

Rabbit Housing Options

FREE ROAMING

Rabbits are happiest when they have a lot of space to run around, and a rabbit's personality really emerges when she is able to interact in an area with her owner. An option that allows your rabbit the most amount of space and the chance to interact with you is having her as a free roaming rabbit. This means that she is allowed free run of the house, usually with a small private area with her hiding box, food, water, litter box, and bed. Rabbits can be litter trained, which is a plus for those considering free roaming rabbits. However, it is best to start with a smaller enclosed area so the rabbit becomes accustomed to the litter box location and then expanding the area once she is proficient at using the litter box. The areas the rabbit will have access to will need to be rabbit-proofed, meaning protected from natural behaviors like chewing and digging, such as hiding electrical cords.

DESIGNATED ROOM

If it is not possible to allow the rabbit to be free-roaming, another option is having a designated area of the house belong to the rabbit. Giving a rabbit her own room is an option that still allows the rabbit plenty of space. Baby-gates can be used to block off areas of the house you do not want the rabbit, but still offering a room or two for her to run around in and explore.

Sometimes it is not an option to have a rabbit free roaming or have a dedicated room and only supervised playtime is possible. There are many other alternatives to provide your rabbit a safe enclosure when you cannot be there to watch her that still offer a comfortable amount of space. The enclosure should be spacious enough to fit in her litter box, food and water bowls, toys, and hiding box with enough room left to stretch out and hop around.

EXCERSIZE PENS

X-pens offer enough space to keep your rabbit happy when she must be safely confined and are easily folded up and stored when not in use. X-pens can be purchased in pet stores and online. To create a bun friendly area, set down an old sheet or rug on the floor and place the x-pen on top. The rabbit's litter box, toys, food and water, and hide can all be placed inside. Taller pens can be purchased for rabbits good at jumping or a sheet can be simply clipped on to the top with binder clips to discourage escape.



DIY RABBIT CONDO

A rabbit condo can easily and cheaply be built and can accommodate any size rabbit or living situation. This idea is expanded off of guinea pig C&C cages (cubes and coroplast cages) and adapted for rabbits. Square wire shelving panels are quickly easily secured together with cable zip ties to create multi-level condos for rabbits. Like x-pens, a towel or sheet can be placed on the bottom of the condo and simply washed when needed. Another option is creating a bottom out of coroplast, which are large sheets of corrugated plastic that are easily cut and folded to make a bottom that is easily swept and wiped down when dirty – a good option for rabbits still learning to use a litter box. Rabbit condos can be built in all sizes – some choose to build tall, multi-level condos, while others prefer to create long and wide single story condos. There are many examples of different set-ups available online.

DOG CRATE/KENNEL

Most cages marketed for rabbits in pet stores are far too small for anything but a baby rabbit. However, dog crates and kennels that are sold in pet stores offer considerably more space and are better suited for a rabbit. It is recommended to get the largest size available (be sure to consider bar spacing and size of rabbit as well). A dog crate can easily be converted into a rabbit cage by simply adding a blanket and all the rabbit's necessities. The large doors on the crates allow easy access for cleaning and for the rabbit to come and go when she has floor time. Large dog crates also have the advantage of being able to add a second story shelf. Coroplast or cardboard can also easily be added around the base and edges to create a bigger tray to prevent hay and litter spillover. Wire bottom kennels will have to either have the wire removed or covered as wire bottoms are not safe for rabbits.

For more information and ideas please visit:

<http://www.rabbit.org/> (House Rabbit Society)

<http://www.myhouserabbit.com/> (My House Rabbit)

<http://www.therabbithouse.com/> (The Rabbit House)

<http://guineapigcages.com/> (Cavy Cages)