

Hamster Housing

Cage Type

Hamsters need plenty of space to run around. The bigger the cage, the better! Aim for a cage size at minimum of 24" x 12" x 12". Keep in mind the bigger the hamster the bigger the cage should be.

Wire Cages: One thing you need to make sure of is that the wires are never more than half an inch apart. You should never buy a cage that has a wire bottom, as this is not good for your hamsters feet. Make sure to create different levels inside, so if your hamster is climbing along the top of the cage, they don't have too far to fall if they lose their grip.

Plastic Cages: There are many plastic molded hamster cages on the market today. These hamster cages are very easy to clean, and they offer protection for your little friend if you have other pets in your home. Many of these cages have a small area of wire which can act as a climbing frame for your hamster. If you buy a cage that doesn't have somewhere for you hamster to climb, be sure you provide a climbing frame in the cage for them.

Say No To Tubes: You've probably seen the brightly colored hamster cages that consist of a collection of tubes joined together. It is not good to house a hamster in one of these cages as it's important for your hamster to have plenty of floor space. It's also easy for a hamster to get stuck in the tubes. If your hamster is a little timid it may decide to hide out in the tubes and you'll spend a lot of time having to dismantle the tubes, in order to reach your hamster. Tubes are also very difficult to keep clean.

Bedding

You should always make sure that the floor of the cage has a covering of at least 2 inches of suitable bedding as hamsters love to burrow.

Good Bedding:

- Carefresh
- Kaytee Clean & Cozy Aspen shavings (only from pet store)
- Paper (no ink and non-toxic only)

Avoid:

- Pine wood shavings
- Cedar wood shavings
- Cat litter
- Corn cob
- Newspaper
- Scented bedding



Location

It's a good idea to have your hamster's cage close enough for it to get used to people's voices but not so close that the noise prevents it from being able to relax. It should also be in an area that is safe from other pets in the home.



Set-Up and Accessories

Hiding Spots: Hamsters love to hide and burrow. Placing a small cardboard box or a plastic den will give them a good place to hide.

Toys: Hamsters love to have something to keep them occupied; a wheel on its own isn't enough. You need to provide a selection of other toys such as wooden chew toys or cardboard. These toys are an excellent choice as they provide a fun activity for your hamster and help prevent their teeth from becoming overgrown. It's a good idea to change around the toys often so that your hamster doesn't get bored.

Wheel: Hamsters love to run! In fact, hamsters running in wheels have been known to run more than 5 miles in a single night! Avoid metal wheels because your hamster's legs can get caught in between the rungs. Plastic wheels are often made from one solid piece of plastic which is safest for your hamster. Hamsters generally prefer larger wheels. The larger a wheel is, the less the hamster has to arch its back and the more similar it is to running on flat ground in the wild. Another option is a plastic saucer wheel. These wheels provide a much flatter surface for hamsters to run on.

Water Bottle & Food Dish: Make sure you are giving your hamster fresh food and water daily.



Maintenance

Each Day: Make sure that your hamster's food and water are changed daily. You should also shake the bedding or shavings, and make sure any droppings are removed from the cage.

Once a Week: Give your hamster's cage a full clean from top to bottom. Though leave a small amount of the old bedding in place so that your hamster recognizes some familiar smells when it returns to the cage.

