

## Rabbit Proofing

Before you bring your rabbit home it is important that you rabbit proof the areas she will have access to when not inside her enclosure. Rabbits love to run, chew, and dig. You want to encourage these natural behaviors in a way that keeps your rabbit and your belongings protected.

### **CHEWING**

Rabbits need to chew. Unlike us, their teeth continue to grow; chewing helps maintain their dental health. There are two ways to protect from nibblers: provide appropriate chew items for your rabbit and exclude her from the areas you want to protect. Wooden blocks, toilet paper tubes, cardboard boxes, paper bags, untreated wicker and willow baskets, and plastic baby toys (such as key rings) all make great alternatives to your furniture and belongings. Grass mats for rabbits can be placed on the areas the rabbit chews to encourage appropriate chewing as well. Chew toys specifically made for rabbits are sold at most pet stores and online.

However, even with appropriate chewing alternatives it is still important to protect items that can be dangerous or expensive for a rabbit to chew on.

### **ELECTRICAL CHORDS**

Electrical cords can seriously harm your rabbit through burns or electrocution if she is able to reach and chew them. Chewing electrical cords also can be dangerous for the household itself (electrical fires), and at the very least costly to appliances and electronics.

Wire tubing secured with electrical tape can be used to cover any exposed wires the rabbit has access to. Wire wrap, corrugated tubing, or cord covers can be a popular solution, which can be purchased at most hardware and electronic stores. It may be necessary to double wrap cords as some determined rabbits can still chew through. Another option is the use of flat cord concealers, which can run along a wall or flat along the floor. Blocking access to cords completely is another method of protecting your rabbit and your belongings that does not risk the rabbit chewing through cord protectors. Wire shelving units can also be used to create cheap fences and gates for rabbits that are easy to move and store. Cable zip ties can be used to connect panels together to block off areas that may be dangerous for a rabbit such as entertainment centers and behind desks. When the gate is not in use it can easily be folded up and stored out of the way. Storage shelving cubes are usually \$20-30 for a box at home and office stores and cable zip ties can be found at electronic stores and both can be found online. Exercise pens for dogs also work well as gates.



### **CARPET AND FURNITURE**

The edges and legs of dressers, bookcases, tables, and other furniture are often the target of chewing when a rabbit has access to them. Wire shelving gates and exercise pens (mentioned above) can be used to block access to furniture. Coroplast can be easily cut and used to block access under couches, beds, and other furniture. Cardboard may be used as well, but might have to be replaced periodically.



Rabbits also instinctively dig and will often dig on parts of carpet and rugs and pull out the fibers. Although some rabbits pull out the fibers and drop them, some rabbits may ingest the fibers, which can cause fatal blockages. Renters in particular want to make sure they leave their carpet in pre- bunny condition. Grass mats and old towels or rugs can be placed on areas of carpet that a rabbit repeatedly chooses to dig at when loose.

### **TOXIC HOUSE PLANTS**

Rabbits love to eat fresh greens, but do not instinctively know what kinds of plants are toxic and which ones are not. Many houseplants are toxic to rabbits so it is best to keep them out of reach of rabbits or in rooms the rabbit does not have access to. Keep in mind that rabbits are great jumpers and simply placing a plant on a table might not keep a determined rabbit out of the way. Hanging plants from the ceiling and away from furniture is a good way to keep your decoration safe from rabbits.

### **CLOTHES, BLANKETS, BOOKS, ETC.**

Rabbits love to play in tunnels and sometimes the comforter hanging over your bed may become a playground and a nice place to chew. Shoes (especially shoelaces), clothes, and books on the floor are also fair game for chewing and digging. Keep blankets, clothes and books stored out of reach of rabbits. Some rabbits will pull books off of bookshelves so gating those areas off can also save your literature.

**For more information and tips on litter box training, visit these websites:**

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

<http://www.binkybunny.com/> (Binky Bunny)

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