



## **Rabbit Care Handbook**

Congratulations on your new bunny! Our rabbits come with lifetime support. At any point in your rabbit's life you can contact us with questions, comments, or concerns. We always love to hear updates and see pictures of the bunnies we've sold too!

We work to socialize all of our bunnies before they leave our barn to give them the opportunity to become gentle, affectionate pets and show animals. We handle them, turn them over on their backs, check their teeth and nails, and practice posing. They have also been exposed to the sights and sounds of other animals and people.

On your bunny's first day home, let him/her get used to their new environment. After that, you should handle your bunny all the time so he/she stays a sweet, social bunny!

If you look for bunny advice on the internet, you will find a WIDE variety of conflicting information. For example, rabbit rescue organizations like the House Rabbit Society does things very differently from people who show and breed rabbits; and even among the breeders, people do things a little differently. Between me and my Mom, we've been raising rabbits for over 20 years in a lot of different ways and we believe there is no right way. You need to choose the way that is best for you and your family. This handbook is our guide with information on how we raise our bunnies.

## Housing

We keep our bunnies in wire cages with resting mats and a wooden house that they can hide in, sit on top of, and chew. Wire keeps the rabbit's underside and feet much cleaner and more sanitary, and also allows for better ventilation. The other advantage to wire cages is that they are much easier to clean as the bunny's waste drops into the pan below, which you can easily pull out to clean and put fresh litter (pine shavings or stall pellets) in.

There are a couple of larger vendors that are at most rabbit shows and you can also order online from. KW Cages: <https://www.kwcages.com/> and Bass Equipment: <https://www.bassequipment.com/SCResult/Rabbit-Cages-232>



Bass Rabbit Starter Kit \$59



KW Rabbit Space Cage \$67



KW sells resting mats or you can get vinyl garden lattice



Petco or PetSmart sell wooden houses (Woodland)



Many people get a hutch to keep their rabbit in. The one below can be used indoors or outdoors. I found the one below [here](#). We do not recommend a hutch that sits directly on the ground if kept outside, as your bunny could dig out or predators could dig in.

Another option is a plastic bottom type of cage. You would fill it with litter (paper based only) and clean and replace the dirty litter regularly (every 2 or 3 days). Pet stores or Amazon sells many different varieties of these types of cages.



Another enclosure option is an exercise pen with a piece of linoleum or something else for the flooring. You would need a litter box in this case as well. Notice that the litter box is in the corner of the cage with a hay rack right above it. This is because rabbits tend to poop while eating, and they usually choose one corner to go in.

A risk with this type of enclosure is that your bunny may be able to climb or jump out. We use these pens when we can take our rabbits out and let them exercise while supervised.

Other items you will need are a water bottle (large size) or heavy ceramic water bowl, a heavy ceramic food bowl, a hay manger and toys. Good toy choices are made from wood, timothy hay, or the hard plastic like jingle balls for cats. If you need litter, be sure to get a paper-based litter - not cat litter.



## Feeding

We feed our bunnies plain timothy pellets and unlimited hay - orchard grass or timothy. Get any pellets that are approximately 15% protein and 20% fiber. We will give you a bag of our food so that you can transition your bunny. Our Mini-Rex and Dutch get between 1/3-1/2 a cup of pellets per day, and our Mini-Lops get between 1/2-3/4 cup of pellets per day after about 4 months of age. From weaning to 4 months, we free feed them.

For treats, you can give them these about every other day: 1 or 2 pieces of dried papaya (unsweetened!) or 1 tablespoon rolled barley and/or black oil sunflower seeds. The following treats shouldn't be given more than once or twice a week: slice of apple, chunk of banana, small carrot, a couple sprigs of either parsley, cilantro, basil, or spring greens. **Don't** give them lettuces like iceberg, as they are too watery and can give them diarrhea.

HOW TO TRANSITION A RABBIT TO NEW PELLETS		
exoticanimalsupplies.com		
Week	Old Food	New Food
1	75%	25%
2	50%	50%
3	25%	75%
4	New Food Only	

## Health

The most common health issue in rabbits is digestive issues, as they have very sensitive digestive systems. If your bunny has stopped eating, drinking, or pooping, the first thing we suspect is a digestive issue. The first thing we always try is giving Bene-bac probiotic gel and be sure they have plenty of hay and water. In fact, we usually give them a dose of Bene-bac whenever they've been in any stressful situation. If that doesn't help their appetite pretty quickly, try using Critical Care - a powdered food you mix with water and syringe feed your bunny. If that doesn't help, you'll need to see a vet.

Another common rabbit health issue is mites. If your bunny is scratching a lot and has white scaly flakes at the base of their neck and/or on their back, it's likely mites. You can treat with oral Ivermectin or topical Revolution flea treatment for cats and rabbits.

Anytime you go to a vet, it's very important to see a rabbit savvy vet! The House Rabbit Society keeps a list of rabbit vets per state: <https://rabbit.org/vet-listings/>



Rabbits need their nails trimmed about once a month. They have 5 nails on each of their front feet and 4 nails on each of their back feet. Small cat nail clippers work fine. The best way to do this is to have one person hold your bunny on their back, and another one clip the nails. On

each nail, there is a red or darker part which is the blood vessel. This is easier to see on rabbits with white toenails. The best way to avoid the blood vessel is to just trim off the sharp tips of the nails. If you do hit the vessel and they bleed, don't worry - just apply a generous helping of flour or cornstarch to the nail.

Your bunny will shed during different times of the year, generally when the seasons change. You can spray water on your hands and brush your bunny with your hands to remove the excess fur.



You can use an exercise pen to let your bunny run around inside or outside, as it's much safer than letting them roam free. We suggest getting one that has a mat that you can put on the bottom when inside to protect your floors, and on the top when outside to protect from predators and provide shade. Even when they are in the pen, **always keep an eye on them!**

Rabbits are much more sensitive to heat than to cold. If it's possible to keep/bring your bunny into an air-conditioned space when it's over 85/90 degrees, that is ideal. If not, some other ways to keep them cool are to put frozen plastic bottles of water in their cage, put a damp towel on top of their cage and use a fan, and mist them with cold water.



Rabbits will almost always use the same area for their toilet, so you can litter box train them. We suggest letting your rabbit have a few days in their new cage to select an area. When they begin using one area more than others, put a litter box in that area with a few droppings in the pan. Does (girl rabbits) seem to prefer 2 litter pans - one to use for potty and one to sleep in. Hanging a hay feeder on the side of the cage above the litter pan will encourage the use of the litter pan because many rabbits will potty while eating, so the hay feeder encourages them to use the proper spot as they will sit and munch on the hay for a while.



## 4H

We also encourage kids to get involved in 4H. In 4H, kids complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. 4H is a great way for kids to learn more about caring for their rabbit and also in showing their rabbit if they are interested in that. Go to [4-H.org](http://4-H.org) to learn more and find a local club!

### ENJOY YOUR NEW BUNNY!

**Website:** [reisasrainbowrabbitry.weebly.com](http://reisasrainbowrabbitry.weebly.com)

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