

# Gerbil Socializing

The most important thing to remember when socializing with your gerbils is to go slow and be patient. Repetition and having a routine can help your gerbils get used to you and trust you. Below are the steps you can take to socialize your gerbils:

## Step 1

Even though it may be hard, you have to leave your gerbils alone for at least the first three days after you bring them home. Do not try to handle or interact with them so they have a chance to get used to their new enclosure.

## Step 2

You can sit next to their enclosure and talk to them when they are awake. This helps them get used to seeing you and hearing your voice. Be sure to set up their enclosure somewhere quiet but also in an area where they will see and hear you often.

## Step 3

You can rip up pieces of toilet paper or facial tissue and rub it in your hands. Place the pieces in your gerbil's enclosure for them to use for making nests. This will help your gerbils get used to your scent as well.

## Step 4

After your gerbils are comfortable being out while you are talking near their enclosure, you can start to offer them treats. Let them come to you to take the treats, don't ever chase them around their enclosure and try to make them take the treat. Once your gerbils are comfortable taking treats from you, you can place some treats in the palm of your hand and let them eat from your hand. Do not try to pick up your gerbils just yet.

## Step 5

When your gerbils are comfortable climbing onto your hand, you can gently cup your hands and slowly lift them from their enclosure. Keep your hands low and close to your lap or the floor. Gerbils are great jumpers, and can get very wiggly. You want to be careful that they don't jump out of your hands and injure themselves. You can place them in a playpen or on the floor of a gerbil safe room for free roaming time. You can sit on the floor and let your gerbils climb on you and get used to being picked up and placed down in a safe environment.

Never pick your gerbils up by their tails. It can easily injure them and as a defense mechanism they do what is called, degloving. This is where their fur and skin shed, leaving just the bone of their tail so they can get away from potential predators.

