

# Hamster Care

Hamsters are great pets: they're cute, cuddly, fun to watch and care for. While caring for a hamster isn't difficult, it does help to have a basic understanding of what you need to do to keep your hamster happy and healthy.



## HAMSTERS

Hamsters come in a variety of colours, sizes and hair lengths, with the most common types being the Syrian (commonly called teddy bear hamster) and dwarf hamsters. Cute and entertaining, they are inexpensive and easy to care for. The typical hamster lifespan is 2 to 3 years.



Syrian (Teddy bear) Hamster

Dwarf Hamster



**Primarily nocturnal**  
with crepuscular behaviors



\*Some individuals may be more agitated & nervous.

## HABITAT

There is a large selection of cages and starter kits for you to choose from for your pet hamster. You should choose a cage that is spacious, safe, and easy to clean. Create a "natural" habitat by connecting multiple units to each other using mazes, tubes, tunnels, and hideaways. Include a corner toilet, a silent exercise wheel, a chew-proof bowl, and a water bottle. The cage and accessories should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected weekly, with a mild bleach and water solution, and rinsed well.

### HAMSTERS ARE ESCAPE ARTISTS!

Keep them safe in a pet carrier when cleaning their cage!

Be sure to place the cage in a secure area away from drafts and direct sunlight, maintain a consistent room temperature of 20 to 22°C (68 to 75°F). Limit or deny access to your hamster by other pets, as the hunting instinct can be very strong in even the tamest of pets.

## COMFORTABLE BEDDING

Bedding provides a secure substrate that encourages burrowing and is comfortable for sleeping and nesting. The ideal bedding is absorbent, dust-free and provides optimal hygienic conditions. Do not use bedding that contains scented oils or chemicals which can be harmful to the respiratory system of your pet hamster. Make sure to provide a deep layer in the cage because hamsters love to burrow. You can also provide your hamster with soft cotton fluff or natural nesting material to make a cozy, warm bed in a corner of the cage. Bedding should be completely changed at least once a week to eliminate odors, fungus and bacteria and maintain a healthy environment.



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**Living World Green  
Naturals Nesting Material & Bed**  
Perfect nesting & resting spot. Safe to chew

**Living World Green  
Ultra Comfort Premium Bedding**  
No additives or colorants, safe & natural, 100% aspen.

## BALANCED AND ENRICHED DIET

Hamsters are omnivores so in the wild they eat a mix of plants and insects. The best diet for your pet hamster is one that includes a quality extruded pellet or quality seed-based food, a good source of timothy hay, small amounts of fresh fruits, vegetables or herbs.

Your hamster deserves love and affection, and of course a treat every now and again. After all, the odd treat can help you develop a bond with your hamster and often assists with training. It is important to remember that treats should be given sparingly and in addition to a balanced diet. A safe way to provide some variety is by alternating fresh treats like fruits and vegetables with protein-packed treats like mealworms or insects and packaged treats like herbs, sticks, drops and chews.

**Living World Green GOURMET TOPPERS**  
Sprinkle on top of hay or food to add variety and encourage foraging or simply serve alone as a treat.



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## SUPPLEMENTS

The use of a salt lick and mineral stone is great for providing salt, calcium, and essential minerals. It encourages gnawing which helps to keep teeth trim and healthy too!

### **Living World MINERAL BLOCKS**

are not your everyday boring calcium supplements; they are studded with delicious flavor tidbits.



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## FRESH WATER

Of course, fresh water every day is very important too. A water bottle will keep the water clean and avoid spilling. Water bottles also mimic how hamsters drink in the wild (drops of dew off plants and grass). It is a good idea to clean the bottle daily and disinfect the bottle once a week to avoid bacteria build up. Proper water flow should be checked frequently too.



## OTHER TIPS ON OWNING A HAMSTER

Consider getting a scale for regular weight monitoring and a comb for grooming (for long haired hamsters). Activities should include time in an exercise ball, supervised time out of cage with caretaker, foraging toys, tunnels & tubes, and dust baths.

Wooden homes and play areas are a great way to give your hamster something to play in and satisfy their need to chew. Chewing is a natural behaviour that helps keep their teeth healthy and stops them getting overgrown. It also gives your hamster something to do and helps to stop them getting bored. Hamsters love to shred, chew and gnaw on things like alfalfa and oat hay, cardboard, corn husks, elk antlers, loofah, seagrass and natural untreated softwood sticks.



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### **Living World Green Seagrass Toys**

Provides mental and physical activity. Helps keep teeth trim and healthy. 100% napier grass

**Give your hamster 24 HOURS to adjust to his new habitat when you first bring him home!**

hand when you want to bring him out of the cage and be patient. Grabbing him will only frighten him and you may be bitten.

Syrian hamsters are not community animals, so keeping more than one in the same cage is not recommended. Even a male and female together will often seriously harm each other. Dwarf hamsters are more social and can often be kept together. If keeping multiple hamsters, a larger habitat is essential and each hamster will require their own wheel, water bottle and food dish. Avoid housing male and female hamsters together as unwanted pregnancies will occur.



## MONDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Spot clean cage; remove any wet bedding and droppings.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

## TUESDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Offer a small amount of washed and chopped fresh fruit or vegetables as a treat.
- Spot clean cage; remove any wet bedding and droppings.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

## WEDNESDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Completely change all bedding in your hamster's cage and spot clean any dirty corners in the cage.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

## THURSDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Spot clean cage; remove any wet bedding and droppings.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

## FRIDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Offer a small amount of washed and chopped fresh fruit or vegetables as a treat.
- Spot clean cage; remove any wet bedding and droppings.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

## SATURDAY

- Place your hamster in a secure place (such as a pet carrier or his exercise ball) and thoroughly clean and disinfect the cage and all accessories with a mild bleach and water solution. Be sure to rinse everything well. Replace all bedding and give fresh food and water.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.
- Weekly weigh in - chart your hamster's weight.

## SUNDAY

- Clean and refill the water bottle. Check the food bowl and refill as needed.
- Spot clean cage; remove any wet bedding and droppings.
- Daily supervised playtime outside of the cage (at least 30 minutes).
- Health check and note anything unusual.

# To do list:

## HAMSTER CARE

