

# CAITLIN SHIH

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## Writing Samples

Originally composed for Helium.com; factual but a bit more conversational in tone

### Homemade Gifts for a Rabbit

<http://www.helium.com/items/2035558-homemade-rabbit-gifts>

Their timid nature may make them seem low key, but rabbits are actually extremely versatile animals. They are very curious and can even be said to enjoy a larger variety of toys and treats than cats and dogs. Making homemade gifts is a great idea and as long as the proper precautions are taken to ensure you aren't using anything harmful, the activity can be a fun, sweet thing to do for your bunny.

#### **1. A Rabbit Home**

*Materials: a box, box cutter, and non-toxic markers.*

A rabbit home is a box or dome that is specially designed for a rabbit to go along with its hutch or permanent cage. Now depending on what type of rabbit this is for and how big it is supposed to grow, the size of the box you should use varies. Once you have selected a suitable box, cut a hole in one of the sides, large enough for the rabbit to go in and out. You can cut holes in other parts of the box, giving the rabbit more ways to get in and out. Remember, rabbits enjoy darkness, so do not cut too many holes in it – just enough for it to have some fun exploring. After cutting entrances in the box, you can color it with only non-toxic markers.

When you've finished coloring it, the rabbit home is completed! Do not be surprised if the rabbit is not comfortable with it at first – it will soon grow to recognize it as a comfortable safe space in its home. Be aware that the rabbit will probably gnaw on its box and so, after some time, it will need replacing.

#### **2. Rabbit Tunnel**

*Materials: a stapler, poster board, paper, tape, and non-toxic markers*

If you take your rabbit outside, this is a great toy. First, decorate the poster board with the markers, if you like. After that, roll it up and staple it on both sides. Cut circles the same size as the holes in the tunnel from the paper. Staple these on the sides, but make sure they move, because these are the doors. You can put food inside to make the rabbit want to explore. This is a fun way to get the rabbit to move around and see new things.

#### **3. Rabbit Goodie Bag**

*Materials: large paper bag, cardboard tubes (paper towel/toilet paper), parrot toys (knots, rope, bells, etc.), dried pinecones, apple tree branches, baby toys, a salt wheel, and rubber balls.*

You will not need to include all of these toys, but these are some of the things that are safe for rabbits that they are fond of. You may even decorate the bag (with non-toxic markers) if you really want to make it special. Remember, the bag will be a toy to the rabbit too.

You may include treats to entice your rabbit to look inside and discover all the toys waiting for it, although store-bought rabbit treats are generally not healthy and should not be consumed in bulk. A better option would be to include small amounts of a certain fruit or vegetable you know your rabbit is fond of.

#### **4. Organic Rabbit Cookie**

You should make these one by one, not in batches, because having too much fruit and vegetables is not healthy for rabbits. Remember, this is only a treat!

*You can use:* mashed grapes (seedless), apples (no seeds), banana, hay, rabbit pellets, broccoli, and other rabbit-safe foods. Make sure all ingredients are organic; pesticides can harm rabbits.

*Do NOT use:* cabbage, parsnips, swedes, potato tops, tomato leaves, and lettuce. Do not use plants from the garden unless you have researched specific flowers beforehand, as many may be poisonous. ...

(clipped for brevity)