

Understanding Rabbit Behavior

A happy rabbit

These rabbits are relaxed and happy.

Rabbits 1-3 show ears close together, facing slightly backwards and pointing outwards. Eyes may be partially closed.

1



Rabbit is lying down, with a relaxed body posture and legs tucked under the body.

2



Rabbit is lying down, with front paws pointing forward and rear legs stuck out sideways. Body is relaxed and extended.

3



Rabbit is lying down with a fully extended, relaxed body. Back legs are stretched out behind the body and the front paws are pointing forward.

4



Rabbit jumps into the air with all four paws off the ground and twists in mid-air before landing.

A worried rabbit

These rabbits are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you near them.

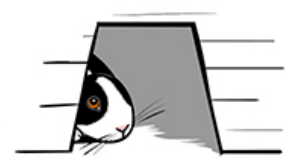
1

Rabbit is in a crouched position, muscles are tense, head held flat to the ground, ears wide apart and flattened against the back, pupils dilated.



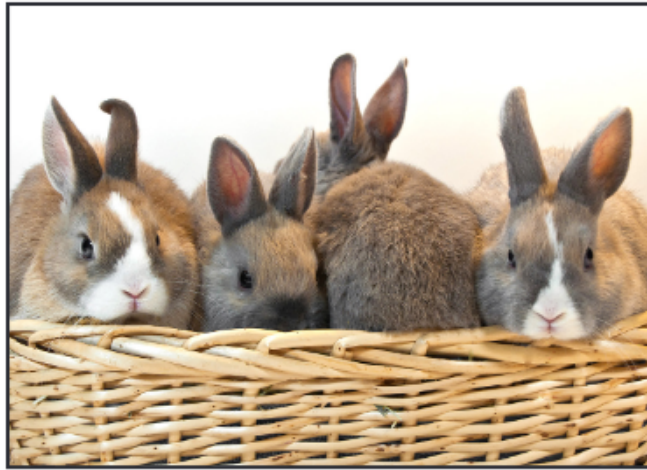
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Rabbits who are worried or anxious may hide.



“HEY, WHAT’S ONE MORE?”—MULTIPLE RABBIT HOUSEHOLDS

Rabbits are extremely social animals. Wild European rabbits from which domestic rabbits descended live in large groups. While these rabbits breed quickly and can often overrun an area, spayed and neutered domestic rabbits can enjoy each other’s company without worrying about a population explosion.



Bonded rabbits are lifelong friends. They often share a cage, groom each other, and sleep nestled up together. Often, when one rabbit is ill the pair is left together since the separation of the two can be stressful. When one of the pair dies, the other mourns the loss and may not eat or behave normally for some time.

Introducing rabbits can be tricky business, but the final reward of watching a bonded pair snuggle closely or bound about a room is well worth the trouble. The easiest couple to introduce is a neutered male and a spayed female, especially if you bring a new female to an established male. Female rabbits are more territorial and may resent any new rabbit, male or female. Two spayed female rabbits can also be bonded, though it may be more difficult. Most difficult, but certainly not impossible, is introducing two neutered males. All important are the bunnies’ personalities: a very mellow neutered male will accept just about any new friend.

When bringing a new rabbit into a house, be sure to quarantine her in a separate room and schedule health exam with a vet right away. Once you are sure the new rabbit is healthy (and spayed or neutered), introduce the rabbits in an area that is new to them both. The new situation in an unfamiliar area makes most rabbits slightly nervous, and they may band together to explore the new surroundings. You should also move their cages together so they get accustomed to each other’s smell and movements. If all goes well with the introductions for several days, you can try to expand their run time to the regular place where they will live. Keep a spray bottle handy to break up any fights that may occur. If there is any fighting, go back to the neutral space for a few more days. Eventually, they should become friends.

Some rabbits will fight, even in neutral territory. In these cases, always keep a spray bottle close at hand to break up any fights. A more stressful situation, such as a car ride is often needed to get these rabbits to accept each other. In all cases, be prepared to move slowly. It takes time to build a lasting relationship.

If it becomes apparent that the rabbits will not tolerate each other, you may have to keep them separate. This possibility should always be considered when bringing a new rabbit into your household, and accommodations will have to be made for separate territories in your home. Rabbits can also form friendships with other animals such as guinea pigs, cats, and some dogs. While in many situations it is the rabbit that harasses the cat, young adolescent cats may not always be trustworthy enough to be left unsupervised with a rabbit. Dogs should be very calm and well-trained.

Rabbits can live
for 12 years



Make sure you can commit
before you adopt or buy.

Many people mistakenly think that a rabbit will live around 2 to 3 years. Rabbits often live up to 12 plus years!!!!

Please do your research before adopting a rabbit!

ACTION for Rabbits

HOW DO I BRING MY RABBIT HOME

TRANSPORTING

The easiest way to transport your rabbit home is to use an appropriate-sized pet carrier. Cardboard boxes are not always the best because urine can soak through the bottom of the box onto your lap or car.

GETTING YOUR RABBIT USED TO ITS NEW HOME

When you first get your rabbit home give it a few days to adjust to its new surroundings before you handle it a lot.

When you do handle your rabbit make sure it is comfortable. You want the rabbit to learn it's a good experience being held.



How do I groom my rabbit?

Just as there are different kinds of rabbits, there are different kinds of rabbit fur. Each fur type has different grooming requirements.

Normal Fur

This type of fur is soft, medium in length, and easy to maintain. It is found on the majority of rabbit breeds including dwarfs, lops, and Dutch.

Normal fur should be groomed with a soft comb or brush, wet washcloth, or pumice stone at least once a week. A pumice stone may be found in a health food store, pet shop, or body and bath shop. Avoid harsh brushes because they can cause irritation to the rabbit's skin. When you groom your rabbit, work from head to tail following the natural direction the fur lays. If you are showing your rabbit, we recommend the pumice stone as your grooming tool.

Rex Fur

This fur is shorter and softer than normal fur. It stands upright, while other fur types lie along the rabbit's body. Rex fur was developed from a genetic mutation and is only found on the Rex and Mini-Rex breeds.

When grooming a rabbit with rex fur, use a wet washcloth or pumice stone. This type requires only occasional grooming. Harsh brushes should not be used. They can break the hair and damage the pelt.

Satin Fur

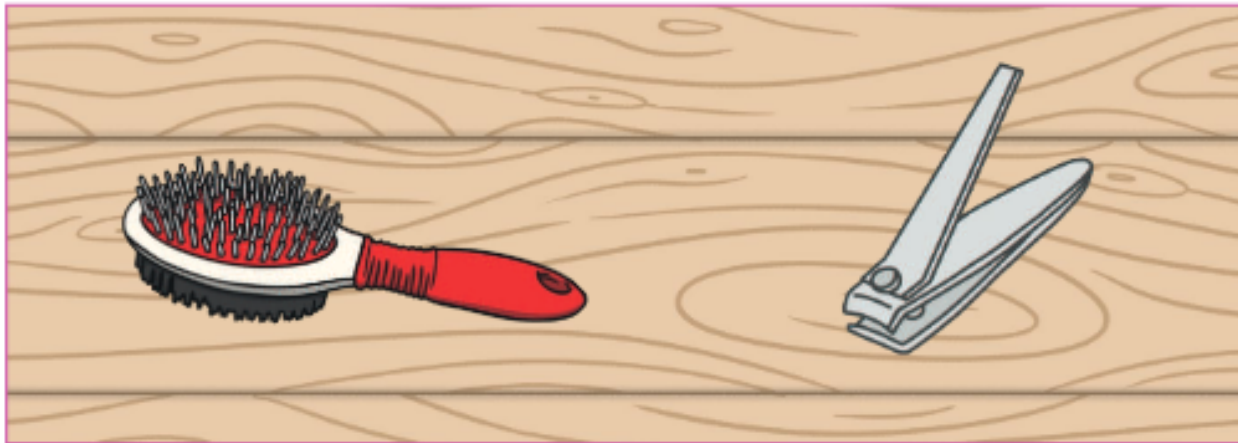
This fur can be recognized by its shiny appearance. It lays along the rabbit's body, reflecting light through its transparent guard hairs. It is silky, dense, and fine to the touch; separating it from all the other fur types. This fur is only found on Satins and Satin Angoras. (Satin Angoras should follow the guidelines for Wool.)

Satin rabbits may be groomed with a wet washcloth and pumice stone. Harsh brushes should be avoided so that the fur is not damaged. Fur on a well-groomed Satin is beautiful, so make sure to groom it gently and properly.

Wool

Wool is easily recognized due to its length, texture, and unique appearance. Wool rabbits have thick soft hair with great density and straight guard hairs. Wool is found on Angoras, American Fuzzy Lops, and Jersey Woolies. Satin Angoras have wool with satin sheen present in the guard hairs. It is the finest of all wools.

Wool rabbits require the greatest amount of grooming. They may be groomed with a comb or hand plucked. This should be done on a daily basis to avoid matting. Well-groomed wool rabbits are not only beautiful but are healthier.



Do I need to groom my rabbit?

Rabbits should be brushed every other day to remove loose hair. You can also check their nails, which need to be trimmed every other week and their weight.

Part of a thorough weekly wellbeing check is making sure your rabbits are clean and have no matted fur. It is important to avoid baths unless your vet suggests it for medical reasons.

Did you know...?

Vets recommend getting your rabbits vaccinated every year to prevent the spread of fatal diseases, such as Myxomatosis and two strains of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease. They can perform a wellbeing check at the same time.



How often does my rabbit need to visit the vet?

Rabbits should visit their vet at least once a year for a thorough check and vaccinations.

They are classed as exotic pets, so it is important to find a vet that specialises in exotic animals.

There are a number of pet insurances for rabbits and it is important to check they cover common health issues, like dental issues.

Vet visits and procedures can be expensive, often costing several hundred pounds, so if your rabbit isn't insured, you could grow a rabbit vet fund and discuss payment plans with your vet.

If your rabbit's behaviour changes, or they lose their appetite, make sure to contact your vet immediately.

How Do I Prepare for a Rabbit Emergency?

Dorothy Shanahan-Roberge
County Carrot Crunchers 4-H Club

It is important to take the time to examine your rabbit every day. If you notice anything different or possibly harmful, you can do your rabbit a favor by finding out what you can do to treat its condition. Below are the materials for a First Aid Kit that you might want to make and keep handy in case of a rabbit emergency.

What you need

How You Use It

Cotton Balls	These are used to clean wounds and apply medicine.
Cotton Swabs	Cotton swabs are used to remove ear wax and ear mite crust. They also can be used to swab the inside of a rabbit's ear with mineral oil to prevent and kill mites.
Gauze (rolled)	Rolled gauze is useful for wrapping up an infected wound.
Waterproof Adhesive Tape	Used to keep gauze on the wound.

Nail Clippers	Clippers are used to shorten the rabbit's toenails about once a month. Human nail clippers may be used if special safety clippers made for rabbits are not available.
Styptic Powder	This item can be found at feed stores or pet shops. It is useful when the quick in a rabbit's toenail begins to bleed if cut too short. When the nail is covered in styptic powder, the bleeding will decrease, then stop. Cornstarch is sometimes suggested, but it doesn't work very well.
Scissors	This item comes in handy for cutting bandages off and trimming hair from around wounds.
Eye Dropper	It may be necessary to give a rabbit medicine through an eye dropper in the mouth.

Papaya	Either dried papaya or papaya tablets can be given as a supplement to rabbits to prevent wool block.
Mineral Oil	This type of oil should be put in a rabbit ear every three days at ten-day intervals to treat ear mites.
Antibiotic Cream	This cream is soothing and suitable for treating sore hocks and other infections or cuts.
Hydrogen Peroxide & Rubbing Alcohol	Both of these easy to find solutions are good for sterilizing cuts and cleaning your own hands after cleaning the rabbit's cut.
Disinfectant	Ask your veterinarian to recommend a disinfectant for cages and equipment. This is especially important in cleaning up after a sick rabbit to avoid spreading the illness.
Gloves	It is important to protect yourself and your rabbit by wearing plastic gloves. By using gloves, an infection is less likely to occur.

To Make the Kit:

After you have collected all the materials above, transfer the liquid cleaners into small plastic bottles and then label them. Other materials should be placed in plastic bags to assure they are as clean as possible.

HOME SWEET HOME: CAGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Most rabbits have some sort of cage they can call their own. Even rabbits that have 24 hour free range of a house enjoy a place to go to nap, hide, or nibble hay. The rabbit's cage should be a pleasant place to spend time, and the bigger, the better (the space above a rabbit's habitat is almost always unused or "wasted" space, so consider building UP!). We recommend that you either build a condo (see below), use an "x pen" or other enclosure, or bunny-proof one room of your house (Ideally a family or rec room where the bunny can act as part of the family). You can buy the panels to make a condo at Target in the home organization section. They are called "Organize It" cubes. Throw away the connectors and connect the grids at several intersections with zip/electrical ties. A box of Organize It cubes costs around \$20. You can make a large condo with two boxes of Organize It grids. Look for more condo setups on www.bunnybuddies.org.



From the Basic...

To the Not-So-Basic

The Cage/Condo

Most cages for rabbits sold in pet stores are much too small for a rabbit who must spend long periods of time in her cage. They are also much more expensive than a condo you can build yourself. Many people have designed multi-level rabbit "condos" with ramps, enclosed hiding places, and multitudes of other features designed to keep a bunny occupied. A general rule of thumb in selecting a cage is to choose one that is at least four times the stretched out size of the adult rabbit. Try to provide at least four square feet for a small breed and nine square feet for a large breed. Multiple rabbits living together need even more space. Cages often come with wire mesh bottoms and a removable tray to catch urine and feces. While this is convenient in terms of cleaning, it can be very hard on a rabbit's feet. Constant exposure to this type of surface can lead to sore hocks, a condition in which the hair on the feet is worn away and ulcers form on the ankle. If you do purchase a cage with a wire floor, be sure to provide a board, piece of cardboard, a few sheets of newspaper, or a small grass mat for the rabbit to comfortably sit on. The tray itself should be lined with newspaper or filled with hay or a paper-based litter. Do not use pine or cedar shavings as the aromatics in the wood can cause serious liver and respiratory damage to your bunny. This damage can interfere with your rabbit's ability to metabolize anesthesia and cause serious complications during surgery. The New York State House Rabbit Society recommends that rabbits that have lived on pine or cedar shavings wait at least three months before undergoing surgery.

Another factor to consider in a cage is the size of the door. You should be able to fit a litter box in the cage. If you cannot fit a box in the cage and you are the creative sort, you may be able to enlarge the door somewhat with wire cutters. If you are still unable to fit a litter box through the door, or are planning on using the cage itself as a litter box, urine guards attached to the sides of the cage are helpful. Rabbits often back up into a corner to urinate and may end up directing their urine through the cage bars onto your carpet. Urine guards are also useful during litter training to protect your floors while the bunny is still learning good bathroom habits.

Placement of the doors is also important. The best cage has both a top opening door, which makes it easy for you to clean the cage, and a side door which can be opened to allow the rabbit to come and go freely (also be sure you can get to your bunny if an emergency requires you to retrieve her quickly). You may not even need to build a top except for just over the top floor of the condo. This will allow you to stand up inside the condo.

Cage Environment

A rabbit must have access to water and hay while in her cage. Water can be provided in a hanging bottle or in a heavy, tip-proof ceramic bowl. (A bottle may be easier for you to maintain, but not all rabbits will drink enough water from a bottle; a bowl is a more natural way of drinking. Watch to be sure your bunny is getting plenty of water.) Hay may be put loose on the cage floor, on one end of the litter box, in a separate box, or in a hay rack attached to the cage (a hay rack attached over the litter box will entice the bunny into the litter box and allow waste hay to fall into the box where it's easy to clean). If the bunny is to eat meals in her cage, heavy ceramic food dishes or cage crocks attached to the side of the cage should also be provided. A variety of toys should be in the cage to keep your rabbit occupied.

Cages should always be kept clean. White vinegar is an excellent cleaner for litter boxes and cage trays. Soiled litter should be changed at least once a week. Above all, the cage should be an inviting place for your bunny. The rabbit should view her cage as a safe home base which is all her own, and not as an unpleasant punishment. A rabbit can also be fairly territorial, and may defend her area if she feels threatened. Her space should be respected, and only entered for cleaning and feeding.

IMPORTANT FACTS ON SPAYING AND NEUTERING

- Just like cats and dogs, rabbits must be spayed and neutered. Due to over-breeding and the common misconception that rabbits are easy or “disposable” pets, there are more rabbits than there are good homes willing to take them.
- Rabbits are the third most common animal to be abandoned to animal shelters.
- Animal shelters which accept rabbits and rabbit rescue organization foster homes are nearly always filled to capacity.
- Many other rabbits are “set free” in fields and parks where they die.
- Aside from helping to relieve the massive overpopulation problem, spaying and neutering your rabbit has behavioral and medical benefits.
- When a rabbit hits puberty between 3 and 6 months of age, he most likely will become very territorial.
- Both male and female rabbits may aggressively defend their territory by grunting, lunging, and biting.
- Sexual activity in the form of mounting hands, feet, fuzzy bedroom slippers, and anything else available is also very common.
- While these behaviors are troublesome, one common behavior tops them all: spraying.
- Unneutered males and some unspayed females will spray large amounts of urine to mark territory and objects (such as an unsuspecting owner) as belonging to them.
- They frequently do this by leaping into the air and spinning in order to spray the urine over a large area.
- Unfortunately, this is when most rabbit owners give up their rabbits or move them to outdoor hutches.
- Neutering relieves most of these behavioral difficulties without changing your rabbit’s personality.
- Most importantly, for medical reasons female rabbits must always be spayed.
- Studies have found that 50 to 80% of unspayed female rabbits develop uterine and/or mammary tumors by five years of age.
- Spaying your female rabbit adds years to her life.

- Spaying and neutering, as with any other medical procedure, should be done only by a veterinarian with experience and training in treatment of rabbits.
- Male rabbits can be neutered as soon as their testicles descend (3 to 6 months).
- Most vets spay females at about 6 months.

Questions to Ask Your Vet Before Spay/Neuter Surgery

How many spays/neuters has the vet done?

Your vet should be seeing rabbits on a regular basis and be experienced in surgery.

What is the success rate?

90% is too low. Some deaths are bound to occur, but they should be very rare.

Should the rabbit be fasted prior to surgery?

The answer to this question should always be “No.” Rabbits cannot vomit, so this is not a problem during surgery. In addition, it is not a good idea to upset the delicate balance in the rabbit’s intestinal tract.

What anesthesia will be used?

Isoflurane is the most common anesthesia used in rabbits, but halothane can be used also. It depends on the vet’s training and experience.

In a spay, will both the ovaries and the uterus be removed?

The answer should always be “Yes.”

Will the rabbit need to stay overnight after the surgery?

If so, provide the vet with pellets, hay and veggies to feed. Many people also give the bunny an old t-shirt or washcloth that smells like home for security.

Be sure to ask your vet about pain management. Some vets include that in the cost of the surgery, and some send pain medication home for an extra fee. We highly recommend it for a day or two, as bunnies in pain tend not to eat. Not eating for even a short while can cause serious gastro-intestinal problems which can become life-threatening very quickly.

following the day of neuter surgery. Your vet may prefer a different drug, but you should insist upon some pain management protocol. Always ask for specific instructions on what to do once your bunny comes home. Call your vet immediately if the rabbit begins chewing on stitches, stops eating or drinking, or has any other difficulty

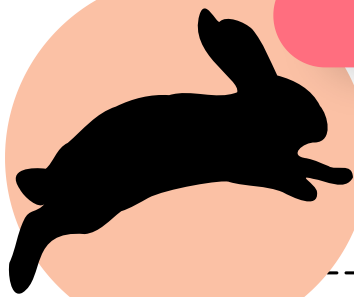
How do I get ready for an outdoor rabbit



Basic ideas to consider

Do not place the rabbit in direct sunlight. Rabbits are sensitive to heat and heatstroke can result.

Make sure the area is built from safe materials. Be sure that the rabbit cannot come in contact with paint and sharp wires or nails.



The specifics

When building or choosing a hutch make sure that it is large enough so that the rabbit can move around freely

A serious consideration

If you decide to keep your rabbit outside, remember that you cannot bring the rabbit inside during the winter because you think it's too cold. Rabbits need time to adjust.

What do I do?



Things to do daily

- Feeding and watering
- Observe your rabbits and their environment
- Keep things clean
- Handle your rabbits



Things to do weekly

- Clean cages
- Clean feeders
- Check Rabbit's health
- Check supplies
- Make necessary repairs

Things to do monthly

- Check nails
- Check digestive glands
- Check fans and air vents

Things to do seasonally

Cold-weather care - rabbits do quite well in cold weather and can survive temperatures well below zero. However you still need to provide protection from weather.
Hot-weather care - Fur coats that keep rabbits cozy in the winter can sometimes provide too much warmth during the summer months.

What do I do?



Winter time

- An outdoor rabbit hutch must be waterproof and should have a solid roof with a slight overhang to keep rain and snow out of the hutch. Placing the hutch against the side of a building or constructing windbreaks can also help reduce drafts and keep the hutch dry.



Summer time

- Outdoors, try to house your rabbit area under shade trees or where buildings can provide shade. If you don't have natural shade from trees, use awnings, sun umbrellas or shade sails to help keep your bunnies out of direct sunlight, especially strong southern exposure or afternoon sun.



SETUP

House setup

To set up the rabbit, we recommend utilizing a small area or roomy cage (or both.) Use a laundry room, bathroom, hallway blocked off with baby gates, or part of a larger room sectioned off using furniture, boxes, or other objects he can't scale or knock over. Choose a spot that gets some regular, not-too-noisy traffic, where he can see and hear but not be trampled by your daily routines. Start house training by providing at least one or two litterboxes. A fresh layer of grass hay on top will both encourage and reward him for hopping in. If you know what brand of chow he was eating, keep him on it for a while to minimize risk of digestive upset (unless it was rabbit junk-food that contained corn, seeds, and other unhealthy additions.) Fresh water in a bowl should be available at all times. Give him at least one cardboard box with two bunny-size doors cut, and a towel draped across one area of his cage, as hiding places. Start him on the road to good chewing habits by removing forbidden and dangerous temptations such as house plants, electric cords, and books.

- Provide permitted alternatives such as untreated straw, wicker, or sea-grass baskets and mats, cardboard tubes and boxes, plastic baby-toys for tossing, fruit-tree branches, and plenty of fresh hay.

Outside Setup

Rabbits can be perfectly happy living in the house or outside just so long as their physical and behavioral needs are cared for.

This means that they need a lot more than just a hutch! Our recommendation for a pair of average size rabbits is a single enclosed area of at least 4 feet by 4 feet by 2-3 feet high. This can include the sleeping quarters, and makes up a footprint (accessible area of the ground or floor) of 4 feet by 4 feet.

Just to be clear, the minimum space we recommend refers to the ground space available in the main enclosure. The upper floor of a two-story hutch does NOT count towards the footprint. Similarly, whilst raised platforms, tunnels and other connected areas are great for enrichment and are actively encouraged, they do not count towards the footprint, they are a nice bonus.

Guide to rabbit poops

Bunny poops

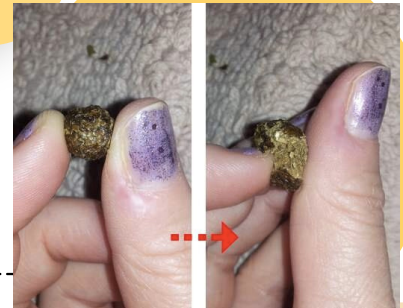


Average sized bunnies will make 200-300 poops per day. They should be uniform in size and shape which means rounded and pea to garbanzo sized. The size of your bunny won't always predict the size of their poops.

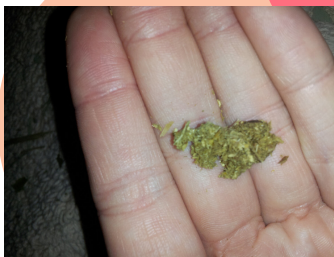


Healthy poops

They should also be friable. Friable means that they'll have a stable form, but if you apply gentle pressure and roll them between your fingers, they'll fall apart into something resembling sawdust as in the photo. Bunny poops can get pretty hard as they dry out, so test a fresh one if possible.



Inside healthy poops



Once you've tested the friability of a poop, inside you should find lots of chewed up hay. Testing them regularly will give you a baseline for what's normal for your bunny.

Color

Darker, more moist poops may be a sign that your bunny is getting too much protein in their diet. The poops in the lower left were from a bunny before a switch from orchard grass (a 'richer' hay) to timothy hay (upper right) after only 24 hours. After 48 hours the poops contained even more visible chewed up hay on their surface and continued to become lighter brown and larger.



Guide to rabbit poops

Ceotropes



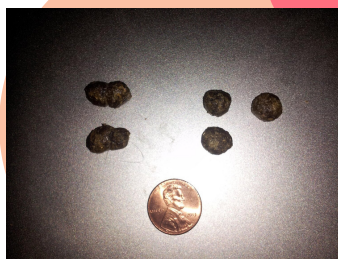
These poops are completely normal, usually bunnies eat them to ensure that they get enough protein and B vitamins in their diet. Sometimes bunnies will make more than normal when they're stressed or are getting too much sugar in their diet. This is okay as long as the bunny doesn't get a messy bottom (by sitting on the cecos) and it doesn't happen all the time. If it does, it might be time for a change of diet.

Linked by hair

These poops are linked together by shed hair. This isn't a problem - the spacing suggests that the bunny's gut is working normally and the hair is getting pushed through with all the other fiber. I would suggest giving the bunny more fresh greens (in addition to their free access to hay) to keep things hydrated and moving and brush them more regularly, but otherwise this bunny seems healthy.



Doubles and Singles



The 'doubles' at the top of this image occur when a bunny's gut slows for whatever reason and 2 pills collide during their formation creating a double poop. These can be caused by stress or advanced age. If your bunny starts making more than two or three doubles (or triples) per day, it might be time to ask your vet about a stimulant to get your bunny's gut back to a normal pace. Their pills should be uniform in size and shape like those at the bottom of the image.

Large egged shaped poops

These are not to be confused with double (or triple) poops or large normal poops. Large egg shaped poops can result from megacolon, this is a rare occurrence in rabbits that typically arises from genetics (En En) or occasionally after trauma. This condition is uncommon, but if you suspect your rabbit has it you should consult a specialist about appropriate long term care.



Guide to rabbit poops

Small round poops



Poops can become small for any number of reasons: stress is the most common one for small round poops. A strange noise or a stressful experience can cause your bunny's poops to be smaller temporarily. They should go back to normal within a few hours. Chronically small poops can indicate chronic pain, narrowing of the intestine or a partial blockage and a vet visit is an order.

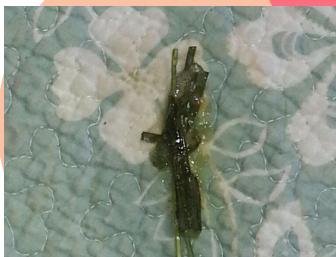


Small mishappen poops

Small misshapen poops can mean your bunny isn't eating enough. This can happen after surgery, if your bunny's teeth are hurting, or any other reason your bunny might not want to eat. Post surgery, this is a good sign - your bunny's digestive tract is working, there just isn't a lot of food in there. Otherwise, your bunny's poops are telling you to go see a vet.



Mucous on poops



Mucous in poops is common after a course of antibiotics, but can also be caused by anything that might irritate the intestinal lining. In this case, the bunny ate her first piece of parsley ever with such gusto that she forgot to chew. Similarly other large or irritating masses might be encased in mucous.

Mucous in poops

Mucous might be present for parasites or other very serious disorders like cecal impaction. A consult with a veterinarian is advised if you observe thick stringy mucous in your rabbit's poops, especially if the mucous is persistent.



Guide to rabbit poops

Cecal Dysbiosis



Cecal dysbiosis is poop that isn't completely formed and is doughy or mushy and is usually quite smelly. It can be caused by stress, illness or a diet too rich in starch, fat or sugar. This shouldn't be confused with normal cecotropes that have been smooshed by your rabbit's feet or bottom. If you're not sure, you may have to poke around to see if the mess comes apart in layers (cecotope) or if it's completely formless (cecal dysbiosis). The alternative is to watch for the next batch. You should monitor any bunny with dysbiosis for signs of illness. Elderly bunnies might have dysbiosis just from achy joints and ageing digestive tracts. You can take their temperature to rule out an infection. If the dysbiosis persists or isn't reduced by eliminating treats or stress, schedule a vet



Diarrhea

True diarrhea is very rare in rabbits and is cause for alarm. Rabbits with diarrhea may be infected with deadly parasites or possibly have been exposed to poisons. Very young rabbits with watery runny stools may have been weaned before they're ready. Regardless of the age of any rabbit with diarrhea, getting them to a vet as soon as possible should be first priority. If it's an option, bring some of the runny stool for your vet to examine.

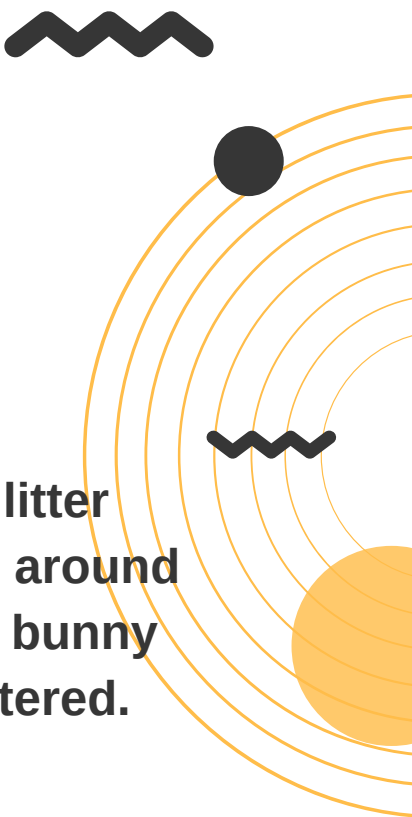


The benefits of litter box training



Let's be real: For pet parents, the biggest benefit of litter training your rabbit is less mess to clean up around the house, along with a fresher-smelling home. But did you know that litter training is also better for your bunny? There are several reasons why:

- Giving Them Their Own Space: When done properly, litter training creates a happy place for your rabbit to spend their time. Rabbits really enjoy their litter box and often spend time sleeping, eating and playing inside of it.
- **FREEDOM TO ROAM: ONCE YOUR RABBIT HAS BEEN PROPERLY TRAINED, THEY CAN HOP AROUND MORE FREELY, GIVING THEM MORE MENTAL STIMULATION—AND YOU'LL HAVE THE PEACE OF MIND KNOWING THAT THEY'LL HEAD TO THE BUNNY LITTER SPOT WHEN THEY NEED TO DO THEIR BUSINESS.**



When to start litter training

How early can you start litter training your rabbit? It's around 4 months old, after your bunny has been spayed or neutered.

IT'S BEST TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR RABBIT HAS BEEN SPAYED OR NEUTERED, WHICH IS RECOMMENDED FOR ALL RABBITS AROUND 4 MONTHS OLD.



One good method on training

The best way to litter train your rabbit is with dust free crystal cat litter, but with this method you will need a litter box that has a plastic grate above the litter so your rabbit doesn't eat the cat litter.

CHOOSING LITTER

- Paper bedding
- Pine horse bedding pellets
- Newspaper
- Critter Litter
- Cat dust free crystal litter



Picking out a litter box




- 1. A large size:** A large and roomy box is most comfortable for bunnies. Rabbits like to sleep, eat, and even play in their litter box, so you'll want to give them the space to do all that. The amount of room each rabbit needs will vary, but in general, a box with sides 20 inches or longer should do the trick.
- 2. At least one low edge:** A box with high edges will be difficult for your bunny to enter, which could interfere with the litter training process. Make sure your box has at least one low edge so it's easy for them to hop in.



How to litter train



- Place the bunny litter box in or around the space that they have been using for the bathroom. If your rabbit is free-roaming, this is often a corner of the room, or the place where their hay is.
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If your rabbit has been kept in an enclosure up until this point, their preferred spot is probably one corner of that enclosure. To transition them into a free-roaming lifestyle, remove the enclosure and place the litter box as close as possible to the area where the enclosure previously sat.



How to litter train

It's time to introduce your bunny to their new favorite spot to go. Place your rabbit in the litter box, then give them some healthy treats or pick some fluffy hay pieces to feed them. This will help your rabbit associate the litter box with positive experiences.



If you see your rabbit go outside of the litter box, clean up the urine and bring the droppings to the litter box. This helps them understand that this is the place they should be doing their business.

If your rabbit doesn't mind being picked up, you can also lift them and place them in the litter box when you see them raise their tail to urinate. Just be sure to pick up and hold them properly, and do not lift or carry your rabbit if they are not comfortable with it.

How to litter train

The final step in learning how to litter train a rabbit is to make sure the area is cleaned consistently. Change the bedding and hay at least once every other day—and do it daily, if possible. The cleaner your rabbit's litter box is, the more likely they'll use it. Also recommended soaking the litter box in a solution of 3 parts water and 1 part white vinegar every two to four weeks. Let the box soak for 15 minutes, then rinse well before drying and adding bedding and hay.



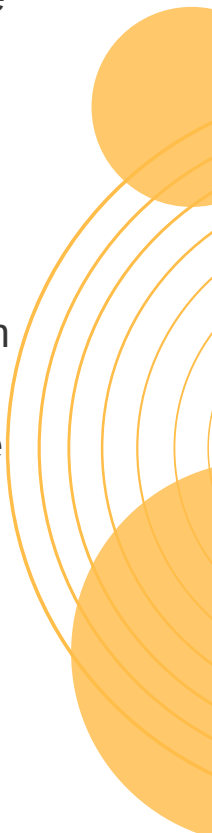


Common Rabbit Litter Training Problems and Solutions

Your Rabbit Keeps Going Outside of the Litter Box



Some rabbits have trouble adjusting to the litter box, especially if they're older or were spayed or neutered later in life. If your bunny doesn't pick up potty training right away, we recommend using an exercise pen to keep them close to their litter box. Give them a smaller space to roam, and they'll be more likely to do their business in the litter box. Then, when they start using the litter box regularly, you can expand the pen to give them more space, and over time, phase it out completely.




Common Rabbit Litter Training Problems and Solutions



Your Rabbit Sleeps in Their Litter Box

It might sound funny, but it's perfectly normal and natural for rabbits to sleep in their litter box. Just be sure that you clean it regularly to keep their new favorite spot odor-free.



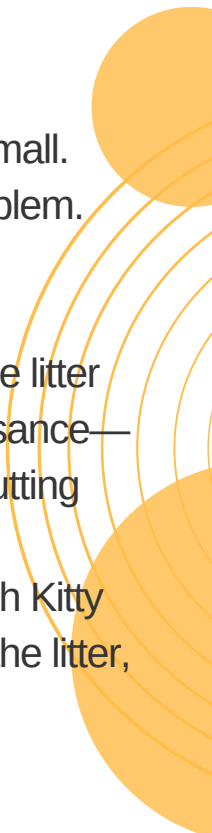
Your Rabbit Urinates Over the Edge

This is a sign that your rabbit litter box is too small. Upgrading to a larger size will likely fix the problem.

Your Rabbit Kicks Litter Out of the Box

Got a case of a digging rabbit? Cleaning up the litter your bunny kicks out of their box can be a nuisance—we totally get it. To mitigate the problem, try putting less litter in the box.

You can also place a grated mat, like the Fresh Kitty Grate Litter Mat, just outside the box to catch the litter, resulting in less cleanup for you.



BONDING RABBITS

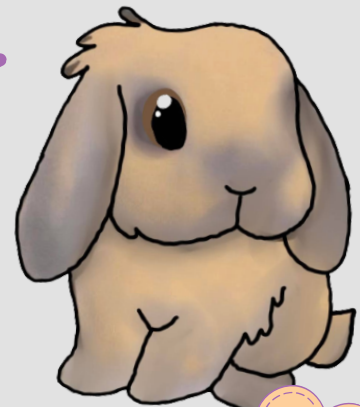
WE HELP WITH BONDING

WE COME TO YOUR LOCATION
AND HELP BOND YOUR RABBITS
TOGETHER FOR YOU.

JUST GO ON THE WEBSITE AND
FILL OUT A BONDING FORM
UNDER SERVICES

LEARN MORE ABOUT BONDING

- Before introducing two rabbits, both should be spayed or neutered. Bonding is generally easier when rabbits have been sterilized. Wait 2-4 weeks after the surgery before attempting introductions. This allows for the rabbit to heal and for his/her hormones to balance. Males can stay fertile for up to 2 weeks after neutering and may still exhibit hormonal behavior during this time.





BONDING

Rabbits are extremely territorial, and may exhibit behaviors such as chinning, and urinating, chasing, batting, biting, or mounting.

Introductions should be done in a neutral space to minimize the occurrence of these territorial behaviors.



You may want to wear thick gloves and a long-sleeved shirt for initial bonding sessions in case a fight ensues. A squirt of water on the nose can often prevent an aggressive behavior if it's done before the act begins, but is usually ineffective once a fight has begun. An initial fight could hinder future bonding success

Work with the rabbits daily for at least 15 minutes. The more often you work with them, the quicker the process will progress (usually). If the rabbits have a bad experience, or if one of the rabbits is elderly or has health considerations, you may need to take it slower, or take some time off.

Rabbits that are not fully bonded need to be kept separate when you are not with them. Once the rabbits have bonded, DO NOT separate them. If one rabbit needs to go to the vet, both need to go. If they're separated and one rabbit comes back with a different smell or change in health, they may reject each other and begin fighting.



BONDING

Bunnies have very different personalities. When two bunnies first meet, several outcomes may occur.

- The most likely outcome is tentative friendship. They may approach each other and sniff but will not groom each other.
- Sometimes one will chase the other. Watch for signs of a potential fight. If chasing occurs, they may need a longer introduction period before they fully bond and will need more work/attention to build the relationship.
- Sometimes one rabbit mounts the other. This is OK as long as the rabbit on the bottom (submissive) is accepting it. They are working out who's boss. The tables may turn later! Make sure both rabbits' noses can be seen so they are not biting in sensitive areas during the interaction. Mounting is a form of communication and a way of establishing dominance. It will likely stop or lessen over time as the rabbits' relationship solidifies.
- Less common, but possible, is love at first sight. The bunnies may groom each other or cuddle with each other.
- Also uncommon, but possible, is outright fighting. Separate the rabbits immediately to prevent them from hurting each other. This will be a harder relationship to build, but it can be done.