

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 450 square feet of floor space.

Bin Cages: Bin cages are an easy, cost effective choice for their enclosure. There are many tutorial videos on YouTube to show you how to make a bin cage. Supplies include:

- 70 quart or larger plastic storage bin
- 1/4 inch fence wire
- Box cutter or dremel blade
- Wire cutters
- Zip ties
- Duct tape (optional)



Aquariums: Forty gallon aquarium tanks or larger are suitable cages for your hamster. Make sure that there is a lid for the aquarium so your hamster can't escape. The bigger the tank the better because you can fit all the necessary enrichment in that your hamster will need. Most cages that are sold in pet stores are too small to house hamsters in.

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 six 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



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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. At minimum, your hamster will need an 8-inch wheel. 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. You can use a water bottle or water dish.

Sand Bath: Hamsters don't bathe themselves in water so make sure to give them a sand bath large enough for them to roll around in. Glass containers, jars, boxes, or large shallow bowls are suitable options for a sand bath. Be sure that the sand you are using is bacteria free. Do not use chinchilla dust, it is made differently than sand and can cause respiratory issues.

Maintenance

Each Week: Make sure that your hamsters food and water are changed daily. You should clean out any areas of bedding where they usually go to the bathroom.

Once a Month: 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.

