

# INSTRUCTIONS

The following Pet Rabbit Handbook Project is for you to put together.

The title page can be decorated however you like.

The booklet, when complete, will be just 6 pages long. All of the other pages you see are cutouts that will be glued on to the original 6 to make flaps.

**The 6 main pages are numbered at the bottom.**

To avoid confusion, only cut out one page at a time and follow instructions for that page before moving on to the next page. The pages are all in the order in which they should be cut out and glued. Just remember that if a page is numbered at the bottom, it is a main page. It should not be cut.

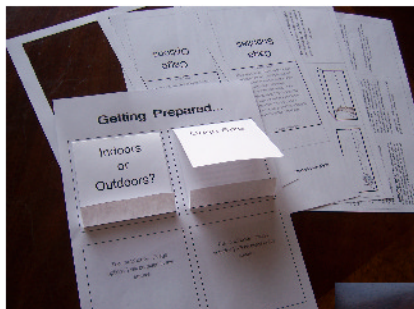
At the very end, I have included a page of clipart that can be used however you like to enhance your handbook.

Once your booklet is complete, you may want to weigh the pages down with something heavy like a book to press the folds down.

I hope you enjoy creating your handbook and I especially hope that this booklet will help you to have the best experience with the wonder-filled world of pet bunny ownership.

'Hoppy' Creating!!

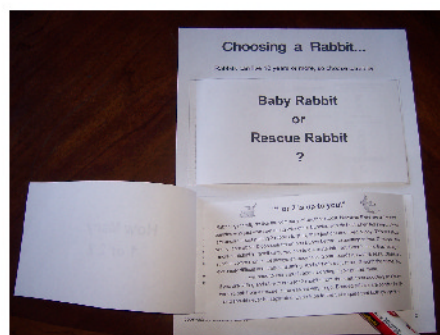
- Suzette Hughes



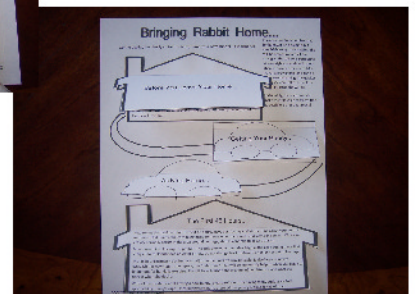
^^ PAGE 1 >>



^^ PAGE 2



PAGE 3



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# Pet Rabbit Handbook

How to Prepare for  
and Care for  
a Pet Rabbit

# Getting Prepared...

The 'matchbook' on the following page ("indoors or outdoors?") will be glued in this square.

The 'matchbook' on the following page ("cage size") will be glued in this square.

The 'matchbook' ("cage options") will be glued in this square.

The 'matchbook' ("cage supplies") will be glued in this square.

# Indoors OR Outdoors?

^ top fold line ^

Glue this square (this side) to the box indicated on the "Getting Prepared" page. It will be the box on the upper left side of the page.

Next, fold the bottom flap of this rectangle upward. Then fold the top flap downward and tuck inside the bottom flap. This will make a 'matchbook'. Later you will be adding to the inside of the matchbook.

bottom fold line

# Cage Size

^ top fold line ^

Glue this square (this side) to the box indicated on the "Getting Prepared" page. It will be the box on the upper right side of the page.

Next, fold the bottom flap of this rectangle upward. Then fold the top flap downward and tuck inside the bottom flap. This will make a 'matchbook'. Later you will be adding to the inside of the matchbook.

bottom fold line



## INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Cut out the two tall rectangles above. Then follow instructions on each piece.

# Cage Options

^ top fold line ^

Glue this square (this side) to the box indicated on the "Getting Prepared" page. It will be the box on the upper left side of the page.

Next, fold the bottom flap of this rectangle upward. Then fold the top flap downward and tuck inside the bottom flap. This will make a 'matchbook'. Later you will be adding to the inside of the matchbook.

bottom fold line

# Cage Supplies

^ top fold line ^

Glue this square (this side) to the box indicated on the "Getting Prepared" page. It will be the box on the upper right side of the page.

Next, fold the bottom flap of this rectangle upward. Then fold the top flap downward and tuck inside the bottom flap. This will make a 'matchbook'. Later you will be adding to the inside of the matchbook.

bottom fold line



## INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Cut out the two tall rectangles above. Then follow instructions on each piece.

Cut out each of the two rectangles below. The upper one will go inside the upper left matchbook on the "getting Prepared" page. The lower rectangle will go inside the upper right matchbook on that page. Each rectangle has 3 sections. The back of the section on the far right will be glued to the inside of the matchbook. Then the remaining rectangle will be folded accordian style so it will fit inside the matchbook. Fold the middle section inward, then fold the left out.

## Indoor bunnies live longer, happier, healthier lives!

OUTDOOR bunnies get little human interaction.

Subtle behavior or health changes are seldom noticed.

They're subject to weather extremes.

They are exposed to flystrike & mosquitos.

They can be startled to death at the sight of a predator (including birds of prey).

Their lives are often considerably shorter from the above stresses of outdoor living.

INDOOR bunnies are always close by for interaction.

They are more likely to get their daily exercise.

Their behavior and health are more readily monitored.

We get to see & enjoy them more often.

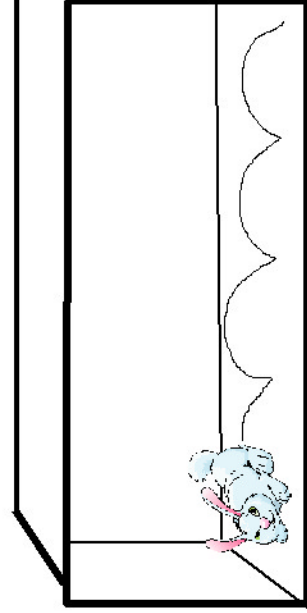
They can spend many hours per day roaming free in a bunny-proofed room or area.

Litter training makes clean-up a breeze.



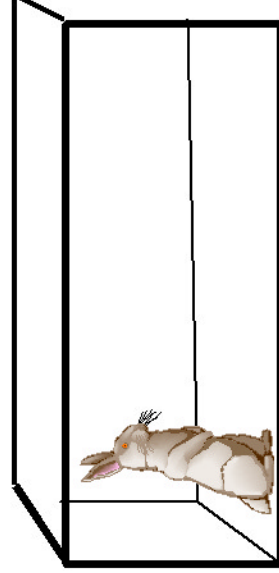
3. The above square and the below square shall be folded back on these lines so that the face of these squares face out.

Rabbits need plenty of room. A full grown rabbit should be able to take a minimum of 4 full hops across his cage (or stretch out fully 4 times).



2. The above square and the below square shall be folded on these lines so that the face of these squares touch the face of squares to the right.

A rabbit needs to be able to stretch up on his hind legs without his ears reaching the top of the cage...



1. The back of the above square and the back of the below square shall be glued to the inside of the correlating matchbooks on page 1.

An exercise pen can be placed in a half-circle around an existing smaller cage to give bunny needed space. Just leave the door to the smaller cage open so bunny has full access to the area in the x-pen.

Cut out each of the two rectangles below. The upper one will go inside the lower left matchbook on the "Getting Prepared" page. The lower rectangle will go inside the lower right matchbook on that page. Each rectangle has 3 sections. The back of the section on the far right will be glued to the inside of the matchbook. Then the remaining rectangle will be folded accordion style so it will fit inside the matchbook. Fold the middle section inward, then fold the left out.

**NIC cage**



**TIP:** Be sure grid openings are just 1 1/2." Some grid brands are sold with 3" openings which aren't safe for rabbits (though could be used for the roof of cage).

3. The above square and the below square shall be folded back on these lines so that the face of these squares face out

**-BOX:** for litter large enough for bunny to lay down in. Plastic storage boxes work well.

**-LITTER:** non-clumping, non-clay, no corn cob, unscented. Avoid pine or cedar *shavings*. Wood stove *pellets* are inexpensive (no accelerants). Yesterday's News Unscented litter and Carefresh litter are also popular.

**-FOOD/WATER BOWLS:** Either heavier ceramic ones or bowls that twist on to a clamp that is attached to the cage. Lighter bowls tend to get tossed about. (Bowls are more natural for drinking than drip bottles. Bunny can get frustrated with slow water access. Bottles aren't as easy to clean.)

**NIC cages** (or cube cages) have multiple levels giving bunny more room w/out taking up as much floor space.

Tutorial sites on how to build one:  
<http://breyfamily.net/bunnycage.html>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bLUDLbZYr4>

Another option for a sturdy indoor cage is to use an extra large **dog crate** (the largest size available). Levels can be added to give more space.

**Exercise pens** can also be used as a cage. These have no roof (unless you create one) so be sure that other household pets are not a concern.

The following site shows examples of x-pen set-ups:  
<http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/articles/houses.shtml>

2. The above square and the below square shall be folded on these lines so that the face of these squares touch the face of squares to the right.

**-HIDEY AREA:** It's good for bunny to have an area to hide when he needs to feel secure.

These can either be purchased or such an area can be created when the NIC cage is assembled.

**-HAYRACK (optional):** some like to have a hayrack over the litter box. (The rack is optional but the hay is not.) Hay can be placed directly in the litter box or in a rack. Hay wheels are more of a toy but are not appropriate as a primary means of feeding hay. It takes too much effort to get the hay out which means less hay consumption.

**-TOYS:** Bunnies need mental stimulation or they will get bored. (see page 5, for more details)

**A word on wire-bottomed cages:**

These types of 'rabbit cages,' often sold at pet stores, are too small for a rabbit (see 'cage size.'). The wire-bottom is uncomfortable for bunny and can lead to sore hocks. Since rabbits litter train quite readily, having such an open grid-type bottom becomes unnecessary and a waste of litter. It is natural for a bunny to choose one area of his cage to do his business. Providing a litter box encourages this natural behavior.

*Please,  
 solid-floor cages only.*

1. The back of the above square and the back of the below square shall be glued to the inside of the correlating matchbooks on page 1.

**-PET BED or FABRIC:** Something soft to lay on that bunny won't ingest. Fleece fabric may work. Some use small cat beds. All bunnies are different, so see what works. Be sure that bunny does not chew and ingest whatever is chosen.

(These are all cage supplies. You will also need grooming supplies and food. More info on those can be found on pages 4 and 6.)

# Choosing a Rabbit...

Rabbits can live 10 years or more, so choose carefully!

## cons of getting a baby rabbit

Many of the reasons for not choosing a baby are listed on the prior page. Not only do they lack the benefits listed there, they are also very messy compared to a fixed rabbit.

Since baby rabbits are irresistibly adorable, they are often sold far younger than the 8 weeks of age recommended. Babies that are weaned too young lack their mother's antibodies that are needed to help them fight foreign bacteria (from humans). Runny stool is a common symptom of this and is often lethal for baby.

About 4-6 months of age, a rabbit's hormones begin to affect him. This is often the age when frustrated owners give up on their bunny and turn him in to a shelter (or worse). Spaying or neutering, which can cost from \$75 - \$350, will eliminate or greatly reduce the effects of rampaging hormones.

Potential signs of a hormonal rabbit:

- ◆ lunging
- ◆ growling
- ◆ biting
- ◆ spraying urine
- ◆ aggression
- ◆ fighting with other rabbits
- ◆ excessive destructive chewing
- ◆ forgetting litter training
- ◆ excessive mounting

## Bonding Bunnies

To find a companion for an existing fixed bunny, find a rescue that allows "speed dates" with their fixed rabbits. Male/female pairs tend to be easiest, but there are never any guarantees with bonding. The rescue should be able to walk you through the process, and if it just isn't working with one bunny, they will allow you to try another.

Don't make the mistake of attempting to bond a baby rabbit. Such 'bonds' are only temporary. They usually end when hormones kick in. Those hormones can cause fights which will greatly decrease their chance of successfully bonding later. After the baby is old enough to neuter, it will need up to 2 months after surgery for hormones to dissipate. Then he can finally be (re-)introduced to a spayed rabbit. Bear in mind that with the newly fixed rabbit, you won't have the option of exchanging him for another if the bond doesn't take. In such a situation, you will have to continue to house both rabbits separately.

There are occasions when bonds go easily and with little effort. Bond attempts that fail can end with vicious fighting. Rabbit fights can result in serious injury or death. Be sure to read up on bonding methods before attempting to do so. NEVER place 2 unbonded rabbits together in the same cage.

Here are some resources for bonding:




















<http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/articles/bond.shtml>

<http://www.cottontails-rescue.org.uk/matchups.asp>



edge to be glued  
fold line

Cut out box below (on solid-line, large box). This box is flap 'a'. Glue the right edge onto page titled "Choosing a Rabbit"

Comparison	Rescue Rabbit	Baby Rabbit (from pet store or backyard breeder)
cute		
vet-checked		
fixed		
litter trained	 often are trained	(extra messy)
sex determined		can't be 100% til 3-4 months
temperament evident		
potential health issues disclosed		
personality assessed		
train more readily		
bonded pairs available		baby bonds are temporary, usually end with coming of hormones
good care advice available even after purchase		

Cut out box below (solid lines). This is flap 'c'. Glue the right edge onto page titled "Choosing a Rabbit"



## "1 or 2 is up to you!"



Rabbits generally do like the company of another rabbit. However there are a few rare bunnies who just won't get along with other bunnies and do best when left single. If you are unsure about getting 2 rabbits to start, then just get one fixed bunny. This will allow you to learn about & concentrate on one bunny before committing to two. Once you are more confident in rabbit care, you can find a mate later on. Bear in mind that finding a suitable companion is not always an easy task. Some bonds go well & easy. Others are extremely difficult and time-consuming. And still others just aren't worth the stress. You will need to learn much about bonding if you go this route.

If you are willing and able to care for 2 rabbits from the start, then adopting an already bonded pair from a rescue is the easiest way to go. Bonded rabbits are bonded for life and should never be separated. Even trips to the vet require that both go together.

fold line only  
Do not cut

Flap 'b' : cut out box below, glue left edge onto page titled "Choosing a Rabbit"

**Baby Rabbit  
or  
Rescue Rabbit  
?**

Flap 'd' : cut out box below, glue left edge onto page titled "Choosing a Rabbit"

**How Many...  
1 or 2 ?**