



RABBIT CARE TIPS

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BONDING

Rabbits are very territorial and independent creatures. Most rabbits do not like to be held, so it's best to let them come to you. Hand feeding your rabbit is the best way to gain his or her trust.

CAGES

Bigger is better! A rabbit's home should be at least 4-6 times the size of your bunny when he's entirely stretched out – more if he is confined for a large amount of the day. Enclosure sizes also should be decided in consideration of the amount of exercise time and space the rabbit has. One guideline to go by is at least 8 square feet of enclosure space combined with at least 24 square feet of exercise space, for 1-2 rabbits, in which the rabbit(s) can run and play at least 5 hours per day. Recommended cages include: an enclosure made from a dog exercise pen, or a Neat Idea Cage (NIC) which is also known as a Cubes and Coroplast cage.

CAGE PLACEMENT

Since most rabbits do not enjoy being held it is best to have the cage placed directly on the floor. During playtime, simply open the door and let the rabbit come in and out as it chooses to.

LITTER TRAINING

Most rabbits are easily litter trained, with a bit of patience from you. The litter box should be large enough for the bunny to get in and turn around, as well as some extra room for hay. Rabbits tend to pee and poop the most while eating, so it is best to put the pellets, water, and hay near the litter box. Doing so will ensure that the rabbit will use the litter box by default. If you notice poop outside of the litter box, don't worry! This is totally normal, and the rabbit is just marking its territory. NEVER use cedar, pine, or cat litter. Paper pellet litter or Carefresh are the preferred choices. Wood shavings are not recommended simply due to the fact that they're not absorbent enough and won't mask the scent.

BEDDING

The cage will need to be lined with either a fleece blanket or carpet for traction. You should never let your rabbit run on slippery surfaces, as it can lose traction and injure itself. If you choose carpet you will need to keep a close eye on it, and remove the carpet if your rabbit starts to chew it. Fleece is the preferred choice as it has short fibers and is less likely to cause a blockage. It is best not to use any commercial pet bedding anywhere other than the litter box, as it can confuse the rabbit, and encourage using the bathroom in undesirable places.

DIET

Rabbits up to 7 months need unlimited alfalfa based plain pellets and unlimited alfalfa hay. After 7 months, switch to a timothy-based hay and pellets. Limit pellets to 1/4 cup daily, but continue giving unlimited hay. Rabbits need three types of greens daily in addition to hay and pellets. The guideline for serving size is 1 cup of greens per 2 pounds of body weight. Greens may be fed once per day or divided into multiple feedings per day. DO NOT FEED iceberg lettuce, corn, nuts, beans, yogurt, bread, crackers, seeds, popcorn, onion, garlic, potatoes, chocolate or rhubarb. The website <http://www.rabbit.org> has a great overview of acceptable fruits and veggies (in addition to other health and care advice for bunny parents).

GENERAL CARE

With proper diet and cage cleaning, the likelihood of illness is decreased. Your bunny will need the occasional nail trim (every month), but there are many resources online for tips on how to do this. Cat nail clippers work best, and cornstarch can be used to stop the bleeding if you get too close. At our Small Critter Events we offer nail trims for a \$5 donation. If you are ever concerned about the health of your bunny visit <http://www.rabbit.org>, and plan to visit your vet!

INTRODUCTIONS

Rabbits thrive socially and prefer to have a companion. Before introducing two rabbits, it is wise to wait for a quarantine period (2 weeks) to ensure neither is sick. For Information on safely introducing your rabbits, visit <http://www.rabbit.org>.