

FINDING A HOME FOR YOUR RABBIT

Let us help you! Understanding and helping to solve the most common reasons why people feel they need to get rid of their pet rabbits can save a life.

1. My rabbit is destructive, or she growls and bites.

- Effective rabbit proofing is a must in every rabbit home. This includes covering or hiding any electrical cords from your rabbit, and the use of barriers for furniture protection. Using vinyl or protective flooring under their pens will protect your carpet or floors. Being ignored in small cages can and often will cause aggression in rabbits.
- **Spaying and neutering** will reduce many unwanted hormonal behaviors such as spraying, mounting, circling, growling, biting, lunging, marking territory, etc. It will also be for their health. Without a spay, uterine or breast cancer has a very high rate of striking females before they turn five.
- Rabbits need to chew to wear down their teeth, which never stop growing. You cannot and should not try to eliminate this behavior. Often times, chewing or digging can be easily diverted by providing safe chewing and digging alternatives:
First-cut timothy hay, untreated willow or wicker baskets, large cardboard tubes, apple, pear, or willow branches, hay in t. p. tubes, old phone books, safe wooden rabbit chew toys, cardboard boxes with shredded paper inside. See our Toys article for lots more ideas!
<http://adoptarabbit.org/articles/2003/Toys.pdf>
- Most rabbits can easily be litter box trained. <http://adoptarabbit.org/articles/packet/litterbox.html>
Reinforce litterbox training with positive praise when they do it right. Tip: Offer a sprig of parsley too!
- From lots of experience, we can help you learn how to practically eliminate aggressive behaviors and are happy to do so.

2. I don't know how to care for or bond with my rabbit.

- Visit our Rabbit Care Articles page: <http://adoptarabbit.org/articles.html#misc>
- Your First House Rabbit
<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/firstrabbit.html>
- Bonding With Your Bunny
http://www.rabbitsonline.net/view_topic.php?id=33995&forum_id=17

3. I have allergies/asthma.

- Have you consulted an allergist to determine if it is an allergy to the hay or the rabbit?
- Try second cutting timothy, or grass hays such as oat or orchard grass. Not all hays are equal offenders. These hays have proven to be far less offensive for most hay allergy sufferers.
- Have someone else handle the hay.
- Keep the litter box and hay in a separate room away from the person who is sensitive. Have rabbit-free rooms
- Keep cages clean and the amount of excess hay in the cage to a minimum. Vacuum regularly; run an air purifier.

4. I Must Move.

Finding a new home for both yourself and your rabbit may take a little extra time, so plan ahead to check out a number of places before you find one that will work for both you and your rabbit. See if someone could watch your rabbit while you do the major part of the move. We have many in our group who are affordable rabbit sitters, so you don't have to worry. Investigate online house rabbit rescue groups where you will be moving to for recommendations for pet friendly apartments. Social networking and Craigslist can be helpful.

Some landlords will make exceptions to “no pet policies” for quiet, small animals. Reassure (and educate) them that you are planning to adequately rabbit-proof the room where your rabbit will be and that she will be supervised during her outside exercise time. Agree to protect the carpet, woodwork, or flooring. Let them know your rabbit is litter box trained. Remember that rabbits are not rodents and a landlord cannot refuse you on those grounds. Be sure to include as references people who know you are a responsible rabbit owner, and who will talk about you both favorably.

5. I can't afford my rabbit.

Here are some money saving ideas:

- Purchase hay by the bale. We have a list of local feed stores and growers. See if someone will split a bale with you and you both can save.
- Pellets can be cheaper if you purchase larger 25lb or 50lb. bags and split it as well.
- If you can, grow your own greens or join a community garden.
- Learn to groom and trim your rabbit's nails and how to do a basic wellness check. We can show you how.
- Visit thrift shops for inexpensive natural baskets, ceramic dishes, or Neat Idea Cubes for bunny proofing.
- Vinegar is an inexpensive and safe cleaner for your rabbit's litterbox and pen.

6. No time to spend with my rabbit.

This is so sad because a rabbit is such a good little companion when she is better understood. Rabbits have a calming effect and are also great for comic relief. They can be quite silly! Don't underestimate their intelligence and unique personality!

Rabbits are similar to deer. They are most active and playful at dawn and at dusk. They tend to want your attention and be a part of the family during these times. This usually works out well for people at work or in school. They love a regular routine in a bunny proofed room. Consider moving your rabbit more centrally to where the family or friends can say hello and interact with her. Provide lots of toys and talk to her! Rabbits are great listeners!

7. I don't have adequate housing for my rabbit

- Please see our shopping list for your first rabbit's basic needs. Many items are quite affordable.
- [Contact us](#) if you need assistance with a basic foster pen set up.

Re-Homing

If you STILL cannot keep your pet rabbit, or if you FOUND one, please do everything you can to find him a new home, and do it responsibly.

First choice: If you have the time, consider fostering your rabbit for Rabbit Advocates. By housing the rabbit yourself (or boarding her) you provide a safe environment until you can find the best home for her that you can. It is possible to find good homes for rabbits, but it takes time, a commitment and a plan.

Rabbit Advocates is a network of private foster homes, and have no central shelter. We are almost always full, and needing more people to foster for us, so more rabbits can be saved and re-homed where they will be permanently loved and very much wanted. Please [contact us](#) to learn how to get your rabbit on our adoptable web site. We can help you with the basic supplies if you need them. We will require that the rabbit is spayed or neutered first. If this is a hardship let us know.

There are two ways to find a new home for a pet rabbit. The first is to prepare the rabbit for adoption. This includes spaying or neutering, litterbox training, socializing, learning bunny's health status and personality. The

second step is to aggressively seek an ideal home by advertising and screening callers for a suitable loving home. It is important that you allow lots of time to do this.

- **Start by contacting your neighbors, friends, family, co-workers, members of your place of worship, or clubs, etc.** Ask them to ask their friends, too. Social networking can be helpful.
- **Make flyers with a picture of the rabbit.** Provide any details about their special personality, age, and any veterinary history. Distribute them on super market or community bulletin boards, at veterinary hospitals, pet supply stores, and by placing ads in local newspapers. **Never say** “Free to a good home.” Offer to provide your cage and supplies free with the rabbit, but do charge an adoption fee of at least \$35, and deliver the rabbit so you can see the home will be safe.
- **Carefully interview anyone contacting you to ensure that they will provide a suitable home. Only an adult, not a child, should be the rabbit's primary care-giver.** Anyone can say they know all about rabbits. Some actually want rabbits for food for themselves or for their reptiles, or worse, they are hoarders, so screen them well.

How to screen: See our [Pre-Adoption Application](#). Use it for interview questions. Ask about their past and current pets to find out what they're looking for in a pet. Explain that you are asking questions because you want the new owner and the rabbit to be a good match. Present a realistic picture of what rabbits are like as prey animals. If you feel the home is not suitable, politely tell the caller that your rabbit doesn't do well with small children, isn't used to outdoor hutch-living, is terrified of dogs, etc. If you do find someone sincere to adopt your rabbit, please refer them to our web site address so that they can find us with any questions they might have about their new companion house rabbit.

The Last Resort: Taking Her to a Shelter

Call first, as there may be a waiting list. The shelter may have to humanely euthanize your rabbit for a number of reasons, so be sure to ask about their policy. Although a humane shelter gives your rabbit a chance to be adopted, you should not wait until the last minute to make this call as they can often have a waiting list. Surrendering her to a shelter can turn a social bunny into a withdrawn, ill, or aggressive rabbit, which can make her perceived as “unadoptable.” Bonded pairs wait the longest. You will not get to find out who the adopter is either.

Finally, **never release your rabbit into the wild**—it is the cruelest fate of all. It doesn't make your rabbit ‘free,’ it makes her ‘food.’ Don't kid yourself that a good Samaritan will come along and rescue your pet. It is never acceptable to let a pet go somewhere outside. Examples are: dumped off a highway or on anyone's doorstep, dumped off in a park, golf course, an abandoned house, or giving him to the first responder to a “free rabbit” sign in front of your house, or anything else that involves a probable bad home.. You are becoming part of the problem.

It is illegal to release a domestic animal at any location without providing for the animal's continued care and well being. Unlike wild rabbits, domesticated rabbits are used to relying on people for food, love, and protection. They lack survival skills, no longer having the instincts that wild rabbits rely on to forage, and escape from predators such as cats and dogs, foxes, coyotes, raptors, opossums, or raccoons. If a predator doesn't get him, he will likely die from dehydration, infection, fly strike, poisoning, being hit by a vehicle, being shot at, exposure to extreme temperatures, or from a host of parasites.

Be Part of the Solution

We know that foreclosure on homes, owner deaths, new births, relation break ups, problems with other pets, and countless other life changes can and do bring pet/owner relationships to an end. This sadly leaves innocent pets homeless. If you are looking for a permanent four-legged family member, please consider adoption. Visit your local shelter or rescue group and bring a smile to the face of a homesick pet waiting for a forever home!