

Block Puzzle Feeder

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Description

A puzzle feeder is simply a device that has some sort of complexity involved in order for the animal to obtain food. Puzzle feeders are very popular with pet owners as it can allow for long lasting enrichment and even slow down eating in dogs and cats. Popular puzzle feeders include **simple cardboard puzzle feeders** and **plastic/ rubber slow feeders** such as KONGS. Despite being designed mainly for dogs and other domestic animals, many pet store puzzle feeders can be very useful for exotic animals such as birds, reptiles and other small mammals. The puzzle feeder I go over in this article is very versatile due to its durable and simple design and can be used for a variety of animals from mustelids to birds of prey. This puzzle feeder is also a great way to brush up on some simple **carpentry skills**!



Building Materials

- 3/4" Ply wood
- 3"x3" or 4"x4" post
- Fire hose or another material like hemp rope to make tabs
- Drill and bits
- Screws
- Circular Saw
- Tape Measure and Square

How to Build a Block Puzzle Feeder

1. The first step to building this block puzzle feeder is to cut the wood blocks as this will determine the dimensions of the box they will go in. To do this, take your post and measure the width. If its a 3"x3" post like the one I used here you are going to make your cuts at 3" as this will make perfect 3 inch blocks. Start by marking out the blocks like Ive done in picture 1 and cut them to size. Depending on how long your circular saw blade is you may have to make a cut then flip the post over and cut the other side to make it all the way through.
2. Once all of your blocks are cut you can now take your drill, and using a **spade bit or a forstner bit**, you can drill a hole in the centre of the block. (*Warning* The block may spin as you drill to make sure you have it secured with a vice or by holding it tightly) This hole will be used to hide food in, so make it the appropriate size for the food item you wish to hide inside of it.
3. You can now begin to build to box that the blocks will go inside of. The secret to building a good box is to **use your square** as much as you can and take your time with your cuts, **the more square** all of your pieces are, the better! To do this, start by cutting the base of the box, to get the measurements for this, simply take the width of your blocks and add the width of your plywood to all the sides of the base. You can then cut the rectangular base out, being sure to use our square!
4. You can then cut your side pieces. These pieces will be two rectangles that are as long as the base and as tall as your blocks.

5. Finally the end pieces will be as wide and as tall as a block.
6. Making sure to pre drill all of your holes in the plywood, you can now begin assembling your box using screws. Start with the two side pieces and then the end caps and then screw that to your base.
7. You can then put all your blocks in to make sure they fit loosely enough that the animal can easily take out. If you are happy with the fit, you can now attach the tabs. To do this I simply cut strips of firehose and screwed them to the block as you can see in the picture below.







Tips/ Comments

This block puzzle feeder is a relatively easy project that can be easily completed in a few hours and I think it can be used for a variety of animals. This design can also be made a lot more complex for animals like primates by adding a lid and even a simple locking device. Making a box is also great carpentry skill to have so have fun with this one!

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