

I deserve a FOREVER home. Only take me if you can keep me for 12+ years and can afford me. I wasn't born to be passed around, made to feel unwanted/unloved/ worthless, and be dumped outside where I can't survive on my own. You underestimate the psychological damage rehoming me will cause and what I'll need to deal with for the rest of my life because of it. I'll also need to hope that my new family will be patient with me while I work through these emotions/PTSD that I now have from being rehomed and abandoned.



## WHY A RABBIT?

Understanding rabbits and building a strong bond with them takes time and patience. They don't give their trust and affection easily; you have to earn it. Making when they do show you their love incredibly rewarding. Every rabbit has a unique personality, just like people – no two are exactly the same. To truly connect with your rabbit and know what makes them happy or unhappy, spending quality time together is essential. There's no fixed rulebook for understanding them or caring for them; it's more like a helpful guide. This means you'll always be learning and adapting to their needs. Rabbits are like little divas at times, they may express themselves by stomping or even having a little tantrum and will ignore you. They need your attention and care every single day. While this may sound like a lot of work, the bond you'll create is truly special.

## GETTING A PET

Getting any pet should always be a carefully considered decision, not a spontaneous one. When you bring a pet into your life, you're committing to caring for another living being with unique needs. Rabbits, like all animals, require stability and shouldn't be passed around from one home to another. They thrive with a consistent environment and the love of a dedicated owner. Owning a rabbit involves thinking through all aspects of their care, doing thorough research, and planning your budget. Please take a moment to flip to the back of this brochure and ask yourself some important questions before making the commitment and bringing a rabbit into your home.

# IS A RABBIT FOR ME?

## ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Are you, the primary caregiver, 18+ years of age?
- Do you have the ability to get to the vet and emergency hospital as needed?
- Have you taken at least one week to think this through?
- Are you ok with a 12+ YEAR commitment?
- Have you done sufficient research on them and their needs?
- Are you ok with some mild/moderate destruction of your home?
- Are you ok with nips/bites here or there?
- Rabbits need a friend to thrive – Can you afford 2 rabbits to make sure their needs are being met?
- Do you have 3 hours to let them free roam, plus another 2 hours for one on one attention per day?
- Are you ok with spending \$80-\$120 a month per rabbit in basic care expenses?
- Rabbits (both sexes) require being fixed – Can you afford \$700-\$1000 each?
- Rabbits require an annual vaccine – Can you afford \$110-\$220 each on top of an annual wellness check which costs \$110-\$157?
- Do you have the space, bare minimum 4X4 x-pen, and do you have their area set up at home already?
- Are you able to afford a regular and emergency vet appointment? (\$200-\$1000+)
- They are NOT allowed to be left alone 12+ hours a day, even 10 hours away is pushing it. Are you able to be home especially through the night?
- Do you have a rabbit savvy bun-sitter? Are you aware of their fees?
- Have you looked around to find a rabbit savvy vet near you who is accepting new clients?
- Is your landlord/owner of your residence ok with a rabbit and some destruction?
- Are you prepared to give them a forever home no matter where life takes you and not just a home for right now?
- Have you thought about doing a foster to adopt to see if a rabbit fits your lifestyle and you're not allergic to them or their hay?

If any of your answers were "no" or if you felt uncertain about any of these points, it might be wise to wait before bringing a rabbit into your life. Taking the time to become better prepared and thoroughly researching their needs is crucial. If you have questions or need more information, don't hesitate to reach out to Hagrid's Haven Rabbit Rescue. You can easily find us on Facebook and Instagram. We're here to help you make the best decision for both you and your potential new rabbit companion.



## Basic RABBIT CARE

Rescue Owner: Breanna Stead

# What you need to know:



## LIVING AREA, DIET, COMMON ILLNESSES, & OTHER SPECIFIC NEEDS

Rabbits require a delicate balance of everything in their life from diet, to exercise, attention, and more. If these rule are not adhered to you risk your rabbit falling ill and depending what it is - it can be fatal within 24 hours.

### • Living Area

Rabbits need an area that lets them take **at least 3 hops in each direction from the center without running into anything**, making an x-pen a suitable space for them if they aren't able to be 100% free-roam. Anything smaller would be inadequate and even lead to medical issues. Opting for **water bowls** is ideal for rabbits as they encourage a more natural body position and allow them to consume more filtered water at one time. Research has shown that rabbits with bowls instead of bottles stay better hydrated. Providing a soft surface for their feet is essential; a **puzzle mat/carpet and fleece blankets** can be added to their living area. This not only helps protect the floor by absorbing liquids but also enhances traction and prevents sore hocks. Their feet go from fur right to bone, there is no padding leading to pressure sores called sore hocks. To prevent destructive behavior, rabbits require stimulation. **Toys, chew items, stuffed animals, and hideys keep them engaged.** Their litter box should be spacious enough for their entire body while leaving room for hay. **Cleaning their litter daily** is a must, their fecal pellets and urine out-put help us monitor their health.

### • Free Roam & Attention

Rabbits, like cats and dogs, thrive when given complete freedom to roam 24/7. With their natural instincts leading to some destructiveness, owners have opted to house them in an x-pen. Rabbits require a **bare minimum of 3 hours of free roaming plus another 2 hours of one-on-one attention daily** to maintain their well-being. Please understand as well, the goal is to provide our furry companions with an environment where all their needs are not just met but exceeded. **Failing to provide sufficient exercise can result in GI Stasis**, a potentially fatal condition if left untreated. **Neglecting to offer adequate attention can lead to negative behavioral changes such as sadness, withdrawal, aggression, and reluctance to interact with humans.** These emotional challenges can also contribute to the development of GI Stasis which can require vet intervention.

### • Diet

A well-balanced rabbit diet consists of: 80% hay, 15% lettuce, 4.9% side vegetables, and 0.1% treats. **The appropriate quantity and type of food depends on their age, weight, and if they are pregnant or nursing.** To gain a deeper understanding of rabbit-approved diets, check out our *Nutritional Guideline for Domestic Buns* brochure. Our *Nutritional Guide – Examples* brochure is another excellent brochure that offers meal examples for different life stages and weights. Remember, treats should not be introduced too early, this can disrupt their gut flora and predispose them to GI stasis. **Treats should only be given once every 3+ days at most once 6 months of age and on, limited to one very small slice.** The cost of food and litter usually ranges from \$80 to \$150 per month. A **pelletless diet is recommended** for their health, to know more check out our *Pellets* brochure.

### • Monthly Needs

It's essential to **trim your rabbit's nails and check their scent glands every 4-6 weeks.** Scent glands are fragile and can tear easily, so only clean them yourself if absolutely necessary and with extreme caution. For assistance or more information on this, you can refer to our brochure on Pawdicures & Scent Gland Cleaning. **Regular grooming is a must for rabbits, especially during shedding periods, to prevent blockages.** Without the ability to vomit to get rid of ingested fur, not grooming or not grooming properly will lead to a life-threatening blockage requiring a costly hospital stay, usually around \$3000.

### • Things to AVOID

Rabbits have a hard time digesting dairy and dairy by-products due to their **lactose intolerance, best to avoid.** Rabbits **cannot properly digest corn, seeds, nuts, or similar foods.** Many store-bought treats are not ideal for their health and are best avoided. Opting for simple treats like a slice of banana, strawberry, or similar options is a healthier choice and sure to bring joy to your furry friend! Choosing a small business for chews can be a better and healthier option as well.

You can check out our store for rabbit safe options– [hagridsbuntique.com](http://hagridsbuntique.com)

## SPAYS & NEUTERS

**Both male and female rabbits should be spayed and neutered** for their health and safety, not just for behavioral reasons.

Females face an 80% risk of uterine cancer, a percentage that rises to 90% with age making this fatal medical risk unavoidable if not spayed. Medical issues can arise in females as early as 1 year of age. Males also encounter various health and behavioral challenges that can be entirely avoided through neutering. **It's essential to only introduce fixed rabbits to each other.** If an unfixed rabbit is introduced, this will trigger aggression and territorial behaviour. To minimize stress when adding a new rabbit to your home, it's recommended to ensure that existing rabbits are fixed or to separate them on different floors of your home until they are able to be. This approach helps create a smoother transition for your furry companions.

It's very important to understand that **rabbits are NOT suitable for kids.** They do not appreciate anything that children have to offer them and prefer to have limited contact with them. They have a **lifespan of 12+ YEARS** and have a **monthly cost of \$80-\$150 on average.** Rabbits are social creatures and **require a friend** to live a full life where they can thrive. Their needs are comparable to those of a dog minus the outdoor requirements. They also have the attitude of a cat where they will come to you when they want your attention. Their **vet expenses are significantly higher** than those of cats and dogs, rabbits are classified as exotic pets making it more difficult to find a truly savvy vet. **Their health is sensitive to any changes in their environment, diet, or routine, which can lead to illness as they demand very specific conditions.** While not consistently cuddly, rabbits have their schedule, favoring floor time over handling. To **earn their affection**, you need to engage with them at their level. Keep in mind that they may **nip when annoyed, angered, or wanting attention, which might not be ideal for households with children.** Improper handling can cause spinal injuries/breaks. Rabbits must **never be punished**, as they are prey animals. Building trust takes time, if you punish them they may not trust you again and will remain afraid of you. If you don't like something they are doing, you have no choice but to work around it and find better solutions. Rabbits do everything for a reason, we just need to find out why they are doing it and we can help correct it. Our owner, Bree, is a behavioural therapist for rabbits who offers services to help owners correct negative behaviours. Check out [hagridsbuntique.com/bookservices](http://hagridsbuntique.com/bookservices) for an appointment.

Being exotic animals, rabbits incur higher vet costs. **Yearly health checks are necessary, if not every 6 months**, by a rabbit-savvy vet. It's important to budget for at least one regular vet visit and an emergency trip annually. **Regular vet visits can range from \$200-\$500, while emergency rabbit-savvy vet expenses can run from \$400-\$1000+.** Rabbits are sensitive to change, as it can lead to stress and medical issues. Continual displacement is harmful to their mental state. **When considering adopting an animal, it implies thoughtful preparation, financial stability, breed-specific research, allocated vet funds, pre-purchasing supplies, getting a rabbit savvy vet, and a well-prepared home environment.** Taking ample time for contemplation and extensive research is key to being the best owner you can. These are voiceless creatures who we are making life decisions for, they have no say in where they end up. **Please only take on a pet if you can handle the responsibility for the rest of their life no matter where life takes you.** Your decisions should never affect their lives negatively. They are a member of your family, they must be factored into every decision you make once you take them home and make that commitment to them.