

## Gerbil FAQs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



If you are thinking about getting a gerbil or you just brought one home, then this list of gerbil questions and answers is just for you! We will go over all sorts of information, such as what gerbils eat, what kind of cage they need, and more to make sure you can be a great gerbil owner.

### How long do gerbils live?

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On average, gerbils live to be two to three years old.

### What do gerbils eat?

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You should feed your gerbil a high quality gerbil diet. You should also supplement her regular pellet food with a little bit of a loose seed mix, fresh vegetables, and fresh fruit. Gerbils need lots and lots of clean, fresh water every day.

### Where should my gerbil live?

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To keep her safe, your gerbil should live in a cage. Because gerbils need a lot of bedding in the bottom of their cage, the best cages are aquariums or cages with deep bases. Avoid plastic cages - gerbils like to chew, and a plastic cage will not last as long as a wire or glass cage. The cage you choose should be at least 12" x 24" by 12" tall. Bigger cages are even better because gerbils are very active.

## What should I put in my gerbil's cage?

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You should put the following things in your gerbil's cage:

- A layer of bedding at least two or three inches deep for digging and burrowing
- A wood or ceramic nest box with nesting material inside
- Things for climbing, such as pieces of wood, rocks, ladders, ramps and platforms
- Toys that are safe for your gerbil to chew on
- Water bottle with a metal spout
- Heavy ceramic food dish
- Exercise wheel with a solid surface

## What kind of bedding should I use in my gerbil's cage?

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Never use pine or cedar bedding. If you're going to use a wood shaving bedding, use Aspen bedding. You can also use wood fiber bedding.

## Which toys are safe for my gerbil?

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Gerbils chew on their toys, so never give your gerbil plastic toys. Safe toys include wooden chew toys, cardboard boxes, hay, branches, and pieces of wood.

## What kind of exercise should my gerbil have?

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Gerbils are very active, so they need lots of exercise. Putting an exercise wheel in the cage will help. Just make sure to choose one with a solid surface, as your gerbil could catch her tail or a foot in a wheel with rungs. When you choose toys, look for toys that are entertaining and fun, such as chew toys, hide outs, and climbing toys. The toys should not be plastic, and they should not have small pieces or moving parts. Another thing you can do to give your gerbil

lots of chances for exercise is let her out of her cage every day in a safe, gerbil-proof room or a [Run-About Ball](#).

### How can I tame my gerbil?

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Taming your gerbil will take some time, and you need to do it slowly so she learns to trust you. Take the following steps to tame your gerbil:

- Speak to your gerbil through the cage.
- Sit next to the cage and spend time with her.
- Offer a treat when she approaches you sitting at the side of her cage.
- Put the treat in your hand so she eats out of your hand.
- Put the treat on your arm so she climbs into your hand to eat it, then let her climb back off your hand.

After a little while, she will trust you enough to let you hold her. Make sure to handle her regularly and give her lots of time out of her cage. Don't bother her while she's sleeping, or you may end up with a grumpy gerbil on your hands!

### How can I hold my gerbil?

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Never pick your gerbil up by the tail! The safe way to hold your gerbil is cupped gently in the palm of your hand. Allow her to climb up into your hand rather than picking her up.

### How should I clean up after my gerbil?

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There are a few things you will need to do to keep your gerbil's home clean and healthy for her. Some of the chores will need to be done every day, and others will need to be done weekly.

#### Daily:

- Clean up soiled, wet bedding

- Give her fresh food and water
- Check her toys to make sure they are still safe for her

**Weekly:**

- Change all of her bedding
- Wash and disinfect the cage, shelves, and any other accessories

You will also need to clean your gerbil by giving her a dust bath every couple weeks. A dust bath is a ceramic dish or hideout that you fill with chinchilla dust. Your gerbil rolls around in it to clean herself.

## What is my gerbil doing when....

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**He rubs his stomach on things in his cage?**

He has scent glands on his abdomen, and is marking toys and cage accessories as his.

**She touches or rubs noses with me or another gerbil?**

That is how a gerbil greets a familiar gerbil or person, and it means that she's your friend.

**She winks?**

Gerbils wink when they're happy or thankful for something. They will also wink when they want to show that they are submissive. If you wink at your gerbil, she may wink back at you!