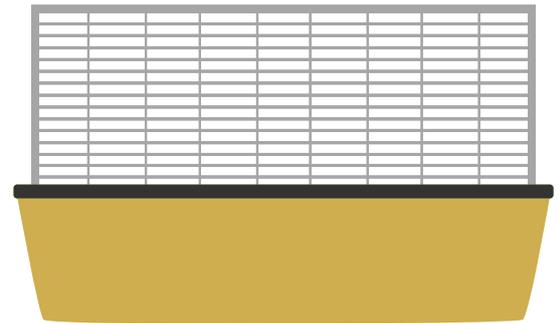
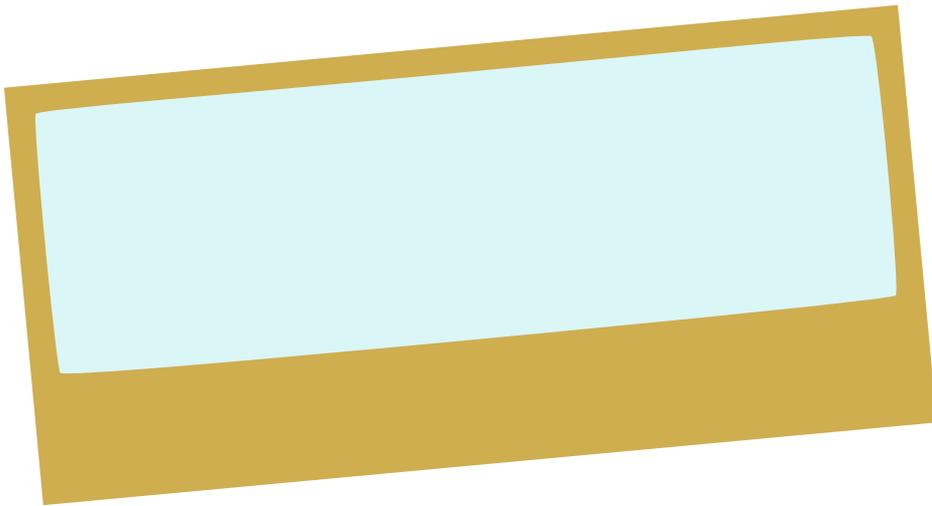
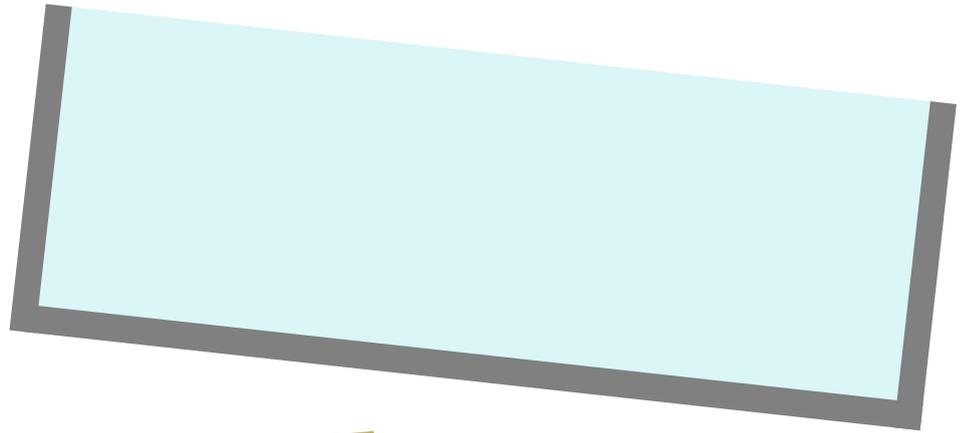
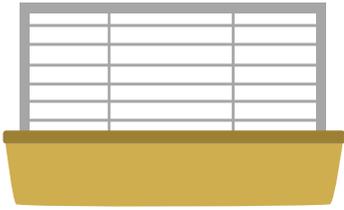


# A Hamster Parent's Guide To Hamster Cages

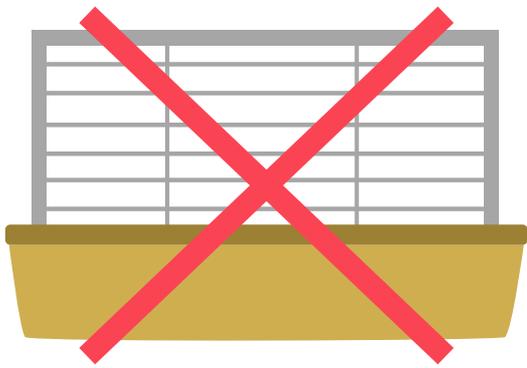




# Hamster Cages

Hamsters are lively and naturally busy little animals, so they need lots of space to scurry around and lots of things to do.

Since hamsters were first kept as pets they've lived in tiny cages with not much more than a wheel. But they need so much more!



Now that we know so much more about hamsters, and what they need, we need to give them cages that let them have all these things, and show their natural behaviours.

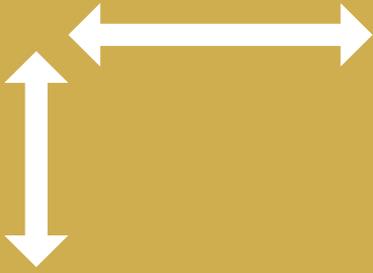
A hamster's needs just can't be met in a small cage

So how can I give my hamster a cage that **does meet all their needs?**

That's what we're going to look at in this guide! In the next few pages we're going to look at . . .

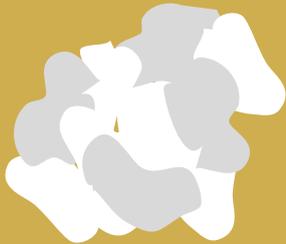
- What a hamster needs from their cage
- The different types of hamster cages
- Setting up your hamster's cage

# So what does a hamster need from their cage?



## Space

A hamster's cage needs to be **at least** 100x50cm, but this is really the minimum size. Your hamster's cage will better suit their needs if its closer to 100cm x 100cm, or larger.



## Burrow

A hamster's cage needs to be deep enough so that you can give them enough bedding to be able to burrow in. Most hamsters need at least 30cm of bedding to be able to burrow in.



## Security

This might sound dramatic for a hamster cage, but your hamster's cage needs to be able to keep them in, and any other pets you have out. It's also important that any kids in the house can't open the cage unsupervised.



## Enrichment

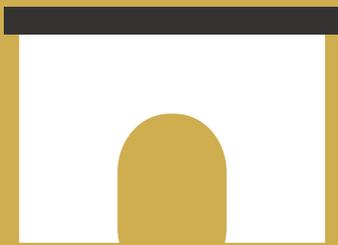
Hamsters are busy little animals and to stop them from getting bored and stressed, they need lots of different things to do.

# *So what does a hamster need from their cage?*



## **Ventilation**

If they don't have enough air flow in their cage hamsters can end up with respiratory problems. At the same time though, their cage shouldn't be too cold or draughty.



## **Shelter**

Hamsters are naturally prey animals, so to feel safe in their cage, they need to be able to hide. As well as bedding to burrow in, hamsters also need lots of other little things to hide in.



## **Food & Water**

Collecting and storing their food is just what hamsters do, and it doesn't mean they need fresh food. Hamsters need fresh food every 1-2 days and at least 2 sources of fresh water every day.

# *So that's what a hamster needs from their cage!*

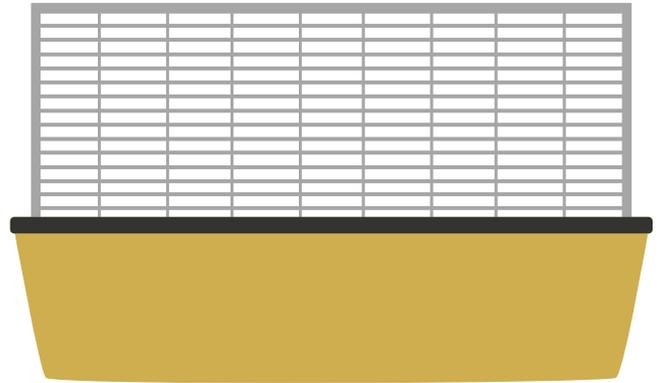
*Keep reading to find out about the different types of hamster cages!*

# Types of Hamster Cages

Let's take a look at the different options for giving your hamster a great cage to live in

## The Basic Cage

The basic cage is probably the cheapest option for your hamster's cage, but you can't just pick any cage out there. There are a few things to look out for in your basic hamster cage. . .



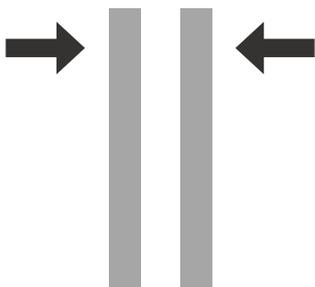
### Size

Finding a cage big enough isn't easy, but there are a couple out there that meet the minimum requirement of 100x50cm.



It's important to note that any shelves or platforms don't count towards this space - this is just the floor space on the base of the cage

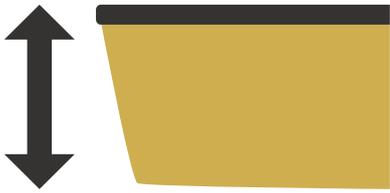
### Bar Spacing



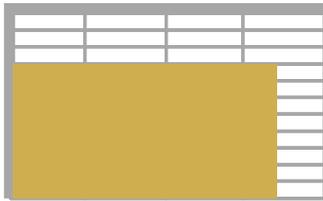
The bars of your hamster's cage need to be close enough together that your hamster can't squeeze out. This is something to look out for, especially if you're looking at cages designed with larger pets in mind.

## Base Height

You want the base of your cage to be tall enough that you can give your hamster plenty of bedding to burrow in without it falling out between the bars of the cage.



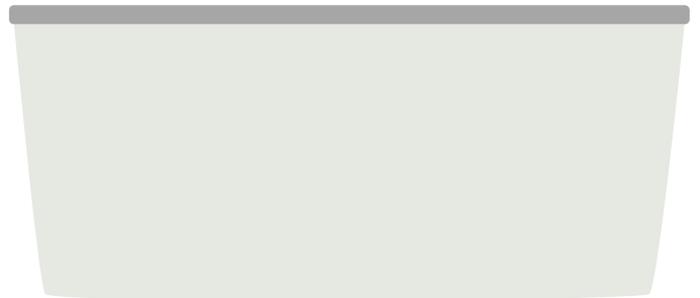
Hamsters need at least 30cm of bedding to be able to burrow in. You probably won't find a cage with a base this deep, but the taller the better. You can then add cardboard or perspex to 2 sides of the cage so you can put more bedding in without it falling out



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## 'Bin' Cages

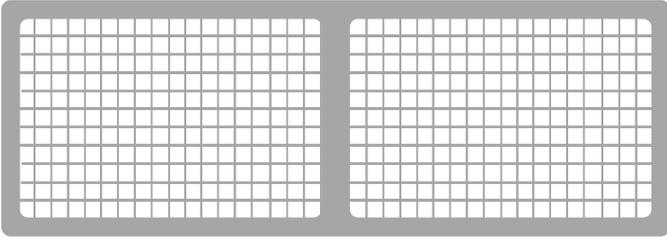
Bin cages, made out of plastic tubs, are a low cost diy option for your hamster's cage. But there are a few things you'll need to think about . . .



### Thick enough plastic

Hamsters are pretty good at gnawing through things, and that includes their cage. So when you're choosing a plastic tub for your hamster's bin cage, you'll need to make sure that it's sturdy and not too easy to gnaw through. For some hamsters though, this option just won't work.

## Ventilation



So that there's enough air flow through your hamster's cage, you'll need to make a mesh lid.

When you do this, make sure that any sharp edges of the mesh are on the outside of the cage so that your hamster can't get hurt.

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## Wooden Cages

There are a couple of wooden hamster cages out there that are big enough for a hamster to live in. Here's what you need to think about if you're buying a wooden hamster cage



## Keeping It Clean

Wooden cages are harder to keep clean than plastic ones because they're not as easy to just wipe clean. As long as you spot clean every 1-2 days though, it shouldn't be too much of a problem.

## The Wood

The wood of your hamster's cage needs to be thick enough that your hamster can't gnaw their way through. It's important that there aren't any edges to the cage that your hamster can access because this will give them a starting point for gnawing their way out.

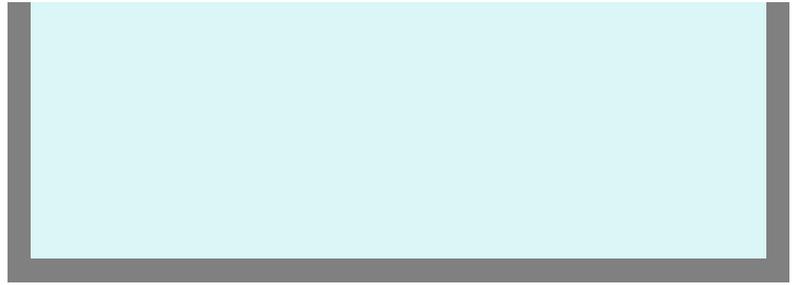
## Ventilation

So that there's enough air flow through your hamster's cage, at least one of the sides needs to be mesh. Having mesh on the front can encourage your hamster to start climbing up the walls of their cage, so its usuabllly best if the mesh is on the roof.

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## Tanks

Some hamster parents use aquariums or terrariums for their hamster's cage.



These can work pretty well as long as you can get one big enough (but it probably won't be cheap).

## A Roof

Again you'll need to make sure your hamster has enough ventilation in their tank. This is usually done using mesh and a wooden frame to make a roof. Not having a roof on your cage risks your hamster getting out (they can climb better than you'd think!).

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## DIY Options

Because there isn't much out there in the way of suitable hamster cages, a lot of hamster parents are turning to DIY options. These are usually done using wood for the sides, perspex for the front and mesh for the back. For more info about this, check out our [DIY Hamster Enclosure Guide](#).

# Setting Up Your Hamster's Cage

There's no one set way to set up your hamster's cage, but here are a few points to get you started . . .

## Bedding

The first thing you'll need to put in your hamster's cage is their bedding. There are a few different types of bedding you can use for your hamster's cage, and to keep things interesting for your hamster it's a good idea to use a mix of different types

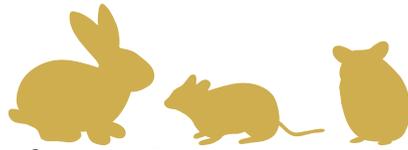
### Hamster - Safe Bedding (And Suggested Brands)

- Paper based bedding (Kaytee Clean & Cosy, Carefresh or Small Pet Select)
- Teabag bedding
- Hemp bedding (Hemperade or Aubiose)
- Hardwood shavings (Chipsi Classic)
- Soft, dust-free hay (Healthy Herby Orchard Grass Hay)

Always do the 'scrunch test' on hay before you give it to your hammy



Fluffy bedding is really dangerous for hamsters because their limbs can get caught, or they can ingest it and it get stuck. Also avoid pine or cedar wood shavings.



*Small Furry Friends*

*Thanks for reading, and we hope  
this guide was helpful to you  
and your hamster!*

For info about caring for your hamster take a look at:  
[www.smallfurryfriends.com](http://www.smallfurryfriends.com)

# Enrichment

Once you've got your hamster's bedding ready its time to start setting up their enrichment. Hamsters are intelligent, busy little animals, and they need lots of things to do to keep them busy.

## Hamster Enrichment Shopping List

- Large wheel
- Multi chamber hide
- Sand box
- Children's play sand
- Wooden chew toys (hamster safe wood)
- Coir for digging
- Tunnels
- Seed sprays
- Hamster-safe dried forage
- Platforms
- Hanging toys
- Lots of small hides

*And anything else hamster-safe!*

The main idea in choosing enrichment for your hamster is to give them things that help them to carry out their

*natural behaviours*

Natural hamster behaviours include:

- Digging & burrowing
- Gathering & storing
- Hiding
- Scurrying
- Gnawing
- Foraging



*The more the better*

There's no one set way to give your hamster enough enrichment, but the wider the range of things you can give them to do, the better