

Animal Care Centers of NYC

GUINEA PIG HOUSING



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= Helpful links to items, videos, and tips!

Before bringing a guinea pig home, it's important to plan a safe, comfortable, and enriching space. This guide covers the essentials to help you prepare the perfect home for your future furry friend.

The minimum required measurements for your set up are the following:

For a Pair: 4-5x2 C&C cage - 10-12 square feet | **For a Trio:** 5-6x2 C&C Cage - 12-14 square feet

**It's important to consider the gender of your guinea pigs when deciding what size to make their enclosure. Males tend to do better with a bit more space than females, as they're more prone to bickering over resources.*

C&C (cubes & coroplast):

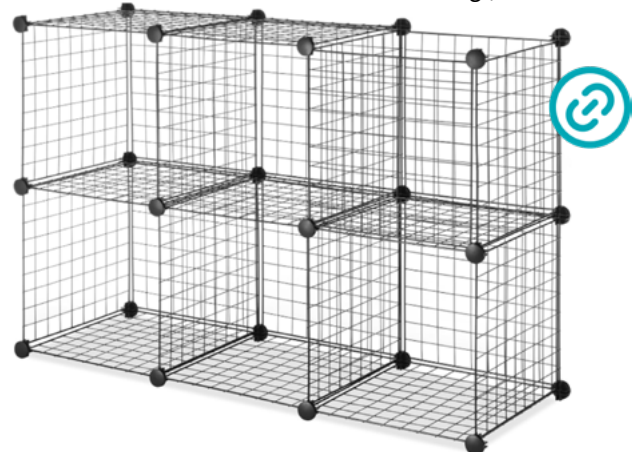
C&C setups are generally recommended due to their versatility, relatively low cost, and ease of assembly while catering to the specific needs of your guinea pigs.



Many sellers offer a plastic trim that can be fitted along the edges for a smooth finish.



Zip-ties can be used alongside the circular connections to ensure a secure & snug fit!

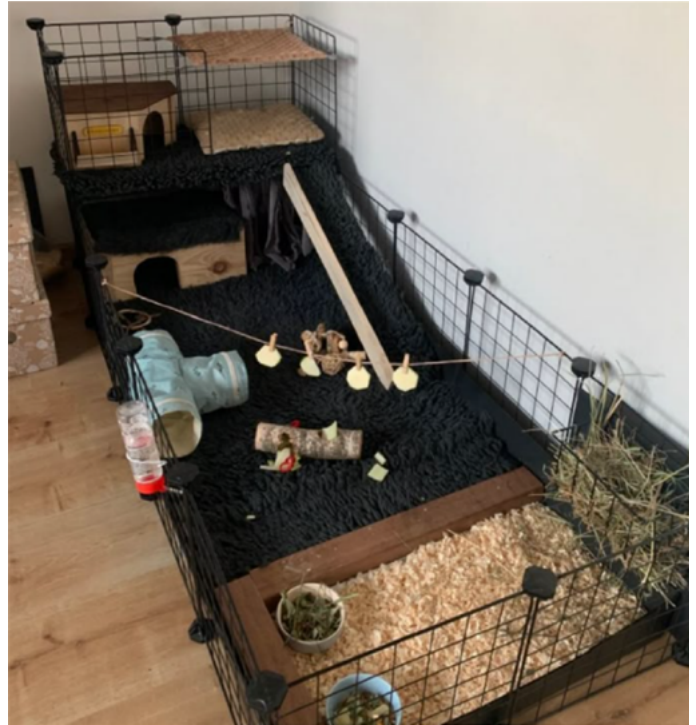


Here's a link to a helpful tool to use when calculating space for your herd size:



More Examples

A large flat space is essential for a guinea pig's physical and mental wellbeing! Plenty of room gives them the opportunity to exercise and explore allowing them to maintain a healthy weight while also being entertained-it can also prevent bickering within your herd.



Flooring & Bedding



2 Layers Fleece
sewn through
1 Absorbent Middle Layer



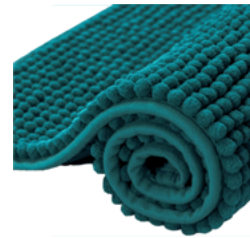
Many online stores & Etsy sellers make fleece liners specifically for guinea pig cages! There's a wide variety of fun patterns and colors with absorbent padding, hammocks, fleece forests, hides, and more! These tend to work best as they're easy to remove, machine washable, non-pilling, and hay doesn't tend to stick to them.



A more accessible option is simply towels, pillowcases, and blankets! Fold and layer to your heart's content to make a fun color pallet and cushy surface for the guinea pigs.



Whelping pads are a great option as they're incredibly absorbent and machine washable, though they tend to be a bit thin and your piggies may appreciate some extra padding underfoot.



Rugs and bathmats are another good option. These are best for supervised floor time and placing underneath water bottles due to their high absorbency and non-slip backing.

Why Is Flooring so important?

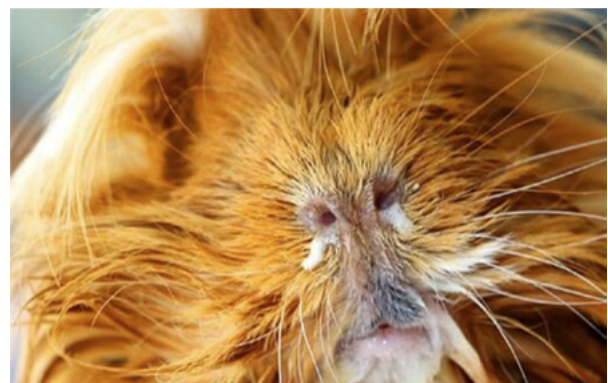
Suitable flooring is an essential part of your guinea pig setup. When deciding what materials work best for you, keep these three factors in mind:

Cushion, Reducing Excess Moisture, and Preventing Harmful Bacterial Growth.

Along with ensuring the cage sees regular cleaning, these three factors are the most reliable ways to prevent a variety of health issues with your guinea pigs. Conditions such as Bumblefoot (pododermatitis), Upper Respiratory Infections, and Urinary Tract Infections are all too common, and can be difficult and very costly to treat.



Bumblefoot (Pododermatitis) is an extremely painful infection of the foot pads- usually attributed to abrasions caused by hard/rough flooring and bedding. These abrasions are then infected by bacteria that thrives in damp environments or are picked up from urine and feces.



While Upper Respiratory Infections and Urinary Tract Infections have many causes that can be ultimately beyond our control, maintaining a sanitary environment plays a major role in preventing these issues. Some bedding may be harder to regularly maintain, unable to be properly sanitized, or creates an environment that harmful bacteria thrive in.

Hideaways & Enrichment

What should you look for? Toys and chews that are made specifically for guinea pigs, non-toxic, have variety, chewable/edible, and are easy to move around. Try to avoid inedible and brightly/heavily dyed materials.



Aim for at least one hide per guinea pig, and one larger hide they can comfortably share if desired.

Please note: Exercise wheels are never appropriate for guinea pigs- they are very dangerous for their fragile spines.



Diy Enrichment

Before you throw them out- think! Could this be fun to chew, toss, and tear?



A great way to provide inexpensive fun and enrichment for you and your guinea pigs is to use what you're almost guaranteed to have lying around your house or in your recycle bin already!

Guinea pigs are strong believers in recycling- especially when there's yummy treats involved!

Making a maze or tunnel out of a cardboard box, stuffing hay and treats into a toilet paper roll or paper bag, and even sprinkling foraging materials (guinea pig safe dried herbs, berries, and flower petals) through a bundle of packing paper can turn a boring day around in seconds!



Litter Training

Did you know? Just like cats and rabbits, guinea pigs can be litter trained!



Guinea pigs generally like to do their business in corners, hides, or where their food is. Typically, keeping their litter boxes in these places makes maintaining their spaces much easier.

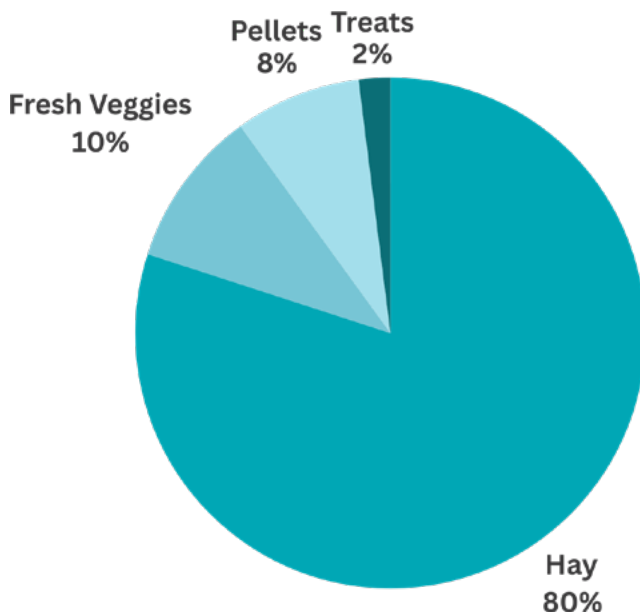
Litter training your guinea pig:

When choosing a litter box, aim for width over depth. Ideally, they should be able to hop in/out easily and have enough room to fully turn around and lie down if they want to. Some acceptable litter options are paper bedding, Aspen shavings, and kiln-dried pine pellets. Never use clay cat litter.



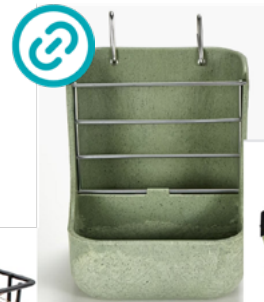
***Only kiln-dried pine pellets are acceptable for guinea pig use, as the natural oils in pine and cedar (softwood) shavings are toxic to them. If you wish to use wood shavings, Aspen is the safest option- ideally as dust-free as possible, as dust may cause respiratory irritation.

Diet



A guinea pig's diet should consist of 80% hay, 10% fresh veggies, 8% pellets, and 2% treats (including fruit).

Guinea pigs should always have access to fresh water and hay, with fresh vegetables and leafy greens being fed daily alongside a small portion of fortified food like pellets. Treats can be given freely by hand or by way of enrichment toys/activities. Never offer pellets with seeds, nuts, or colorful "treats" mixed in- and never feed them anything with meat or dairy.



Please note: Pregnant/nursing mothers or babies under 6 months old should be given Alfalfa hay in addition to their usual hay (timothy hay, orchard grass, meadow grass)

For pellets, heavy ceramic bowls are recommended for preventing spills, water bottles can be used instead of bowls to ensure debris does not contaminate their drinking supply, and a wide variety of hay feeders/racks can be used depending on preference.

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Setup Examples



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