Learning to care for your rabbit companion, including housing, diet, litter box training, handling and more.
Common Myths

- Good pet for kids – maybe, maybe not
- Good starter pet – not really
- Rabbits are cuddly – not necessarily
Common Myths

- Teeth require frequent trimming
- Okay to house rabbits in backyard hutch
- Rabbits are nocturnal animals
Great Companions for the Right People

- Will house indoors in common family area
- Enjoy observing rather than holding all the time
- Not too fussy about home
- Will give 3 to 4 hours of play time each day
- Can afford medical costs
- Will keep rabbits throughout their lifetime
Spay and Neuter:
- Prevents pregnancies
- Reduces hormonal activities
- Improves temperament and litter box training
- Prevents cancer

Oregon / Washington Vet list at http://rabbitadvocates.org/vets/
Prey Animals

Eyes

Nose

Ears

Territorial
Litter Box

Large, plastic cat pan

Paper-based litters

Will naturally use one corner

Lots of fresh hay

Change at least every 2 days
Add more hay every day
- Grooming regularly to remove loose fur
- Trim nails about every 6 to 8 weeks
- Clean with damp wash cloth or unscented baby wipes
- Rabbit Advocates has volunteers to help with grooming needs
Diet Guidelines

- Fresh grass hays at all times
- Fresh vegetables (sparingly)
- Very limited fruit as treats (carrots are in this category)
- Limited high quality pellets
- Check with your vet for specifics
- Weigh your rabbit regularly
**Housing**

- Minimum 36” wide x 24” deep x 18” high
- Room for large litter box, food bowl, and water bowl

KW Cages Metro Condo

KW Cages Libby Cage
Housing

Carpet on floor to protect feet & flooring  

X-Pens excellent choice

X-pen 36” high

X-pen 30” high with wooden base
Free run of a bunny-proofed room is ideal.

KW Cages Custom Pen

Free-Run Bunnies
Bunny Proofing

- Prepare house before bringing bunny home
- You must think like a rabbit!!
Mental Stimulation for Your Rabbit

- Chew toys, willow toys,
- Toss toys, bell toys
- Towels to bunch-up and spread out
- Card board boxes, wooden ramps, telephone books
- Chew toys, willow toys,
Quiet Communicators

- Nudge
- Nip
- Hard bite
- Nibble
- Grunt
- Grunt /
  - Ears back
- Growl
Communication

- Circling/spraying
- Honking
- Thumping
- Teeth chattering softly
- Teeth crunching loudly
- Tossing toys, waggling ears, hopping about

It’s just one of those days...
Common Rabbit Behaviors

Playful Rabbits

Joyful Jumping

(Photo courtesy of http://www.alisongiese.com)
Rabbit Handling

1. Approach with flat hand, above head, pet firmly, backwards from forehead, across ears and down back.

2. Put one hand under belly & use the other to support the hind end.
Rabbit Handling

- Back in and out of carrier/cage
- Don’t let struggle
Rabbit Holds
Scoop on Poop

- Diet is key

- Fecal - dry but not hard, round, light color & plentiful (hundreds overnight)

- Watch for decreased size or quantity of fecal pellets.

- Overproduction of cecal pellets may indicate too rich a diet or underlying medical issue
YOUR power of observation is bunny’s key to long, healthy life!

Observe:
- Eating times and quantities, liquid consumption
- Posture, spots for laying down, sleeping
- Respiration rate and sound (if any)
- Fecal pellet size and quantity; urine color / quantity
- Gut feel, etc.
- Common behaviors; playing, favorite treats, foods, etc.

Check every day for one month to learn what “normal” is for your bunny

Keep a journal (reinforces observation, record for history / patterns)
When To Consult Your Vet

- Not eating in 24 hours, audible sounds from gut without stethoscope
- Mucus or parasites in stool
- Tilted head, loss of balance, jerking eye movements
- Repeated head / ear scratching or head shaking
- Partial paralysis or immobility, lethargy
- Repeated sneezing, nasal discharge or eye discharge
- Straining to urinate or urine that appears very white or gritty
- Loud teeth grinding, hunching in pain
- Loss of interest in treats, favorite foods or favorite activities
- Sores on bottom of feet (sore hocks)
- Fur mites, ear mites and fleas
Medical Emergencies

- **Do not wait** for regular vet appointment if any of these are present:
  - Shallow or labored breathing, or very rapid breathing (if nothing precipitated it)
  - Weak heartbeat
  - Paralysis
  - Unresponsiveness or unconsciousness
  - Seizures or convulsions (call vet before transporting)
  - Open wounds, bleeding
  - Inability to regulate temperature after 2-3 hours of home treatment (below 100 or above 104 F)
  - Grey or bright pink gums
  - Diarrhea
  - Severely distended stomach (bloat)

- *Note temperature* before going to vet to report reading before stress of travel
Love Your Rabbit

- Commit to your rabbit
- Make your rabbit part of your family
- Give your rabbit the best care
The End!

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to San Diego House Rabbit Society (sandiegorabbits.org) for graciously providing the original materials to us free of charge, and for giving Rabbit Advocates permission to modify them for our own use.

We also thank Alison Giese (AlisonGiese.com) for permission to use her Joyful Jumping photo of Bernie as well as other photos of her bunny areas and run time at http://bunnypics2share.shutterfly.com/28.