

INFORMATION

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Short Guide to Keeping **HAMSTERS**

Hamsters have been bred in a large range of different colours and coat types, yet they still retain the basic instincts of their ancestors. They are nocturnal and anti-social (with other hamsters) especially Syrian hamsters, which are only capable of living together when they are very young, after approx six weeks they must be separated and housed alone from then on. Dwarf hamsters such as the Russian, Chinese and Roborovski, are smaller and more tolerant to others but they should be purchased together at a young age to give them the best chance of getting on.

On average a pet hamster can be expected to live for between two and three years. Looking after your hamster correctly, will involve providing suitable food, accommodation and exercise. These basics will ensure your hamster remains happy and healthy throughout its life.

HOUSING:

There is a lot to choose from when it comes to housing. The traditional hamster cage is still a popular option, but more modern and inventive designs are now available. These are often designed around a basic cage onto which you can add extra rooms, wheels and tunnels; this mimics more closely the hamster's natural burrow in the wild.

Whichever option you choose, all housing should have a sleeping area, complete with **hamster safe bedding** which will not cause a blockage if swallowed. The floor can be covered with wood shavings and changed once or twice a week (any heavily soiled areas should be removed daily). Buy specially packaged animal bedding as this will be dust and mite free.

It is important to keep your hamster fit and entertained. In the wild, hamsters may travel several miles a night in search of food or a mate. An exercise wheel is an excellent alternative to this night-time activity. Providing a good range of toys and chews should stop your hamster getting bored and chewing its cage. Being burrowing animals by nature, they will require adequate retreats of various types.

SEXING:

Sexing hamsters is fairly easy; the gap between the two openings near the tail is much longer in males, making the rear end more elongated. Testes can also be seen in adult male hamsters. (See diagram opposite).



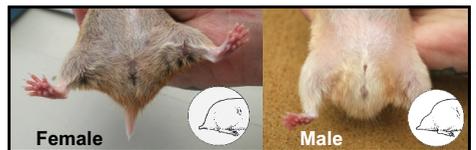
HANDLING:

All hamsters can become tame quite quickly with regular, gentle handling. Remember they live underground in dark burrows and have fairly poor eyesight, so instead they have a strong sense of smell. You will need to accustom your pet to your scent; to do this, place your hand on the cage floor and allow your hamster to sniff and step onto you voluntarily - if he is reluctant, gently encourage him with your other hand. You can then carefully lift him out using your other hand to prevent him from falling. Avoid gripping your hamster tightly as this may cause him to panic, struggle and bite.

DIET:

The best way to feed your hamster is with complete food mix that provides for all your hamsters nutritional needs. This is always available at All-In-One and is easy to use and store. Food should always be provided in a small bowl, refreshed every day. Water should always be available, also freshened daily. You can treat your pet from time to time with small pieces of fruit and vegetables or try ready made treat bars and yoghurt drops.

Hamsters instinctively hoard food, building up supplies for when food is in short supply. Be sure to check your hamsters bed for spoiled fruit and veg and remove it. It is also important to provide a mineral block and chews to help keep teeth in trim.



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A valid receipt is required.