



# Rat Care

Rats are great pets: they are smart, interactive, and easily trainable. While caring for a rat isn't difficult, it does help to have a basic understanding of what you need to do to keep your rat happy and healthy.

## RATS

Pet rats come in a variety of colours and even different hair types (including hairless). Rats are intelligent and social and make wonderful pets. These charming little creatures are inexpensive and easy to care for. They are very clean animals and are easily tamed and trained. The typical rat lifespan is 2 to 3 years.



## HABITAT

While rat cages and starter kits can make suitable homes for rats, rats love to chew and may eventually chew out of a plastic cage. A wire cage is a good alternative. As with any animal, the bigger the cage the better the environment for your pet. Create a "natural" habitat by providing the following: shelter, hammock, ramps, balcony platforms, ladders, play areas, 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. 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.

### RATS ARE ESCAPE ARTISTS!

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

## 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 rat. Some rats may also be sensitive to shavings; therefore, you may want to use corn cob or a paper-based bedding for your rat as an alternative. Make sure to provide a deep layer in the cage because rats love to burrow. Bedding should be completely changed at least once a week to eliminate odors, fungus and bacteria and maintain a healthy environment. You can also provide your rat with soft cotton fluff or natural nesting material to make a cozy, warm bed in a corner of the cage.




**Primarily nocturnal**  
with crepuscular behaviors

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**Activity level:**

**Noise level:**

**Social\*:**

**Maintenance:**

\*Some individuals may be more agitated & nervous.



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



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

## BALANCED AND ENRICHED DIET

Rats are omnivores so in the wild they eat a mix of plants and insects. The best diet for your pet rat is one that includes a quality extruded pellet or quality seed-based food and fresh greens.

Your rat 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 rat 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, nuts, and cereals with protein-packed treats like mealworms or hardboiled eggs, and packaged treats like herbs, sticks, drops and chews. Be careful not to give too much soft food as it can cause diarrhea.

**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 rats 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 RAT

Consider getting a scale for regular weight monitoring. Activities should include time in an exercise ball, supervised time out of cage with caretaker, foraging toys, tunnels, tubes, and mazes. To promote their natural instinct to dig and burrow, provide a rat-safe "dig box" filled with aspen shavings, clean dirt, play sand, other rat-safe foraging materials and add some small treats to encourage foraging.

Wooden homes and play areas are a great way to give your rat something to play in and satisfy their need to chew. Chewing is a natural behaviour that helps keep their teeth healthy and stops them from getting overgrown. It also gives your rat something to do and helps to relieve boredom. Rats 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.

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

Rats are highly intelligent, very social and can be easily handled and trained. Handle your pet gently and make sure others do so as well. Allow him to climb onto your hand when you want to bring him out of the cage and be patient. Rats are very social and are usually very easy to tame. Once tame, your rat will love spending time

with you; and many rats will learn to ride around on the shoulder of their favorite person. Rats are very social animals and as such will enjoy the companionship of another rat. Same sex pairs or groups are ideal. Males usually get along fine with other males, especially if introduced at a young age or if they are littermates. Keeping rats in groups does not make them more difficult to tame if they are handled from a young age. If keeping multiple rats, a larger habitat is essential and each rat will require their own wheel, water bottle and food dish. Avoid housing male & female together as unwanted pregnancies will occur.



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### Living World Green Seagrass Toys

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

# To do list:

## RAT CARE

### 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 rat'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 rat 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 rat'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.

