



# PET RAT CARE

**Average Adult Size:** 9-11 inches (plus tail)    **Average Lifespan:** 2-3 years

## **General Information**

Pet rats are intelligent, social, and cuddly pets. Their simple care and friendly nature make them a good choice for children or adults, and they will provide hours of entertainment and companionship every day. They can learn to perform tricks and love to play, they are even ticklish! There are several different breeds of rats to choose from as well, from the large eared dumbo rat, to curly haired rex rats, or hairless!

## **Enclosure**

Lack of exercise can quickly lead to an overweight and depressed rat. Rats also like living in pairs and groups so a large cage is a must! A multilevel, wire cage with a footprint of at least 2 square feet is sufficient for a pair, though bigger is always better along with lots of time to exercise and play out of the cage. When choosing a cage, choose wire walls over glass. Glass tanks don't offer enough ventilation. The space between the wires should be half an inch or less, rats are sneaky and flexible escape artists, especially when they are young. Wire floors however should be avoided or covered with softer textures that are better for the rat's feet.

## **Cage location and accessories**

Your cage should be in a frequently visited room of the house, rats like to be part of daily activities. Avoid drafty windows, vents, or areas with lots of temperature swings. Providing natural or household light during the day and keeping the room dark at night will establish a day/night cycle to encourage natural behavior and sleep. The cage should have multiple rat-safe toys of different types, places to hide, and soft paper-based bedding to nest in. Spot clean daily to remove soiled bedding; change out all bedding regularly to avoid smell build up. Change out toys often as they become worn out or the rats lose interest. A dish for food and a water bottle will complete the set up.

## **Diet**

Rats naturally eat a wide variety of foods, so a balanced pellet or block diet makes the best base. In addition to the base diet, vegetables, fruits, seeds, and other foods can be given in small amounts for variety. Always research new foods before offering them to your pet to make sure they are safe. Keep fresh, clean water available at all times, in either a bottle or bowl.

## **Grooming**

Contrary to popular myths, rats are quite clean! They tend to potty mainly in one area and they bathe themselves constantly. Baths are rarely necessary and the only grooming they often need help with is nail trimming. A quick trim with nail clippers, with care to avoid the sensitive quick of the nail, is all it takes.

## **Keeping more than one:**

Rats are very social! They do best when kept in same-sex pairs or groups and they also enjoy human company. Young rats usually take new introductions well, while older rats may need a little time to get used to each other.

**Zamzoo care sheets are intended to cover the basics of animal care, for more information we encourage you to talk to our experts and do further research!**