

The
Well Kept Rabbit

presents

Rabbit Care 101



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01. Proper Diet

These are general guidelines. Remember that nutrient requirements change over the life cycle: body size, age, pregnancy, extreme weight loss, and obesity all affect nutritional needs.

Remember:
**BORING IS
BETTER!**

Never feed muesli
(pellets with seeds,
nuts, corn, etc.)



1/8-1/4 cup

(2-4 TBSP) healthy
high fiber pellets per
5 lbs. per day

5%
PELLETS

10%
GREENS

Serve **1-2 packed cups** of a
mix of leafy greens per day
(aim for a variety of at least
3 different veggies/day).

Greens may be fed once per
day or divided into multiple
feedings per day.

5%
**HERBS &
TREATS**

Maximum of
2 TBSP daily
per 5 lbs body
weight of
healthy treats



Check out our
unique,
healthy treat
selection on
our website!

www.thewellkeptrabbit.com

80%
HAY

Unlimited 24/7 access to quality grass hay
(timothy, orchard, oat) is vital!



02. Water

Your bun should have
access to
**fresh,
filtered water
24/7**

Using a ceramic heavy
bottomed bowl is ideal.

IMPORTANT! If your bun came from a previous home where they only drank from a water bottle, be sure to provide both a bottle and a bowl, until they fully transition to a bowl to avoid dehydration.

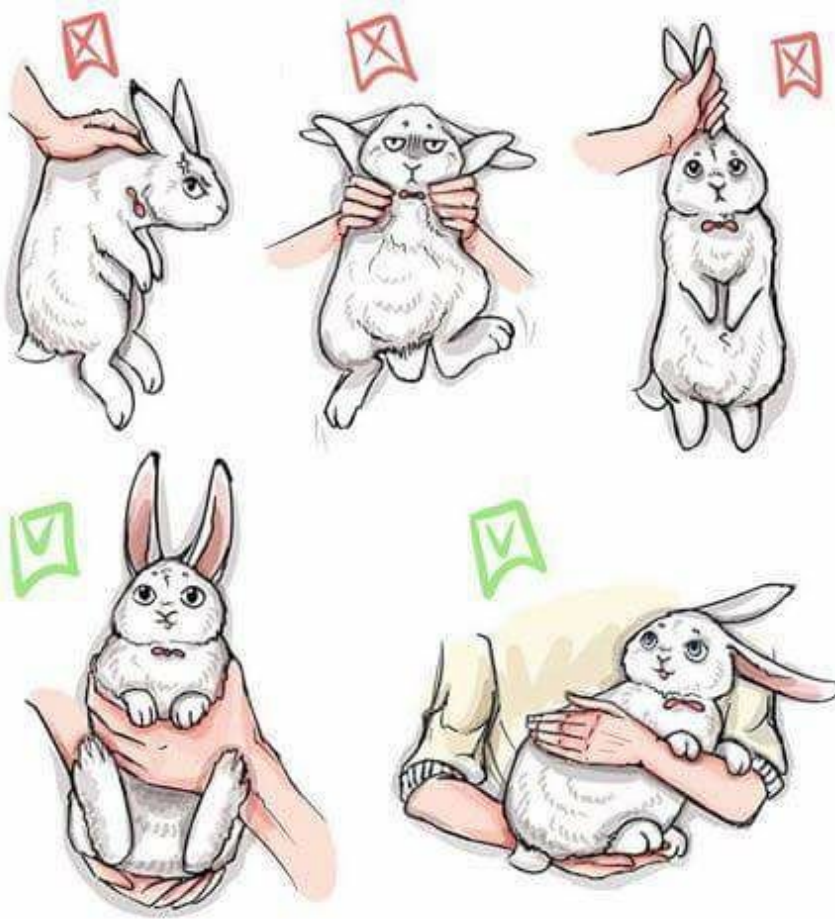
It takes 250
laps from a water
bottle to get just
1 tsp. of water!
That's a lot of
work! Thanks for
our bowl!



03. Handling

Rabbits' spines are very fragile so it's vital to understand how to handle your bun.

Contrary to popular belief, most rabbits do not enjoy being picked up (what prey animal would?!), however there are important times you will need to be able to handle your bun like a trip to the vet or for nail trimmings.



1. Place one hand under the chest
2. The other hand supports the back/bum/hind legs
3. Lift swiftly and securely and hold gently against your body

04. Housing

The x-pen is the most ideal housing if your bun is not able to have free-roam of a room/house.



never
house outdoors

ideal
temperature

60-75 °F



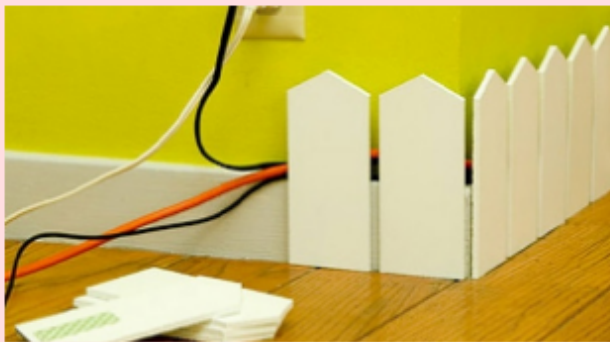
Always Provide:

- litter box
- plenty of hay
- toys
- hidey box
- fresh water
- rugs/blanket esp. if on uncarpeted floors



Bunny
Proofing

Rabbits LOVE to chew, some more than others. Cords, baseboards, furniture, carpet/rugs, are all favorites. It can be very dangerous (electrical shock, ingesting toxins, etc.) so be sure to securely block these off if necessary.



! Don't forget that many house plants are **toxic!**



There are many creative ways to bunny-proof!

05. Litter box Training

Rabbits are very easy to litter box train - they love to poo while they munch, so hay is vital for your litter box.



Set-Up:

1. Medium/large cat litter boxes work best (**no corner boxes!**)
2. Bottom layer of newspaper
3. Middle layer of safe litter (about 1 inch)
4. Top layer of hay
5. Optional: Hay-rack is ideal for foraging and you don't have to refill as often!



UNSAFE LITTERS

- Pine/cedar shavings (pine/wood stove pellets are safe)
- Clay/clumping litter
- Corn cob
- Silica gel crystals

Tips

*Your bun will naturally choose an area to go to the bathroom; put their litter box in this area.

*If they pee outside of the box at first, immediately wipe up with a paper towel and place it in litter box. Same with poos - they'll quickly start to learn where they are supposed to go!

*Clean up any messes ASAP with a 1:1 vinegar/water mixture (vinegar neutralizes the urine odor). Try out our **Natural Citrus Infused Cleaner!**

*If you see your bun in the litter box, give them a small treat to reward them.



06. Understanding Behavior

Understanding your bun's behavior is very important – especially because as prey animals they tend to hide illness, making it vital that you know their normal behaviors so that you also know when they are "off".

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.

2



Rabbits who are worried or anxious may hide.

An angry or very unhappy rabbit

These rabbits are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1



Rabbit turns and moves away flicking the back feet. Ears may be held against the back.

2



Rabbit is sitting up on back legs with front paws raised displaying boxing behaviour. Ears pointed upwards and facing outwards, rabbit may be growling.

3



Rabbit is standing tense, with back legs thumping on the ground. Tail raised, ears pointing upwards and slightly turned outwards, facial muscles are tense and pupils dilated.

4



Rabbit is standing tense with body down and weight towards the back, head tilted upwards, mouth open and teeth visible. Ears held back and lowered, tail raised, pupils dilated.

07. Health

Ensure daily that your bunny is eating and has produced normal droppings. An easy way to do this is to do a "treat check" in the AM and PM (to check appetite) and cover their poops daily with fresh hay to be able to clearly monitor that their fresh poops are normal (if your bun hasn't pooped or eaten for 12-24 hours they need to see a rabbit savvy vet ASAP!)



● **Changes to Grooming**
Soiled or dirty fur, dirty ears, excessive scratching, chewing fur, wet fur around eyes, chin or bottom.



● **Changes to Activity**
Less active than normal, slower to greet you, aggressive, spending less time playing, exploring or interacting.



● **Changes to Movement**
Limping, stumbling, dragging back legs, uncoordinated, tilting to one side or reluctant to move.



● **Changes to Eating Habits**
A change in food preferences, only eating favourite foods, eating less, dropping food or chewing oddly.
● Not eating at all is an emergency.

Rabbit's instincts are to hide signs of illness; they often show little outward sign of being unwell until they are very sick. The first hint of potential illness are subtle changes in your rabbit's behaviour and routine that make you feel "something's not quite right". If you notice a change you are worried about, call your vet to set up an appointment.



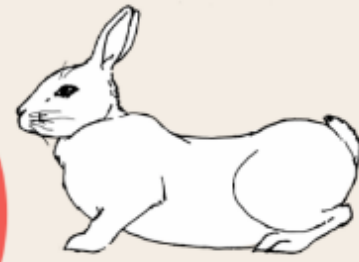
● **Changes to Toilet Habits**
Losing litter training, increased weeing, small or odd shaped droppings.
● Diarrhoea or producing no droppings are emergencies.



● **Signs of Pain**
Sitting huddled/hunched up, eyes tense or semi closed, reluctant to move, and may grind their teeth.

Some health issues should be treated as an emergency and you'll need to call your vet (day or night!) and go straight there:

Unresponsive
Difficulty Breathing
Not eating/pooping
Diarrhoea (Liquid/watery poop)
Flystrike
Trauma
Bleeding
Seizure



● **Stomach Pressing (Pain)**
Pressing the stomach to the floor, being restless and unable to find a comfortable position to sit or lie in.



● **Seizure**
Rapid twitching, kicking or shaking. May stagger or appear disorientated, but not necessarily fall over.



● **Unresponsive**
Laying on side limp, floppy, cold. Some rabbits sleep in this position but will act normally when disturbed.



● **Difficulty Breathing**
Mouth breathing (rabbits usually breath through their nose), laboured breathing, wheezing or blue lips,

08. Grooming



You will need to help your bunny groom by brushing them or using your hands to remove excess fur, especially for longer haired rabbits. If they ingest too much fur, it could create a blockage in their GI tract.

This is very dangerous because unlike cats, rabbits cannot vomit.

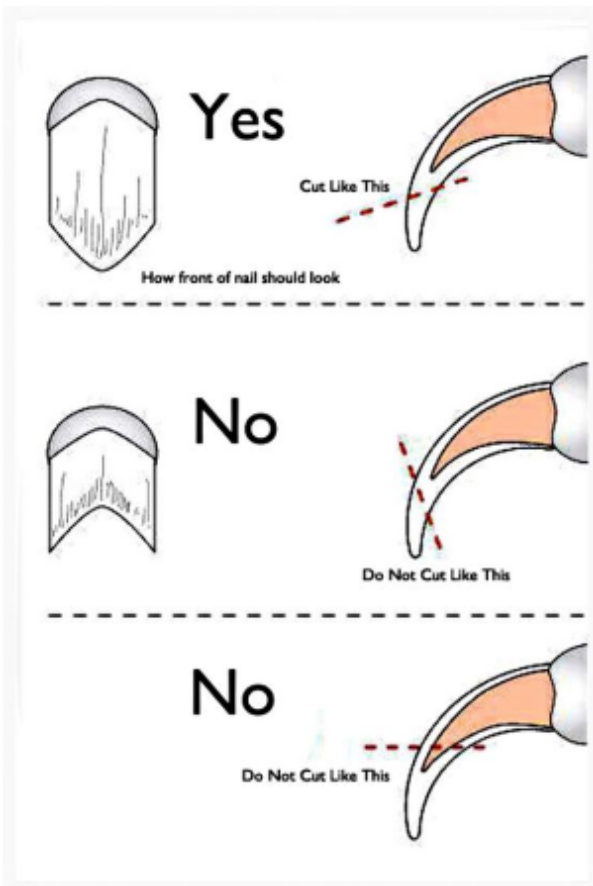
- Rabbits shed
- 4 times a year

2 heavy molts & 2 lighter ones



trim nails every 6-8 weeks

There is a "quick" in the nail that will bleed if you trim too far back, so take care to avoid this. A product called KwikStop or flour/cornstarch will stop the bleeding.



DO NOT BATHE YOUR RABBIT

Rabbits can easily die from shock or hypothermia when given a bath. They can also get ear infections and pneumonia. Rabbits bathe themselves regularly, just like cats do. When living in clean conditions, rabbits should never need a bath.

09. Enrichment



**3-4
hours/day**

roam time

Exercise time outside of their housing area helps prevent GI stasis, urinary tract disease, bladder stones, muscle atrophy, obesity, and **BOREDOM** (which causes depression and can lead to destructive behaviors like chewing and digging)!

Bunnies need toys for enrichment just like us! There are plenty of free/cheap options like toilet paper rolls filled with hay, cardboard boxes, & phonebooks just to name a few. **We also offer a wide variety of safe, handmade Boredom Buster toys in the shop!**



Your bun can enjoy the outdoors but only if you have a safe, enclosed area and they are supervised the **ENTIRE** time. Keep in mind that many plants can be toxic, so you'll need to do your research first. X-pens are great to use for an enclosed area.

10. Resources

This guide is just a brief introduction into rabbit care. Please continue your education through the recommended resources below!

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1) We highly recommend watching a video series by rabbit lover Amy Sedaris and rabbit expert Mary Cotter!

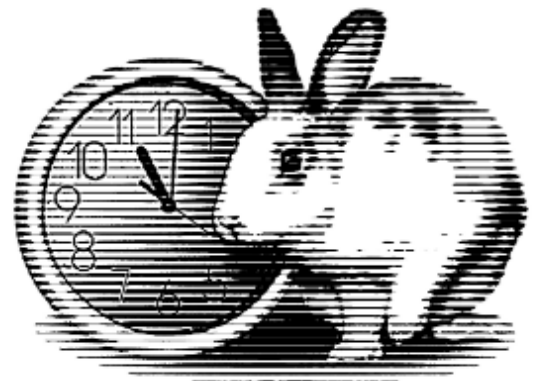
Video link: <https://www.howcast.com/guides/1187-how-to-take-care-of-a-pet-rabbit/>

2) Helpful Websites

www.rabbit.org (the House Rabbit Society website - most trusted resource)

www.myhouserabbit.com

www.best4bunny.com



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY



3) Pinterest is a great way to find lots of unique ideas like toys, housing, and care.

Link to our Pinterest page:

<https://www.pinterest.com/thewellkeptrabbit/of-bunnies/>

Contact

For any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at thewellkeptrabbit@gmail.com!



Let's be friends!



@thewellkeptrabbit



The creator of this Rabbit Care 101 guide, Anna, is an Educator for the House Rabbit Society and owns **The Well Kept Rabbit**, a small family-owned business offering all-natural, handmade treats & goods for small pets. She actively promotes the welfare of house rabbits, is the **Small Pet Mentor** for her local rescue, and aims to revolutionize small pet care.

