

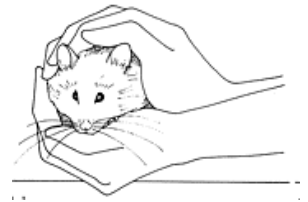
Hamster Care



Congratulations on adopting a new member of your household! To help your new furry friend adapt to your home, we recommend following these guidelines:

PLEASE KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON YOUR HAMSTER WITHIN THE FIRST 30 DAYS IN THEIR NEW HOME. HAMSTERS CAN FIT THEIR BODIES IN ANY HOLE THEY CAN FIT THEIR HEAD, AND IF THEY ESCAPE THEY CAN GET LOST EASILY!

1. **GIVE YOUR HAMSTER A DAY TO TRANSITION INTO HIS NEW HOME!** He will be confused, and need time to make his new home comfortable for himself. Try to limit handling the first day, and keep the noise level in his new room to a minimum!
2. **HAMSTERS ARE NOCTURNAL.** They will sleep during the day and be more active at night. Remember, it is important that you let your hamster sleep, as they need sleep to stay healthy!
3. **HAMSTERS ARE TINY CREATURES WITH POOR EYESIGHT.** Make them aware of your presence by speaking softly and moving slowly, but with purpose. Be careful to never startle your hammy!
4. **TO PICK UP YOUR HAMSTER:** Place your hand palm up in the cage and wait for the little guy to climb on board. You can place a treat in your hand to encourage your new friend to investigate. Once the hamster is cupped in the palm of your hand place your other hand over his back to prevent him from jumping off. Gaining trust can be a slow process; your time and patience will be rewarded!
5. **SOCIALIZE WITH YOUR HAMMY EVERY EVENING.** The more you spend time with him the more he will trust you and develop a bond with you.



HAMSTER FACTS

- **Syrian:** Also known as golden hamsters, or teddy bear hamsters, run about 6 inches in length and are the largest of the common hamsters.
- **Dwarf:** There are several species of dwarf hamsters, such as the Siberian, Roborovski (or Robo), Djungarian, and Chinese. They are only about 2-3 inches in length.
- Well cared for hamsters typically live 2-3 years.

HOUSING YOUR HAMSTER

When considering housing for your new hamster, it's very important to understand that they are solitary creatures and must live alone. At around 8-10 weeks of age they start to develop territorial behaviors and stop being good roommates. Often when territorial behaviors emerge, hamsters begin fighting. The only exception to the one per cage rule is when you have Roborovski hamsters. **"Robo" hamsters can live in small, same sex groups if adequate space is provided.**

There is a lot of variety when shopping for a hamster cage. **Dwarf hamsters do best in plastic tube cages,** as their small size makes it easy for them to escape through bars. The **larger Syrian hamsters do best in open-air wire cages,** as they can get stuck inside of plastic tubes. Consider the adult size of your new hamster when choosing their new habitat. Whichever cage you choose, **the bottom should be solid.** Wire bottom cages can

damage little hamster feet. Cover the cage floor with a 1-2 inch layer of pelleted recycled paper bedding to collect waste and provide insulation. Pine or cedar bedding can be harmful to rodents and should be avoided.

A clean cage is the first step to a healthy hamster! Droppings, uneaten food, and soiled bedding should be removed every day. **Once a week the cage and accessories should be cleaned with warm soapy water and the bedding completely replaced.** This also helps to significantly reduce any unpleasant odors!

Hamsters enjoy a room kept at 65 to 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) and can be sensitive to temperature changes. To prevent heatstroke and sudden temperature changes, do not place your hamster's house in direct sunlight or a drafty space.

Accessorize! Hamsters love to exercise, so make sure yours has a wheel for running. Give your hamster plenty of choices when it comes to where he or she can sleep. Some hamsters prefer to sleep in a wooden or plastic hidey-hole, while others will make a nest to curl up in for the day. Offer your hamster a few sheets of paper towels, and watch them build a comfy little nest. Keep your hamster entertained by providing lots of items to explore. Tubes from used paper towel or toilet paper rolls make excellent hamster tunnels.

DIET

Your hamster's main diet should consist of high quality hamster pellets or a loose seed mix. Small amounts of fruits, nuts, and vegetables can be given to hamsters as treats, but first check with your vet as to which foods would be best for your hamster's dietary needs. Some fruits and vegetables may upset a hamster's delicate digestive system. **Do not give your hamster processed, people food,** especially candy, caffeinated and carbonated beverages, or sticky foods (such as taffy and peanut butter) as they cannot digest them properly and could become very ill. Fresh, clean water should be available at all times; a water bottle with a drinking tube that attaches to the side of the cage is the best way to go.

HAMSTER BODY LANGUAGE

Good Signs:

- **Grooming:** secure and happy
- **Yawning and stretching:** happy and comfortable
- **Listening:** standing tall on his back legs with ears up, means something has captured his attention
- **Scent gland marking:** to mark their territory dwarf hamsters have scent glands on their stomachs while Syrians have them on both hips
- **Hamster biting cage bars:** this can mean the hamster wants your attention or is bored and looking for items to chew. Always provide toys and wooden chews for the hamster.
- **Squeaking:** afraid and / or agitated. This is common during their first few days in a new cage and should stop once acclimated. Dwarfs will also squeak during play or fights.

Warning Signs:

- **Hissing:** their loudest noise. Normally the hamster is in a crouched position, mouth wide open, teeth showing, front paws raised. This means that the hamster is very upset and frightened or startled.
- **Teeth grinding:** a chattering sound. The hamster is irritated and wants to be left alone. It can be a warning before the hamster bites.
- **Hamster biting your hands:** If the hamster nibbles you while holding it, this means the hamster wants to go back to the cage. Avoid startling the hamster or having your hands smell like yummy food. Their poor eyesight can result in confusion and nipping.