



Providing a suitable home for your gerbils.

- Gerbils are best housed in a special gerbilarium, which should be large enough to offer them space to shelter, dig and exercise, with solid glass walls and a secure wire-mesh top:
 - The gerbilarium floor should be solid to allow for bedding material to be provided (to absorb the relatively small quantities of urine they produce and to allow for digging).
 - Cages with metal bars can be dangerous for gerbils as they may slip and injure their legs or feet.
- If you already keep your gerbils in a cage, and your gerbils spend a lot of time repetitively digging in one corner, provide additional hiding places and consider moving them to a gerbilarium with added depth so they can create their own shelters.
- If your cage has metal bars, monitor your gerbils to ensure that they are not slipping on the bars or catching their feet or legs. If you are concerned that they are, consider moving them to a gerbilarium.
- Provide suitable bedding material:
 - Bedding material should be deep enough to allow your gerbils to dig and construct a system of burrows. A bedding depth of 20-30cm is recommended. The gerbilarium should ideally be around 50cm high to allow your gerbils to dig and still have room to emerge above ground and stand fully upright (an adult gerbil is approximately 12cm tall).
 - Non-toxic peat may be suitable though it is not particularly environmentally friendly. Soil from your garden is not recommended as it may contain harmful bacteria or parasites.
 - Other suitable bedding substrate includes a mix of rough-grained woodchips and hay to provide more structure to their burrows and additional gnawing opportunities.
 - Sawdust should not be used as it may cause respiratory problems.



- Make sure your gerbils always have access to appropriate nesting material that they can shred:
 - Gerbils are highly motivated to shred gnawable material such as ink-free cardboard or paper and hay. Empty toilet rolls, egg containers or plain cardboard boxes are also ideal.
 - Do not provide them with nesting materials that can separate into thin strands such as cotton wool or similar 'fluffy' bedding products. They pose a serious risk to the welfare of your pet.
- Make sure your gerbils have a suitable place to hide:
 - In addition to the opportunity to dig their own shelters, consider providing your gerbils with a dark nesting box which is large for it to set up a food store, to sleep, and to comfortably move around. It should ideally have multiple entrances to avoid dominant animals trapping others inside and preventing other animals from entering.
 - An entrance via an angled tube is recommended to prevent light entering the shelter.



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