

Rat Glossary of Terms

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Bedding

There are a few different kinds of bedding you should use in your rat's cage. Use a [wood shaving](#) (avoid cedar and pine), shredded paper, or processed [corn cob bedding](#) on the bottom of your rat's cage. Use a nesting material in his nest box for shredding and sleeping. Use [hammocks](#), [hanging cubes](#), and other fabric bedding items for climbing, playing, and sleeping.



Block diet

A [block diet](#) is rat food that is formed into very large pellets. They are nutritionally complete, and they give your rat a chance to gnaw, which is important. A block diet should make up the bulk of your rat's daily diet.

Buck

A male rat.

Bumblefoot

A disease that rats can get from walking around on wire cage floors. Bumblefoot is present if your rat has small red bumps and lumps on the bottom of his feet. They start out small and can become large and scabbed over. To prevent it, cover wire floors with wood or another material, use soft bedding material, and make sure your rat gets lots of exercise.



Cage

Your rat will live in a [cage](#). Tall, wire cages are the best, and they provide your rat with a place to climb.

Chew toys

Like other rodents, your rat has teeth that continue to grow, so you should give him wooden chew toys to wear his teeth down. [Natural wood chews](#) and [chew treats](#) are good as well.



Crepuscular

A crepuscular animal is one that is awake most at dusk and dawn. Rats are mostly crepuscular because they are most active for a few hours around dusk and dawn, and they spend a good part of the rest of the day sleeping.

Daily diet

A daily diet is what your rat should eat every day. It should be high in fiber and low in fat and calories. His daily diet should include a [high quality rat food](#) and fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grain pastas and breads, or yogurt.



Doe

A female rat.

Exercise Wheel

Rats can get lots of needed activity on an exercise wheel. Make sure to choose one with a solid surface, such as the [Silent Spinner](#). Rats need an exercise wheel that measures at least 11".



Fancy rat

A "fancy" rat has different, more exotic coat colors, and their coat type can be straight, curly or stain. Fancy rats are the result of selective breeding by people.



Food bowl

Your rat should eat his food out of a [food bowl](#), and we recommend using a bowl that attaches to the side of the cage.

Hammock

A [hammock](#) is a piece of fabric that hangs from the walls or top of your rat's cage. They give your rat a place to climb and play and a place to sleep. The more hammocks you are able to put in your rat's cage, the more room he'll have to play.



Kitten

A baby rat.

Nest box

The nest box should be filled with [nesting material](#) for your rat to shred and create a comfortable nest for himself.

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Nocturnal

A nocturnal animal is one that is awake mostly at night. Rats are generally nocturnal, but most are crepuscular.

Pellet diet

A [pellet diet](#) is an alternative to a block diet for rats. Avoid pellet mixes that contain seeds and nuts.

Quick

The quick is the red line that runs up the middle of your rat's nails. When you clip his nails once every one or two months, be sure to just clip the tip of the nail and avoid the quick.

Rat proof

You need to do this before you let your rat out of the cage to play each day. Rat proofing is when you make sure that your room is safe for your rat. Cover or move all cords, rubber items, and anything else he will chew on.

Toys

Rats need [toys](#) inside and outside their cage to keep them happy and active. Your rat will like toys that he can explore, chew, hide, climb, shred, carry, and push. Give him lots of tunnels, [tubes](#), hanging bird toys, and other toys.

Water bottle

To keep your rat's water clean and fresh, use a water bottle. Change and wash out the [water bottle](#) each day.