

# Housing

(By URCSA)

Rats need to be housed indoors in a cage that is adequate in size for the amount of rats within. There is some controversy regarding whether pet rats are fossorial or arboreal. Many pet groups insist rats are arboreal as they enjoy climbing. Science and natural habits indicate rats are fossorial as they live in burrows underground in the wild.

We have come to the conclusion that they are both, as domestic rats do seem to enjoy climbing, however they also enjoy burrowing and foraging. It is also dependant on the personality of your rats. Ideally, you want a cage that allows for floor space as well as climbing/hanging space. A rat should never be forced to climb to be comfortable.

when deciding how many rats should go into a cage, you must consider several factors;

- Activity level of the rats (if they are lazy, more can go into a cage. If they are active, less can go into a cage)
- How the colony functions as a whole (do they fight when confined to a smaller space? Do they prefer to cuddle together, or have their own space?)
- How often do you want to clean (more rats= more cleaning)
- How much free roaming time do they get (out of cage time).

*There are several options when looking at housing for your rats:*

## Traditional Cages

- These types of cages are often more geared towards giving the rats height over floor space, and usually do not offer much in the way of digging opportunities without additional customisation
- Girls tend to like this type of cage more. You can create levels by buying actual levels (either Perspex or metal), by hanging baskets or making wooden levels



## Deep Base Cages

- These types of cages are often bunny cages.
- They often have wide bar spacing so make them unsuitable for females or young rats. This can be rectified by covering the cage in mesh.
- They provide ample room for burrowing, but can often lack in climbing room.

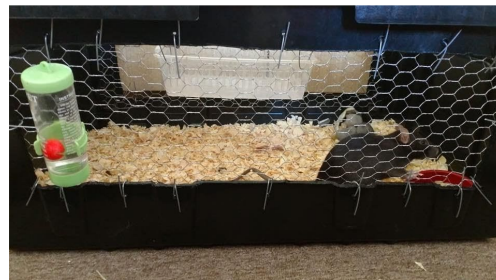
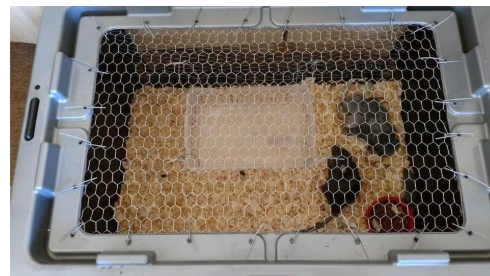


## DIY Cages

- There are many ways to make a DIY cage.
- The pros are that you can customise it for your needs (height, floor space, deep base, levels, material it is made of, etc).
- Cons are that you may find you need tools you do not have, or may battle if you are not handy.



*Converted Cupboards. Please note for this you will need to find a non toxic wood sealant, and do constant maintenance*



*Bin Cages. 2 sides and the lid can be replaced with mesh for adequate ventilation. You can stack multiple bins to create a multilevel cage*



## Racks

- Good for saving space
- Difficult to find rack compatible bins in SA
- Easy to build
- Does not offer much head room



Image provided by Clairvoyant Critters



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Image provided by April Lytle