

Rats

Care Sheet



Curious rats inhabit every continent except Antarctica, showcasing their remarkable adaptability to diverse environments, especially around humans. Their cleverness in utilizing our resources is part of what makes them such fascinating companions! To create a welcoming home that reflects their natural habitat, be sure to prioritize a cozy setup, provide a healthy diet, and consider whether to keep them solo or in friendly groups. Remember, these clever creatures can squeeze through small openings, so it's important to keep a watchful eye on them. Enjoy the journey of bonding with your delightful new friends!

Enclosure

Selecting the perfect enclosure for your beloved rats is crucial for their happiness and well-being! These adorable little creatures thrive when they have ample space to explore, play, and snooze comfortably. For one rat, you'll want an enclosure that's at least 24" L x 24" W x 24" H—but if you have more, it's essential to provide them even more room to roam! Opt for a solid floor instead of wire to keep their precious paws safe. Remember, a sturdy design is key—metal bars are a must since rats can be expert escape artists! Make sure the spacing between the bars is no more than half an inch to keep them secure. Good ventilation is vital, as it helps prevent bacteria buildup and keeps your furry friends healthy; that's why glass and plastic enclosures are best avoided. With the right enclosure, your rats will live their best lives, and you'll enjoy watching them thrive every day!

Get to know

Creating a strong bond with your rats is one of the most rewarding aspects of their care. These delightful creatures are incredibly social, loyal, and trusting once they feel comfortable with you. Begin by taking your time; allow them to acclimate to their new environment and their companions, if you have more than one. Introduce yourself gently by sitting nearby and offering treats. Once they recognise your scent and see you as a friend, you'll find that they can become your best companions. Remember, it's essential to have at least two rats, as they thrive on social interaction and can become lonely if kept alone.

Exercise

To keep your pet rats happy and healthy, it's essential to provide them with plenty of physical and mental stimulation. Creating a lively environment filled with diverse activities will promote their well-being and happiness. Consider designing their cage with multiple levels for climbing, curious tunnels for exploration, and a variety of engaging toys to keep them entertained. Rats love to run, so offering a spacious and safe area for them to play or even a wheel in their cage can make a big difference in their exercise routine. While some rats enjoy swimming, it's best to ease them into it gradually to avoid any surprises. Additionally, aim for at least 1-2 hours of playtime outside of their cage each day. This dedicated time not only keeps them mentally stimulated but also strengthens your bond with them. By offering these enriching experiences, you can ensure your furry friends lead happy, fulfilling lives!

LIFESPAN

2-4 years in
captivity

SIZE

15-27 cm (a
10-24 cm tail)

TEMPERATURE

18c-27c

HUMIDITY

60% - 80%

Environment

Substrate: For your rats, a paper-based bedding is a fantastic choice! It's safe and helps prevent respiratory issues associated with sawdust or wood shavings. Aim for a depth of 1-2 inches to let them dig and explore. Also, steer clear of scented products, as they can be irritating to their skin.

Décor: Creating a warm and inviting space for your pet rat is so important! Be sure to include a cozy hideaway box where they can snuggle up. Adding a dig box will spark their curiosity and keep their minds engaged. And don't forget to include plenty of hiding spots and fun toys to enhance their playtime!

Cleaning: Keeping your enclosure clean is crucial for the well-being of your Rats! Be sure to spot clean any waste you see promptly. Additionally, remember to replace the substrates at least once a week and give everything a thorough clean with a safe disinfectant.



Diet

Feeding: A rat's diet is essential to their overall health and vitality! To ensure they thrive, offer them high-quality rodent lab blocks or pelleted food as their mainstay. You can also treat them to small amounts of grains, vegetables, fruits, hay, and occasional treats, keeping these extras to about 10% of their daily intake. Most fruits are safe and delightful for rats, but remember to avoid seeds, pits, and citrus fruits. To make it easier for them, chop up any fruits or veggies you provide. An adult rat typically needs around 15 to 20 grams of food daily.

Water: Ensuring your rat has access to fresh water daily is essential for their health and happiness! Using a water bottle keeps their water clean and prevents food or bedding from contaminating it. Remember to clean the bottle regularly with a safe disinfectant to keep harmful bacteria at bay. Your furry friend will thrive with just a little extra care!

Rat's weight

A healthy rat has a cylindrical body and a gently rounded abdomen, while an overweight rat takes on a pear shape, often with a broader abdomen and some rolls of fat around the legs and neck. You should be able to feel their bones with a little pressure. Conversely, if you can easily feel their bones and notice a lack of muscle, your rat may be underweight. Maintaining the right weight is crucial for their overall health and happiness. Let's ensure our furry friends thrive!

Rat's weight and shape



Underweight

Perfect

Overweight



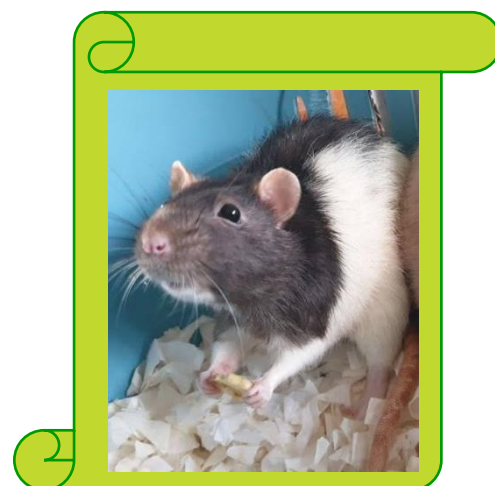
Health & Welfare

A healthy rat is full of life! You'll notice they're active, alert, and curious, sporting bright eyes, a clean nose and ears, and a lovely smooth, shiny coat. Keep an eye out for any discharge from their eyes, nose, or ears, and make sure their teeth and nails aren't overgrown. Regular checks on their appearance and behaviour can help catch any health concerns early. If you ever have worries, don't hesitate to visit a vet who can work wonders for your little companion's health and happiness!

Grooming

It may surprise some, but rats are quite fastidious creatures! They typically manage their grooming and usually don't require us humans to give them baths. However, if you notice they're filthy, a gentle spot clean with a damp cloth is excellent. Generally, it's best to let them manage their own hygiene needs. If you have an older rat or one that may be injured or unwell, they might appreciate a little extra help with grooming. Just like us, rats' nails continuously grow. Fortunately, their natural behaviours—like exercising and climbing—usually take care of this, so nail trimming isn't often necessary. But if you notice their nails curling or if they seem to be scratching themselves while grooming, it's a good indication that it's time for a trim.

If you're unsure about trimming their nails, it's wise to seek help from a vet to avoid any potential injuries. Additionally, if you notice that your rat isn't grooming as it usually does, it's essential to have it checked out, as this could signal an underlying issue. Remember, keeping an eye on their grooming habits is a great way to ensure they're happy.



Diseases and Concerns

Rats are truly remarkable and resilient creatures, but like all pets, they can encounter some health challenges. One of the most common issues is respiratory infections, which can cause symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, and difficulty breathing. To help prevent this, maintaining clean bedding and a tidy cage is essential. Additionally, as rats age, they may develop tumours, so it's important to keep an eye out for any lumps or behavioural changes—it's all part of being a responsible pet owner! Dental health is another key concern, as a rat's teeth grow continuously. Providing them with plenty of chewable items is a fantastic way to keep their teeth healthy and well-maintained. If you ever notice any misalignment in their teeth, don't hesitate to reach out to a vet for guidance!

If you're thinking about welcoming a rat into your home, learning about their health needs is crucial. Daily monitoring will help you catch any potential issues early, ensuring your little friend stays happy and healthy!

Transport

When you travel with your animals, it's essential to prioritise their safety and comfort. Ensure their travel box has sufficient space for your Rat to sit comfortably without being jostled around. If they're new to travelling, covering the box with a cloth to create a calming darkness can help ease their nerves. Remember to ensure the box is well-ventilated yet secure to prevent escape. In the winter, keeping your pet warm is crucial, so pack a battery heat pack or a hot water bottle to maintain a cosy environment.

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