



Try making a Recycled Dog Toy

The experience:

*Did you know that the average U.S. citizen throws away 70 pounds of clothing each year. Although 95% of textiles can be recycled, only 15% are recycled or donated.**

My dog Margaret is enjoying her recycled T-shirt toy, which we made with help from my Mom. Instead of a tennis ball, I used a lacrosse ball which is mega-strong. The toy has held up well to her German Shepherd teeth. She loves to play fetch and tug, so this toy is really fun for her.

Materials:

- Old T-shirt (Use more than one shirt if you want a multicolored toy.)
- Old Tennis Ball (we used a lacrosse ball for Margaret's toy, as it is more robust)
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Cut straight across the shirt from the bottom of one sleeve to the bottom of the other sleeve (armpit to armpit) so that the torso portion is separate from the upper portion of the shirt.
2. Take the upper part of the t-shirt and cut a 1" strip from sleeve to sleeve to use as a rope in assembly.
3. Cut the torso section in half to make two wide strips across from seam to seam. The width and length of the strips will vary depending on the shirt size. Cut open along only one seam to make one long strip of fabric. Do this to both pieces.
4. Lay two strips of fabric out in an "X" and place the tennis ball in the middle.
5. Wrap the four fabric strips around the ball and tie tightly with the rope of fabric from Step 2. Make sure it is secure by wrapping it around several times and double knotting it. Snip off the ends of this strip leaving a half inch of fabric.
6. Then cut each of the four strips up to where it connects to the tennis ball into three different strips. You will now have twelve total strips dangling from the tennis ball.
7. Take three strips at a time and braid them tightly the entire way from the start of the tennis ball to the ends, double knotting the ends. Do this to the remaining nine strips of fabric. You should now have four braids stemming from the tennis ball.



Adapted from https://www.alcosan.org/docs/default-source/kidscorner/dog_toy_tutorial.pdf

*(Source <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/textiles-material-specific-data>. The US Population in 2017 was 325 million. 11.2 million tons of textiles went into landfills. ~ 70 pounds per person. 13.6% recycling rate.)