

Chinchilla Housing

Location:

Chinchillas are very sensitive to temperature, so their habitat should be set up in a room where the temperature can easily be maintained between 50 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep in mind where any air vents and windows are. Direct sunlight or heat blowing on them could cause them to overheat.

Chinchillas sleep during the day, so a room that is quiet and calm during the day is best. Bedrooms make an excellent location.

Habitat:

In the wild, chinchillas live in the mountains, so a habitat with plenty of vertical space and platforms is ideal. The minimum cage size for one chinchilla is 4'x4'x4', but they need plenty of space to run and jump around so the bigger the cage the better! Small, single level cages or cages with wire bottoms should be avoided.

Many chinchilla owners recommend the Critter Nation Double Unit habitat by Midwest. With wide double doors, it is very easy to clean. You can even add levels if housing numerous chinchillas. There are also many DIY habitat options online if you want to build one yourself.

Set-up and Accessories:

Bedding: The bottom of your chinchilla cage should be lined with a soft bedding. Carefresh is a great option. It will absorb urine, reduce any unpleasant smells, and provide a safe landing for your chinchilla's feet. Do not use wood shavings because they can be sharp and also cause respiratory problems.

Water Bottle: A water bottle attached to the outside of the cage is necessary for a steady water supply. A water bottle outside the cage prevents spills and prevents your chinchilla from getting wet.

Food Bowl: A food bowl that is either heavy or can be attached to the cage works best. Light, plastic dishes will be easily tipped over.

Hiding Areas: Your chinchilla will need a safe place to hide when they feel scared. Nest boxes, huts, and tunnels make great safe spots. Chinchillas are big chewers, so make sure whatever you put in their cage is either chew

proof or safe to chew.

Perches: Perches and ledges provide vertical space for your chinchilla to jump around. You can purchase perches in a variety of different materials. Many are chewable, which gives your chinchilla another enrichment outlet. Wood and lava stone ledges are the most common perches. It is a good idea to move the perches around the habitat regularly to enrich your chinchilla.

Cooling Stone: Chinchillas do not tolerate heat well. Placing a granite stone or tile in their habitat gives them a cool place to relax. Granite naturally maintains a lower surface temperature than room temperature. Marble works this way as well. On really warm days, you can place the stone in the fridge or freezer and then put it back in your chinchilla's habitat for an extra chill.

Dust Bath: Due to the density of chinchilla's fur, they cannot bathe in water. If their fur does get wet, it holds in the moisture, causing fungus to grow on your chinchilla's skin. In the wild, chinchillas bathe in volcanic ash which helps distribute natural oils, clear away dirt and debris, and keep their fur soft. You can purchase chinchilla dust that mimics volcanic ash. Place the dust in a dust bath house and allow your chinchilla to roll around in it two to four times per week.

Wheel: Chinchillas are very active creatures and would greatly benefit from an exercise wheel. A wheel should always be available for your chinchilla inside their habitat. The wheel needs to be large enough so they do not have to arch their back. Wheels with holes of any kind should be avoided because your chinchilla's toes and feet can easily get caught. Wheels made out of aluminum alloy are recommended because they cannot be chewed. If you do use a plastic wheel, be sure to inspect it regularly for chewing and remove the wheel if any sharp edges are formed.

Cleaning

Daily Cleaning: Remove any food and water from the previous day. Any spots of soiled bedding should also be removed and replaced with fresh bedding.

Weekly Cleaning: Remove all bedding. Wash dishes, walls, and floors with warm water and dish soap. Once everything is completely dry, put in fresh bedding and clean accessories.

Monthly Cleaning: Completely disassemble the habitat and scrub everything down.

