Habitat Tips for Mice & Rats

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Cage size, materials, and accessories

Other than size, mice and rats have essentially the same requirements for housing. A wire cage is best, allowing for 12 x 24 inches of floor space for 2 rats or 4-5 mice. Glass cages do not allow for good ventilation. The wire cage also encourages your pet's instinct for climbing and offers exercise and stimulation. Your design can expand horizontally or vertically, depending on the space available to accommodate ramps, wheels, climbing platforms, ladders, and other toys (toilet paper and paper towel cardboard rolls make wonderful tunnels for running). Mice and rats need and enjoy a lot of exercise, so be sure the cage and accessories can fill this need.

Bedding

Bedding material serves many purposes, including: providing a sense of security, insulation, absorbing moisture from waste materials and also as nesting material during breeding. The ideal bedding material should be clean, nontoxic, and free of oils or preservatives. Since heavily soiled areas of the bedding should be removed daily, bedding material should also be easy to replace, relatively dust free and absorbent for convenient maintenance.

There are a variety of bedding materials available, including: wood shavings,

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shredded paper, processed corncobs, and pellets. However, when using wood shavings, avoid cedar or pine shavings. Aspen shavings are the preferred bedding material if using wood shavings.

Recycled shredded paper is another good choice and is environmentally friendly. Shredded newspaper can be used as well but be sure it is printed using soy-based ink. Conventional newsprint ink can be harmful to your pets if ingested. Shredded paper towels work well for "nesting" areas usually created in one corner of your pet's environment. Commercially available bedding is also readily accepted by small pets and is hassle-free for you.

To provide a clean and healthy environment for you and your pet, the entire cage, including accessories, should be thoroughly cleaned and the bedding changed once a week. Heavily soiled areas should be removed daily. Selecting the appropriate bedding material can make maintenance more convenient and create a clean and safe environment for your pet.

Cage location

Ideal cage location is in a relatively quiet area which is still within view of what is going on in the home. Placing the cage on a table or stand will help your mice or rats feel more secure. Avoid placing the cage in direct sunlight or drafty areas and prevent access to the cage by other household pets, especially cats and dogs.

WE RECOMMEND

Flying Saucer
Solid saucer-style toy protects your pet's tail and feet and won't squeak!

Toy Kits for Small Pets
Bring out natural foraging behaviors to curb cage boredom.

Chewbular Play Tube
Your small animal can charge-through in play or chew-through to help wear and clean her teeth.

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