

Gerbils



Housing

Your gerbil should be provided the largest habitat possible! Their enclosure should have 1-2" of paper-based bedding as well as nesting materials! Gerbils will most definitely chew on things in their habitat, so make sure that you don't include any soft plastic materials that might be swallowed! Wood, ceramic, or hard plastic toys/hiding spots are all okay. Enclosures should have multiple levels since gerbils love to climb and explore! Their habitat should be spot-cleaned daily and deep-cleaned weekly or more often as needed.



Behavior

Gerbils are one of the few rodents that are awake during the day and sleep at night! They're very social and enjoy each others' company, so they thrive in pairs. If housed together at a young age, gerbils will live harmoniously together. They touch noses with other gerbils as a greeting and are typically very curious rather than being scared. Gerbils actually purr by vibrating when they are comfortable though it might be difficult to hear this! They will also wink at you if you give them a treat as a sign of gratitude!



Handling

When handling your gerbil, take it slow! Though gerbils tend to be super social and aren't as easily scared as other small animals, they still prefer a slow approach to help them feel comfortable. Make sure you are holding them securely when you pick them up, and don't squeeze them! The more often you handle your gerbil, the more friendly and tame it will become.



Overview

The most common pet gerbil species is the Mongolian gerbil whose scientific name (*Meriones unguiculatus*) translates into "little clawed warrior" in Latin! Despite their name, Gerbils are typically very docile and calm, making them great pets. They are social animals with curious personalities who enjoy the company of their families.

Gerbils have an average lifespan of **5 years** and grow to be about **4-5 inches long** including their tail! Gerbils might be super small, but they still need room to exercise and play! A **20-gallon aquarium** would be a good size for a pair of gerbils to live together. Their enclosure should have a solid bottom and escape-proof lid.

Gerbils should be fed high-quality gerbil pellets along with small amounts of grains, veggies, fruits, and hay! They should also have access to clean, fresh water at all times.

Information from [petco.com](https://www.petco.com)