



Operation Happy Sock[™]

Basic Information Packet

Table of Contents

Q & A.....	Pages 1-2
Five Easy Steps.....	Page 3
Sock Collection Sign.....	Page 4
How to Make a Happy Sock.....	Pages 5-6



Q & A

Thank you very much for your interest in Operation Happy Sock. Here are some basic questions and answers about our program to help you get involved.

Q: What is Operation Happy Sock?

A: Operation Happy Sock is an all-volunteer, non-profit project that takes unwanted socks and turns them into catnip toys for homeless cats in animal shelters. We started in November 2004 and have been growing by leaps and bounds ever since.

Q. What is a “Happy Sock”?

A. A Happy Sock is a big, fluffy catnip toy that we make by taking a sock, stuffing it with a combination of polyester fiberfill and catnip, and then tying a knot in the ankle. The result is a durable, huggable toy that cats can lick, kick, and enjoy for countless hours.

Q. Who runs Operation Happy Sock?

A. You do! Seriously, OHS is a project that is well suited to almost any group – children or adults alike – who love animals and want to do something special to help them. Home-schooling groups, Girl and Boy Scouts, book clubs, and local animal shelter volunteers have made hundreds of Happy Socks so far. It’s easy, fun, and a great community service.

Q. What does it cost to make Happy Socks?

A. For every 100 socks you collect, you’ll need about \$17 for other materials. A group of 6-10 people can make at least 200-300 Happy Socks in a couple of hours, assuming they’re able to collect that many unwanted socks. They would need around \$50 for their project.

Q. What materials go into a Happy Sock?

It takes three things to make each Happy Sock: one sock, about a teaspoon of catnip, and a handful of polyester fiberfill – white, fluffy filler that makes the toys big and soft. For every 100 Happy Socks, here’s what you’ll need (approximately):

<u>You'll need</u>	<u>At a cost of</u>	<u>Where to find it</u>
100 socks	FREE (donated)	Friends, relatives, neighbors
1 lb. catnip	\$10.50	WalMart
36-44 oz. of polyester fiberfill	<u>\$ 6.15</u>	WalMart or craft stores
	\$16.65 TOTAL	

Q. Where do the socks come from?

Your group collects unwanted socks from friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or anyone else you can think of. You'll be amazed at how happy people are to finally have a good use for their unwanted socks, and how glad they are to clean out their "missing sock drawer." It's a real win/win situation because those socks might otherwise end up in a landfill, but now they'll have a wonderful "second life" as Happy Socks.

To help you collect socks, we provide a template for signs that you can put on sock collection boxes, including a sign that spells out exactly what kinds and quality of socks are ideal. You can put sock collection boxes in strategic places at school, church, or the local animal shelter. (Please be sure to ask for permission before placing a collection box.)

Q. Where does the catnip come from?

A. You'll find that the best deal in town is the Hartz catnip sold at WalMart. It comes in 1-1/2 ounce boxes for 94 cents apiece (prices may vary in some parts of the country), a cost of just over \$10/pound. The quality and texture of this catnip works very well for Happy Socks. You'll want to buy around 10 boxes for every 100 socks you collect.

Q. Where does the polyester fiberfill come from?

A. You'll find plastic bags of fiberfill at WalMart and craft stores, for just \$2 per 12-ounce bag or \$3 for 22-ounce bags. For every 100 socks, you'll want to buy 36-44 ounces of fiberfill.

Q. How much time does it take to make Happy Socks?

A. People vary greatly in their ability to make Happy Socks. Some people like to take their time, enjoy themselves, and do creative things like tying two knots in the socks, which takes extra time. They may make about 20 Happy Socks per hour. Other people are very fast and can make as many as 60 per hour (one per minute).

Operation Happy Sock was founded in 2004 expressly for the purpose of creating and delivering catnip toys to homeless shelter cats. More information is available at www.operationhappysock.com.



Five Easy Steps

(1) Collect socks. You'll be amazed how happy people are to clean out their "missing sock drawer," especially when their unwanted socks will be helping others. Be sure to ask friends, relatives, and coworkers for their socks, and think about putting sock collection boxes in handy locations at school, church, or other likely spots. (You can use the "Happy Socks Collection Sign" template provided on the next page.)

(2) Gather your Happy Sock materials. For every 100 socks you collect, you'll need:

- Three 12-ounce bags or two 22-ounce bags of polyester fiberfill (available for around \$2-3/bag at WalMart or craft stores), and
- About 1 pound of catnip (available at WalMart for \$.94 per 1-1/2 ounce box; 11 boxes = more than 1 pound).

(3) Call a local animal shelter to see when you can visit. Some shelters have special tours for groups of children who visit; others are more casual. It's best to call ahead and be sure they'll let you give Happy Socks to the cats yourself.

(4) Have your Happy Sock Production Party! In addition to the socks and filler materials, you'll need:

- a. A work area consisting of a big table and chairs for everyone;
- b. Tablecloths (disposable paper or plastic is ideal);
- c. Bowls to pour catnip into (one bowl for every 3 or so people);
- d. Plastic bags to put the finished Happy Socks into. (A standard, white kitchen garbage bag easily contains 100 finished toys.)
- e. A DustBuster or other mini-vacuum for easy clean-up;
- f. Goodies to create the party atmosphere your group will enjoy.

Special notes: Catnip is very lightweight, so be sure to hold your Production Party in an area **away from drafts, fans, or sneezing people!** Catnip dust floats everywhere, so we recommend that the work table area not be used as an eating or drinking area.

Cats enjoy helping out but should be discouraged from eating more than a little (about 1 teaspoon) catnip since significant amounts can upset their stomachs. (*For more advice, please see the section on "How to Make a Happy Sock".*)

(5) Deliver your Happy Socks to the animal shelter! We recommend that you clearly label your bags "Happy Socks (Catnip Toys)." Don't forget the camera!



We want your SOCKS!

Operation Happy Sock creates and delivers catnip toys to homeless cats in animal shelters. Our volunteers make simple toys, called "Happy Socks," by putting catnip in the toe of an old sock and tying a knot at the ankle.

We welcome donated socks that meet these guidelines:

- **Clean** – please run them through the washer first.
- Sweat socks and fuzzy socks are terrific!
- **Any size** (baby and kids' sizes too) are welcome.
- Thin synthetics or nylons aren't durable enough.
- Even **socks with holes are fine** – we are experts at making a toy from almost any sock!

It's time to clean out that sock drawer and admit that all those lone socks will probably never meet their mates again. Give 'em a second life as a Happy Sock!

Thank you on behalf of homeless cats everywhere!

www.operationhappysock.com



How to Make a Happy Sock

Before starting, it's best to assemble everything you'll need: a bowl containing a few ounces of catnip, an opened bag of polyfill, and a pile of donated socks.

- 1) Take a sock and **be sure there are no holes** in it. If there are, it may still be a perfectly workable Happy Sock, but you'll need to keep those holes in mind.
- 2) **Gather the sock all the way onto your thumbs** as if you were about to put it on your own foot, with the toe facing away from you.
- 3) Keep one of your hands inside the gathered sock, but take the other hand away and **grasp a healthy handful of polyfill**.
- 4) Use the **handful of polyfill like a mitten to grab a pinch of catnip** from the bowl.
- 5) **Stuff** the polyfill and catnip **way into the toe of the sock**, as far down as possible.
- 6) Pull your hand out of the sock, leaving the polyfill and catnip inside the toe.
- 7) **Tie a knot** in the sock around the ankle, ensuring that the polyfill and catnip stay way down inside the toe where you stuffed them.

CONGRATULATIONS!
You've made a Happy Sock!

Trouble-shooting, or looking for advanced Happy Sock techniques?

Please see the Advanced Happy Sock Techniques page that follows...



Advanced Happy Sock Techniques

- Got a **really long sock**? Try making TWO polyfill/catnip deposits with TWO knots in them. We call this the “double whammy” Happy Sock.
- Got a sock with a **hole in the toe**? Try tying a knot down around the toe first, to seal off the hole, and then see if you can still make a Happy Sock with the remaining material as usual.
- Got a **hole in the heel**? EASY! Just stuff the toe of the sock as usual, but be sure to tie the knot right where the hole is. No one will ever suspect!
- **Baby socks? No-ankle socks?** You’d be amazed how easy it is to stretch them out and still make a Happy Sock out of them. Kids with little hands are really good at making Happy Socks from tiny socks – let them show you how!
- Hopelessly hole-y sock? No such thing! If it’s **really full of holes**, it’s ready to serve as filler, just like the polyfil. No sock goes unused!

Got a group of Happy Sock kids?
Give them their own special “job titles”!

- Big Sock Specialist
- Baby Sock Specialist
- No-ankle Sock Specialist
- Purple (and other colors) Sock Specialist
- Catnip Bowl Patrol (keeps the catnip bowls full)
- Fluffy Stuff Patrol (keeps fiberfill available)