

# Are You the Right Pet For Me?

## What You Need to Know Before Adopting a House Rabbit

### Introduction

Rabbits are intelligent, social creatures that can make wonderful pets. When cared for properly, house rabbits often live from 6 to 10 years.



Drawing by 'littlebirth'

### Husbandry Needs

- House rabbits need **large cages** plus **time outside of the cage** for exercise and stimulation. Regular opportunities to move about are particularly important for young, energetic bunnies.
- Rabbits possess an instinctive need to **burrow** and require a “safe place” like a hide box or a covered corner of the room.
- House rabbits can be trained to use a **litter pan** that should be spot cleaned daily and disinfected on a regular basis.
- Your house or select rooms in your home will require **bunny-proofing**, to protect your furniture from chewing and digging and to protect your rabbit from household dangers.
- As a **prey species**, a loud, rambunctious household is stressful for some rabbits.

Do you own dogs, cats, or ferrets? Dogs in the household should be trained to respond to commands, and predator species should never be left unsupervised with pet rabbits.

Rabbits also should not be housed with guinea pigs, as this poses a serious health risk to this popular rodent.

### Behavior

- Rabbits are most active at **dawn and dusk**, and they can also be quite active at night. Most individuals tend to sleep a great deal during the day.
- A house rabbit owner can also expect to become well versed in forms of **non-verbal communication**. Although rabbits can and do vocalize, they are a comparatively silent animal when compared to dogs or cats.

- As a general rule of thumb, most house rabbit **do not enjoy being picked up** and cuddled. Nevertheless pet rabbits require regular interaction with their humans. The typical house rabbit owner spends a lot of time at their rabbit's level—on the floor.
- Many believe that rabbits do best when housed with others of their kind. Will you have the time and money to adopt a second or third rabbit in the future?

## Costs

The standard rabbit cage is NOT sufficient for a normal, healthy house rabbit. A larger cage is recommended for sufficient space and stimulation.

<b>One time expenses for the typical house rabbit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large cage</li> <li>• Litter pans (minimum 2)</li> <li>• Water bowl</li> <li>• Food bowl</li> <li>• Spay/castration</li> </ul>

Neutering is also required for good pet quality. Spaying or castration reduces chewing and territorial aggression, while increasing the odds of a longer, healthier life. Spaying reduces the risk of uterine tumor, a common condition in does.

<b>Recurring expenses for one house rabbit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hay</li> <li>• Pellets</li> <li>• Healthy snack food</li> <li>• Chew toys</li> <li>• Regular veterinary care</li> </ul>

## References

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