SHOE BOX PUZZLE

Materials Needed

- A shoebox with a lid
- Box cutter or scissors
- Small dry treats, plus small toys like ping pong balls or crinkle balls
- Optional: a pinch of catnip or silvervine

Why it works: Fishing for prizes through the holes engages paws, nose, and brain, giving cats a satisfying problem to solve.



Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Prep the Box

- Remove all tape, labels, staples, and tissue paper from the box and lid.

2. Cut the Holes

- Cut 4–8 round holes in the lid and sides, each about 2 inches across: big enough for a paw, too small for a head.
- Space them out and keep them a few inches from the corners so the box stays sturdy.
- Trim any rough or jagged edges.

3. Load It Up

- Drop treats and a few small toys inside.
- Add a pinch of catnip or silvervine for extra interest.

4. Close It

- Press the lid on firmly. If it's loose, swap in a better-fitting box rather than taping it.

5. Set It Out in the Room

- Put out more than one box so cats aren't queuing or guarding.
- Refill and swap toys regularly to keep it new, and recycle the box once it's damaged.

6. Make It Harder

- Start easy: use the biggest holes only, or leave a gap at the lid edge so treats are easy to reach.
- Scrunch paper balls inside so treats hide between them and paws have to dig.
- Put treats in an egg carton or cupcake liners inside the box, so each prize takes a little fishing.
- Only make it harder once they're finding treats easily. A frustrated cat walks away.

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