

GERBIL ADOPTION GUIDE



Finding your new companions

Step 1: Submit your application form (available on our website) and photos

We will need to see photos and measurements of your gerbils' accommodation. Please email these to: smallanimals1@raystede.org

We will consider your application and contact you if we need a few more details or to invite you to Raystede for a chat. If you do not hear from us, we have everything we need for now, thank you.

Step 2: Wait for the magic to happen

Once you have registered with us, please keep an eye on our website for new arrivals and contact us if you feel someone might suit your home.

When animals arrive at Raystede, we get to know them through behaviour and medical assessments. Our expert animal care teams carefully use this information alongside your application to see if the match could be a success. Finding the perfect pet can take time. Please be patient; they will be worth the wait.

Step 3: Visit Raystede

We will invite you to Raystede as soon as we have found any potential matches for your home. We will discuss the animals' background, health and behaviour. This sometimes requires a few visits. You will need to provide photo ID, proof of address, and if applicable, written landlord permission to have a pet in your property.

Step 4: Take your new pet home

Once we have found your perfect partner, we will book an adoption appointment; our Rehoming Team will talk you through caring for your pet. Your adoption fee will help us continue our work to give animals a better life.

Rehoming criteria

Our housing requirements aim to ensure the best welfare standards for gerbils. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

Gerbils should live in same sex pairs or groups, depending on the size of tank provided.

A tank at least 90 x 30 x 30cm / 3' x 12" x 12" for a pair of gerbils

A group will need a much larger tank. Gerbils will always live happily in a tank that is too big, never in one that is too small. Because gerbils are burrowing animal, a cage is not suitable.

The tank should be secure with a wire mesh lid for ventilation. Ensure they have plenty of stimulating equipment such as branches, tunnels, tubes and toys.

Peace of mind when adopting

- All gerbils are health checked by a vet

You will also receive:

- A comprehensive adoption pack and appointment with our Rehoming Team to ensure you have everything you need to care for your new gerbils

Follow-up advice from our expert Small Animals Team

Thank you for your adoption fee, which will help to cover some of our costs:

Adoption fee: £5 each

The average daily cost of care for all small animals at Raystede is in excess of £300.

Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare, The Broyle, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ.

Tel: (01825) 880467 Fax: (01825) 840995 E-mail: smallanimals1@raystede.org www.raystede.org

President: Morgan Williams. Registered Charity No. 237696. Registered Office: Raystede, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ. Registered in England No. 816674

Gerbil care

Owning and caring for gerbils is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long - term commitment. Did you know gerbils can live on average 3 - 4 years?

Getting your gerbil's diet and environment correct is the best way of ensuring a long and healthy life. Here are some guidelines for offering your gerbil the best care:

- **Gerbils are highly social animals** and should always live in same sex pairs or groups, depending on tank size. Gerbils 'thump' by pounding both hind legs on the ground when they are excited or stressed. Groups of gerbils will simultaneously express 'thumping' behaviour.
- **Gerbils are very active, inquisitive creatures.** Like their wild ancestors, gerbils love to burrow. They are excellent at tunnelling underground, making new tunnels and compartments. They should be housed in a **glass tank with suitable substrate and furnishings**:
- **An ideal substrate** for gerbils is a mixture of peat, shredded newspaper and hay, filling at least three quarters of the tank. Wood shavings should be avoided as chemicals in the shavings can be the cause of respiratory issues.
- **Add furnishings to the tank to provide enrichment** for the gerbils. Cardboard or wooden tubes and a bed in one corner are ideal. Any heavy furnishings, such as rocks and clay pots, must be placed in the tank before the substrate. This is to prevent items falling onto or trapping the gerbils while they dig/burrow. Gerbils are fascinating to watch, mesmerizing you for hours.
- **Handling gerbils:**
 1. They are not that easy to handle; they move fast and are prone to jumping from your hands. A fall may cause serious injury. For this reason, **gerbils are not usually the best pets for younger children.**
 2. Before handling, slowly rub your hand in the bedding to collect their scent.
 3. Handle your gerbil very carefully. During handling, any gerbil can become stressed and will bite. Always cup your gerbil in your hands, never squeeze. Always hold them close to your body.
- **Check your gerbils for signs of injury and illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary.**
 - Check teeth are not becoming overgrown – seek veterinary advice if necessary.
 - Check the coat and skin for signs of mite, bald patches, sores or lumps and seek veterinary advice if found.
 - Check the tail for cuts or damage.

Diet

Gerbils' teeth grow continuously throughout their life. The teeth need to be worn down every day by eating hay. Failure to eat the right diet will quickly result in serious dental disease.

The diet should include:

- **Hay** is essential as it helps to wear down the teeth as they grow.
- **The bulk of a gerbil's diet is a specially formulated mix** containing wheat, oats, barley, sunflower seed, corn, pumpkin seeds and dried grass pellets.
- **Fresh water** available at all times. This should be in a bowl to allow natural drinking.
- **Treats:** if treats are given avoid commercial treats which are high in sugars. Instead, provide small quantities of fruit and vegetables such as cabbage, celery, carrot, apple and broccoli. Sunflower seeds must be given sparingly as they can cause stomach upsets and obesity.