

**TIPS ON GETTING
STARTED WITH YOUR
FURRY FRIEND**

PET RABBIT

CARE GUIDE



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Introduction

- **Brief History of Domesticated Rabbits:** Originally from Western Europe and North Africa, rabbits have been domesticated for more than 1,400 years. Initially bred for food and fur, they have become beloved pets worldwide.
- **Why Proper Care Matters:** Rabbits are sensitive creatures. Providing the proper care ensures they live a long, happy life.

Choosing the Right Rabbit

- **Breed Insights:** From the floppy-eared English Lop to the cloud-like Angora, each breed has unique care requirements.
- **Size, Lifespan, and Temperaments:** While Dwarf breeds might live 8-12 years, larger breeds like the Flemish Giant have shorter lifespans of 5-8 years.
- **Adoption vs. Buying:** Adoption gives rabbits a second chance and often provides new owners with spayed/neutered, health-checked pets.



Housing and Environment

- **Indoor vs. Outdoor:** While indoor rabbits are protected from predators and weather extremes, outdoor rabbits experience a more natural environment but require secure, weather-proof hutches.
- **The Perfect Cage:** Minimum cage dimensions should allow the rabbit to make at least three consecutive hops. Wire floors can harm their feet; solid flooring with bedding is preferred.
- **Creating a Rabbit-safe Play Area:** Remove toxic plants, ensure the area is escape-proof, and supervise playtime.
- **Climate Control:** Rabbits are sensitive to heat. Ensure temperatures remain between 60°F and 70°F.

Diet and Nutrition

- **Hay, Hay, and More Hay:** Timothy hay is a staple, but oat and meadow hays are also suitable.
- **The Right Pellets:** Look for high-fiber, low-protein options.
- **Fresh Food:** Dark leafy greens are essential, but offer fruits like blueberries and apples sparingly.
- **Treats in Moderation:** Overfeeding sugary treats can lead to obesity.
- **Hydration:** Refill and clean water bowls daily.



Handling and Socialization

- The Gentle Touch: Support their hind legs and avoid lifting them by the ears or scruff.
- Bonding Time: Spend time daily talking, petting, and playing.
- Active Play & Enrichment: Tunnels, balls, and climbing structures provide exercise and fun.
- Other Pets: Introduce slowly and always supervise interactions.

Health and Wellbeing

- Common Rabbit Ailments: Look out for overgrown teeth, runny eyes, and wet bottoms.
- To Spay or Neuter: This can prevent cancers and unexpected litters.
- Grooming Routine: Brush weekly (more for long-haired breeds) and trim nails monthly.
- Chew on This: Offer wooden blocks, apple branches, or rabbit-safe toys.



Behavior and Training

- **Decoding Bunny Language:** A "binky" is a joyous jump-spin, while thumping warns of danger.
- **Litter Training:** Start by placing a litter box where they naturally choose to go.
- **Behavioral Issues:** Chewing furniture? Offer more toys. Digging carpets? Provide a digging box.
- **Toys & Games:** DIY toys, like paper towel rolls stuffed with hay, can be a hit.

Traveling with Your Rabbit

- **Selecting a Carrier:** Choose a hard-sided carrier with good ventilation.
- **Travel Prep:** Include hay, water, and a familiar blanket.
- **On the Road:** Avoid direct sunlight; never leave your rabbit in a parked car.



Emergency Preparedness

- **Rabbit First Aid Kit:** Include gauze, styptic powder, and critical care food.
- **Vet on Speed Dial:** Always have contact details of a rabbit-savvy vet.
- **Emergency Signs:** Rapid breathing, not eating/drinking, or lethargy means vet time.

Conclusion

- **Lifelong Learning:** Rabbit care evolves. Stay updated with the latest information.
- **Community Matters:** Join online forums like BinkyBunny or RabbitReddit for advice and support.

11. Resources

- **Organizations and Rescues:** Consider joining the House Rabbit Society for more resources.
- **Books & Websites:** "The House Rabbit Handbook" is a top recommendation.

- **Vet Directories:** Websites like Rabbit Welfare Association offer vet listings.

