



HAMSTER CARE GUIDE: EXERCISE AND SOCIAL NEEDS

EXERCISE

Wheels: Most hamsters love to run on wheels! This is a great way for them to exercise and keep entertained. Be sure to purchase a wheel with a solid base (never wire) that is large enough for your hamster to use without an arch in his back.



Solid Base



Wire

Exercise Balls: Letting your hamster run in an exercise ball can be a terrific way for your pet to safely explore your house. Be sure to always closely monitor your hamster when they are in their exercise balls to ensure they don't get stuck or escape.

Floor Time: Take your hamster out in an area where you can easily catch it such as on your bed or a chair. Let it run around in your hands, lap, and arms. Once it is comfortable with you, you can let them run around and play in your designated hamster-proof area.

Hamsters are nocturnal, so spending time with them in the evenings will be the most rewarding. Keep this in mind when placing your pet's cage. Most hamsters will run on their wheel during the night.

SOCIAL NEEDS

Bonded Buddies: Unlike most pocket pets, hamsters are solitary creatures and will fight if housed together. Some dwarf hamsters can live together in pairs or groups, but it is not common or necessary unless they are already bonded.



TEACHING YOUR HAMSTER TO TRUST YOU

- Every time you approach your hamster's cage, bring a small treat for your pet. They will learn to associate you with pleasant things and look forward to your visits. Never feed treats through cage bars and always offer with a flat palm or your pet may start to nip fingers.
- Never grab a sleeping hamster. Always announce yourself by calling its name, rattling the water bottle, or gently tapping the cage. Once your pet is awake, hold your hand out flat for it to come to you.
- A great way to bond with your hamster is letting it out of its cage and spend time with you. The more you let them out to play, the sooner they will be comfortable with you. Use a trail of treats to coax them toward you.
- Speak softly to your hamster so it will get used to your voice.
- Coax your hamster to climb into your hand with a treat rather than forcefully picking it up.

KEY COMPONENTS OF TRAINING

- Trust
- Positive reinforcement
- Consistency
- Repetition
- Patience