

Small Pet Rodent Awareness Week



Rat Care Sheet

WHAT IS A RAT?

Rats are active rodents who love to explore, enjoy interaction and are very intelligent. Females will typically be on the move whereas males are likely to be happy to have a cuddle on the sofa. They're very social so need to be in groups of 2 or more.

KEY INFORMATION

- Lifespan: 2-3 years
- Size: 23-28 cm
- Colours: brown, white, black, sand, cream, grey or ginger
- Nocturnal: yes

DIET

Complete rat food, for example Rat Rations along with fruit and vegetables and some cooked meats.

Rats require unlimited clean water in water bottle with a metal tube.

ACCOMMODATION

Indoors in a cage - min. size of 100cm x 60cm x 60cm. For example. Savic Royal Suite 95.

Rats need a large cage to live in with multiple levels made of metal or kiln dried pine. Rats are avid chewers so cannot be housed in a plastic or wooden cage or they will quickly eat their way out - wire/metal cages are the most suitable. Rats are very temperature sensitive and need to avoid hot rooms/conditions or can develop heat stroke. They themselves don't smell, but the toilet area in the cage can have an odour if not regularly changed - you can use litter trays to make cleaning easier.

Rats need hides/huts for sleeping.

ENRICHMENT

Provide a solid surface exercise wheel, for example a metal TicTac wheel, 16". Rats love to make a bed so will need paper based bedding, for example Softacard, Finacard or Bedmax or plain unscented toilet/kitchen roll.

Rats enjoy time out of their cage but it must be supervised to prevent any accidents such as chewing cables. They love climbing so hammocks, ropes and other items in their cage are

essential to prevent them getting bored. They brux and boggle when happy but are generally silent.

HANDLING

Rats are generally happy to be handled and will rarely bite you. They'll often perch on you whilst having a run around outside their cage and will take treats from your hand. They're great with children and will easily get used to playtime in the morning and after school.

NEUTERING

Rats do not need to be neutered unless they're due to be introduced as a mixed sex group - in this scenario, we recommend the males are neutered as it's a less invasive procedure in comparison to the females. Male groups can sometimes fall out when hormonal and neutering can help ease tension but doesn't guarantee they can be successfully re-bonded.

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<https://smallpetrodentawarenessweek.co.uk>