



CAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Home sweet home; this is the life! This is what we want for our rattie family members, isn't it? A cozy and comfortable, safe yet stimulating environment. However, all cages are not created equally so we like to help adopters make the best possible cage choice the first time they buy a cage.

Some **DOs** and **DON'Ts** to help guide you in your cage selection:

Do get a cage big enough for the number of rats you are planning to house.

We always recommend getting a cage that will fit at least 3 rats, even if you are only planning to get a pair. This is especially important for males, since they get much bigger than females do. The more space the better as it makes for happy rats and allows plenty of room for accessories! Rats require 2 cubic feet of space per rat minimum. Use this cage calculator to determine how many rats can be comfortably housed in a specific size cage:

<http://www.rattycorner.com/odds/calc.shtml>

Do get a cage designed specifically for rats.

Multilevel cages designed specifically for rats are best. Vertical style cages allow more room for climbing as well as placement of accessories such as hammocks and igloos. We have found that adopters who attempt to modify cages made for guinea pigs, birds, sugar gliders, etc. usually become frustrated with its limitations and end up purchasing a rat-specific cage in the long run! Cages designed for other types of pets may also feature primarily vertical rather than horizontal bars, which can make it much more difficult--if not impossible--for rats to get the climbing exercise they love and need. Many ferret style cages are acceptable, provided the wire spacing is appropriate for your rats. Rat cages typically have 1/2 inch bar spacing whereas ferret cages typically have 1 inch bar spacing (see next "Do").

Do get proper bar spacing based on the ages and sizes of your rats.

It is best to get narrow bar spacing (1/2 inch) so that babies or smaller rats cannot escape. 1 inch bar spacing is acceptable but only for large adult rats. Some small females can escape from 1 inch bar spacing!

Do get cages with powder-coated wire, as opposed to galvanized.

Make sure the cage you plan to use has powder-coated wire rather than galvanized as galvanized wire is not good for rattie feet. It is much harder to clean and therefore increases the chances of your rat developing foot issues such as bumblefoot. Powder-coated cages are much easier to clean and are more gentle on rattie feet!

Do place your rat cage in an active location in the home.

Rats are very social creatures and like to be “where it's at”! Bedrooms, especially children's bedrooms, are not the best placement as rats can be busy during the late evening and early morning hours and their antics can interfere with their human's sleep. We also do not recommend rat cages be placed in a child-specific play area as it is very important young children be supervised when handling small pets. Kitchen areas, family rooms, living rooms, etc. are great places for rat homes so they can see the ebb and flow of the family and be a part of the activity.

Don't use plastic base cages.

Avoid plastic base cages if the cage sits on top of the plastic rim, rather than down inside it. (ex: Super Pet Cages are notoriously a bad choice as rats frequently chew right through the plastic bottom!)

Don't use wire floor grates.

Avoid cages with large spaces on the floors (over 1/2 inch) or wire floor grates as little rat feet can get caught in them and your rat could be seriously injured. If the floor grate cannot be removed, cover the floor with tiles or linoleum.

Don't use cages that have floors with pull-out trays.

Rats can, and will, escape from these types of cage bottoms and/or get their leg stuck and injured while trying!

Don't use a glass tank to house your rats.

Not only are glass tanks small, but they also do not permit air flow and thereby allow odors (such as ammonia from urine) to build up within the tank, which is unhealthy for your rats' respiratory systems. Urine will also pool on the bottom of the tank making a glass tank an overall unhealthy living environment.

Recommended Cages

Midwest Critter Nation and Ferret Nation Cages

<http://www.midwesthomes4pets.com/my-pet/small-animals-1>

or

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NJ0DAE/>

The Critter Nation cage is by far a favorite amongst the rat community due to its ease of cleaning and spacious layout. Manufactured by Midwest, the Critter-Nation has 1/2 inch bar spacing, whereas the Ferret Nation cage has 1 inch bar spacing. There are single versions that house 5-6 rats and double versions that house up to 12 rats. Add on units are also available.

Aside from their ease of cleaning and spacious layouts, Critter Nation cages are a favorite due to their affordability: you can get a lot of rat cage for the buck! A single CN can house 5-6 rats and can be found for a great price when on sale (see links below).

The Critter Nation can be ordered from a variety of online sites.

Pet Street Mall – prices have been as low \$134.95 including shipping

<http://www.petstreetmall.com/Critter-Nation-Cage/8515/3521/details.html>

Amazon – prices fluctuate; has been as low as \$110, with an average price of \$143

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NJ0DAE/>

Critter Nation accessories

1) additional shelves:

Ferret.com

<http://www.ferret.com/item/shelf-for-ferret-and-critter-nation/650387/>

1-800 Pet Supplies

<http://www.petsupplies.com/item/shelf-for-ferret-and-critter-nation/650387/>

2) indoor ramps (usually need to be custom ordered):

1-800 Pet Supplies

<http://www.petsupplies.com/item/ferret-nation-182-replacement-ramp/650577/>

3) replacement pans (note: while marketed for the Ferret Nation, these will fit CNs as well):

1-800 Pet Supplies

full bottom pan

<http://www.petsupplies.com/item/replacement-pan-for-ferret-nation-bottom-pan/630504/>

cut-out middle pan

<http://www.petsupplies.com/item/replacement-pan-for-ferret-nation-cut-out-pan/630505/>

4) Bass metal replacement pans*

https://www.bassequipment.com/Store/SCResult/245/Critter_Nation_Replacement_Pans

***Note:** Since these pans are made of galvanized metal, they will absorb urine odors unless treated with Rustoleum and allowed to cure for 14 days – 1 month (curing makes it safe for animals). You can use the following method to treat the metal pans and/or to treat rusted sections of a cage.

Rustoleum Treatment for Bass Pans:

1. Scrub the cage with a stiff brush and be sure to get off as much of the rust as possible.
2. You can rough up the cage a bit with some sandpaper but it is not a crucial step, especially if the cage is a little rough to begin with.
3. Spray with Rustoleum, let it sit for at least four hours before you do the second coat.
4. After the second coat, let it cure for at least two weeks before putting ratties in!

5) Pre-painted replacement pans

<http://www.chinchilla.ca/detail.php?ProductID=MW6000>

If you would prefer to avoid the Bass pan + Rustoleum method, these pans are made of pre-painted galvanized metal to prevent rusting.

Martin's Cages

<http://www.martinscages.com/products/cages/rat/>

Another popular cage manufacturer is Martin's Cages. There are many models from which to choose:

The Rat Skyscraper 695 houses 4-5 rats. (~\$140 + shipping)

The Rat Tower 690, Rat Retreat 685 and Rat Lodge 680 each house up to 3 rats.
(price range = \$105 - \$126 + shipping)

We will accept the Rat Lodge 670 if you already own it but only for 2 females. It is a very small cage with little room for accessories and is much too small for males.

Model numbers below 670 are not acceptable at all since they do not meet the size requirements for a pair of rats.

Note: Many Martin's Cages come with the option of flip-top lids. If you choose this option, be sure to carefully secure flip-top lids. We have had reports of rats getting stuck in loose flip top lids.

Petco Rat Manor

<https://www.petco.com/shop/en/petcostore/product/you-and-me-rat-manor-habitat>

Pricing varies between store and internet sales

The Petco Rat Manor can house up to 3 rats and is very similar in design to the Martin's Rat Tower 690. However the ramps are a bit steeper and some feel the cage design is a bit flimsier. The shelves and ramps can be taken out and washed, and the cage can be folded up and put into the tub to scrub. It can also fold for traveling.

Maine Cage Factory

<http://www.maine Cage Factory.com/rodent.html>

Most of their in-stock cages are on the small side however they do accept custom cage orders. Please inquire about powder-coated wires. Before you order, please be sure to review the specifications with your adoption counselor.

Marshall Folding Mansion

<http://www.ferret.com/item/marshall-folding-mansion-ferret-home/650715/>

An option for families that travel with multiple rats, this powder-coated cage will house 12-14 adult rats. It folds and is easy to transport. However, it is only suitable for large adult rats as it has 1 inch bar spacing. In addition, the ramps are somewhat steep which is difficult for older rats. It also lacks a full floor and only has multiple mini-platforms, thus there is no continuous play space, only ramp to ramp.

Cost ~\$170 + shipping.

CAGE SETUPS - Please check out this link for photos of fully furnished and accessorized cages.

<http://s242.photobucket.com/user/MaineRatRescue/library/Cage%20Setup?sort=3&page=1>

Cages which are Not Accepted

Martin's Cages Model numbers below 670 are not acceptable since they do not meet the size requirements for a pair of rats. We will accept the Rat Lodge 670 if you already own it but only for 2 females. It is a very small cage with little room for accessories and is much too small for males.

Quality Cage Company Large Deluxe Rat Home - Powder Coated Black

Model: RT-1824PC-BLK

http://qualitycage.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=129_231_240&products_id=1374

Very small and cramped, would fit two females, but there is no room for accessories (igloo, wheel, litter box, etc.)

Super Pet Deluxe cages

We will accept this cage if you already have it, but it is best to avoid this type of cage. This is a plastic base cage and rats are notorious for chewing their way out of the plastic corners! We have heard of this happening so many times, we feel it is not worth spending the money on this cage type!

However, the **Super Pet Habitat Defined Home for Rats** cage is not acceptable at all.

<https://www.amazon.com/Kaytee-Habitat-Defined-Rat/dp/B001TI6GDW>

Despite being touted as a “rat cage”, this cage is barely big enough to house 2 rats and is so narrow, accessories do not fit. The plastic ramps and platforms fill up all the limited space and once again, it has a plastic base which rats can chew through.

All Living Things Cages

These cages are best to avoid, since they too have a plastic base. This is also a very narrow cage which makes it difficult to fit in accessories such as igloos and hidey houses. The wheel that comes with the cage is made of a metal grid, rather than a smooth surface. This type of wheel can cause injury to rattie toes and feet; smooth surface wheels are best. Also, the shelves are all plastic which means they will pool urine and the ramps are somewhat flimsy. The base is also a thin plastic and— guess what?— we've had rats chew right through the corners! It just isn't a good buy for the money.

Marchioro Rat Cages

These are single story rat cages, better for old infirm rats. Their designs are similar to guinea pig cages. There is no room for accessories or vertical space for climbing. The cages also have plastic bases so rats can chew out of them.

Glass tanks of any kind are not acceptable rat homes!

Not only are glass tanks small, they do not permit air flow and thereby allow odors (such as ammonia from urine) to build up within the tank, which is unhealthy for your rats' respiratory systems. Urine will also pool on the bottom of the tank making a glass tank an overall unhealthy living environment.