



Rabbits Need More Space Than You Think



When you go into a pet store, you might notice a row of cages marketed toward rabbits. These products will have enticing names like 'deluxe rabbit home' and show images of happy rabbits on the packaging. The problem? Almost every single one of these 'rabbit cages' is *much* too small for rabbits.

The HRA guidelines recommend at least 8 square feet in their enclosure. The rabbit will require an additional 24 square feet of space to exercise for a minimum of five hours every day. The hutch should always be tall enough for the rabbit to stand up on their hind legs.

These, of course, are minimum guidelines. Larger breeds of rabbits and multiple rabbits kept together will require more space. I always recommend giving your rabbits as much space as you are able. In the best-case scenario, you can even free roam your rabbit to allow them full access to your home or at least a few rooms that are rabbit-proofed.

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How much space do rabbits need?

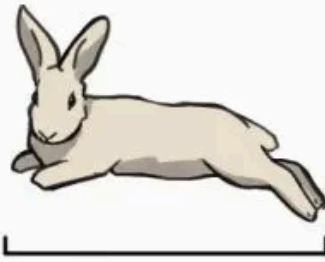
When choosing an enclosure for your rabbit, you need to make sure that there is space to hop around and sprawl out. A home that is too small will feel like a cramped jail cell to the rabbit, making them unhappy, bored, and irritated.

But of course, not all rabbits are the same size. Rabbits can range from tiny 2-pound Netherland dwarfs to giant breeds of rabbits, like the Flemish giant that regularly reaches weights over 15 pounds. While the rule of thumb to give your rabbit at least 8 square feet is helpful as a starting point, you need to make sure you take *your* rabbit's size into account.

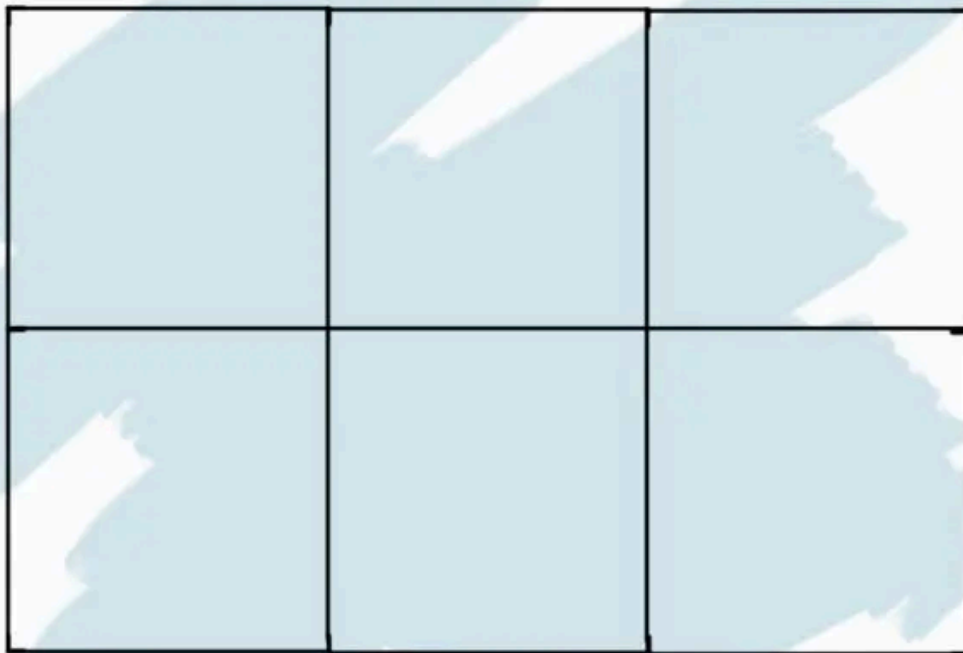
If your rabbit is still young right now, you also need to think about their eventual adult size. You'll want to avoid having to purchase a second enclosure after your rabbit outgrows the first one.

[Learn more about how to know how big your rabbit will be as an adult.](#)

THE SIZE OF A RABBIT ENCLOSURE



LENGTH: 3X SIZE OF RABBIT



WIDTH: 1.5-2X SIZE OF RABBIT

**THIS IS A MINIMUM SIZE,
YOU CAN ALWAYS GO BIGGER!**

The minimum size of a rabbits enclosure should be 3 times their length and 1.5 to 2 times their size in width.

Minimum length

At a minimum, you want to make sure the enclosure is big enough to allow your rabbit to hop three times along the length. The easiest way to estimate a hop-length for your rabbit is to measure them from nose to toe when they are fully sprawled out. Multiply this number by 3 to get the rabbit enclosure's minimum length.

For example, when I measure my medium-sized 6-pound rabbit while lying down, she is about 16 inches long. Multiply that by three, and you get 48 inches. That means I want an enclosure that is at least 4 feet in length. Any smaller would start to feel cramped.

Minimum width

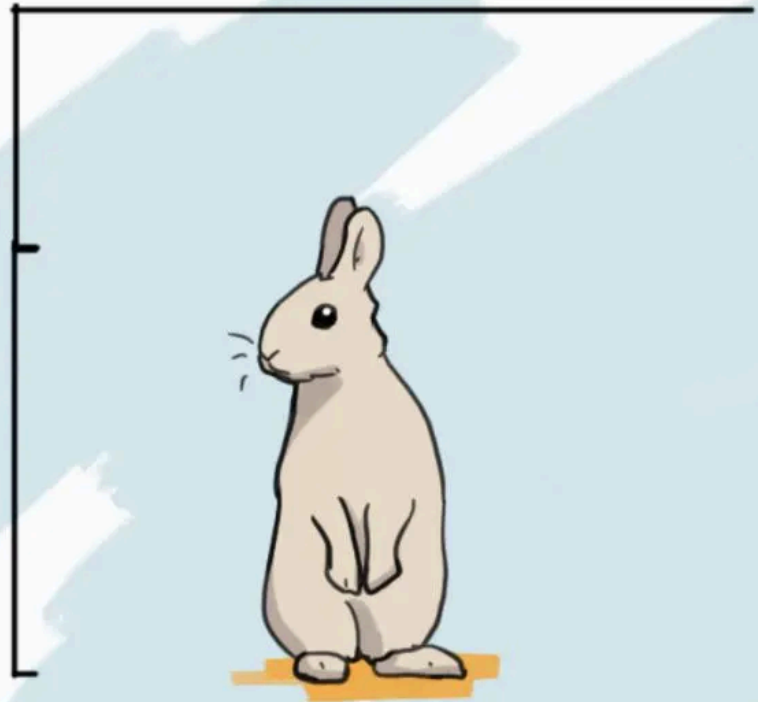
The width of the rabbit's enclosure should be enough to let your rabbit lay down comfortably without touching the sides. You'll take the length of your rabbit that you measured in the last section and add a few inches to make sure they don't feel cramped if they lay down along the width.

Continuing my example from above, I would want to give my rabbit, who is 16 inches in length, at least 18 inches, or a foot and a half. It is better to provide them with a bit more wiggle room and give your rabbit an enclosure that is 2 feet long.

For my rabbit, I would need a minimum space of 4 feet x 2 feet. That's equal to 8 square feet of floor space for your rabbit.

THE HEIGHT OF A RABBIT ENCLOSURE

**MINIMUM
HEIGHT:**
1.5-2X
SIZE OF RABBIT



Rabbits should be able to stand up in their enclosure without hitting their head. If the walls are tall enough to prevent escape, the enclosure does not need a ceiling at all.

Minimum height

Your rabbit also needs enough vertical space to stand up on their tippy-toes without bumping their head against the top. Without enough room to stand up, your rabbit can end up with a spinal deformity. In less severe cases, they can also lose flexibility in their back which puts them at greater risk for injury.

This means that I would want to give my rabbit at least 2 feet of vertical space in the enclosure in my example. That would give her enough room to stand up and even stretch out without bumping her head or ears on the top.

Recommended Enclosure

While you might be able to find a rabbit cage that meets these size requirements, they are few and far between and tend to be prohibitively expensive. [That's why I recommend getting a pet playpen and using that as your rabbit's enclosure instead.](#) You can typically find these in the dog section of a pet store rather than the small animal section. They offer your rabbit much more space while also being cheaper than all but the most undersized cages. ([Check out the current price](#))

Why do rabbits need large enclosures?

If you're used to the idea of keeping pet rabbits in a small hutch, these sizes might seem remarkably large to you. It looks like a lot of space for such a small animal, making you wonder if it's all really necessary.

The number one reason to make sure your rabbit has a large enclosure is for their health. Space to move around keeps their muscles from atrophying and prevents obesity. It's also essential for maintaining a rabbit's digestion healthy and moving. This helps to prevent potentially deadly conditions such as [GI Stasis](#).

Rabbits also need space every day to improve their mental health. Rabbits are naturally active creatures who enjoy hopping around and playing. They can quickly get [bored and depressed](#) if they are not given enough room to act like their playful bunny self.

Giving your rabbit a large enclosure will make it easier to get your rabbit back at the end of the day. Most of the time, when rabbits frantically try to avoid your attempts at going back into their cage, it's because they don't want to feel trapped in such a small space. Instead, you can give them a large place that feels more like a home for your rabbit than a small jail cell. They'll be happy to go back because it's a place they feel comfortable and safe.

How much space do rabbits need for exercise?

This enclosure space is just the beginning. While it's enough to keep your rabbit active during the day, it's not enough space for running and zooming around, and it won't allow your rabbit to get a healthy amount of exercise.

In addition to their enclosure, you want to make sure your rabbit has an extra 24 square feet of exercise space available. Again, this is a minimum amount, and any rabbit would be happy with as much space as you can give them.

If your rabbit is a house rabbit ([I always recommend keeping indoor rabbits](#)), this will typically mean making sure your rabbit has access to at least one room in your home for exercise. You'll just want to take the time to rabbit-proof any rooms that your rabbit will have access to. This will keep them out of trouble and prevent your rabbit from getting into dangerous situations. [Learn more about how to rabbit-proof your home to make it safe for your rabbit to exercise.](#)

How much time do rabbits need for exercise?

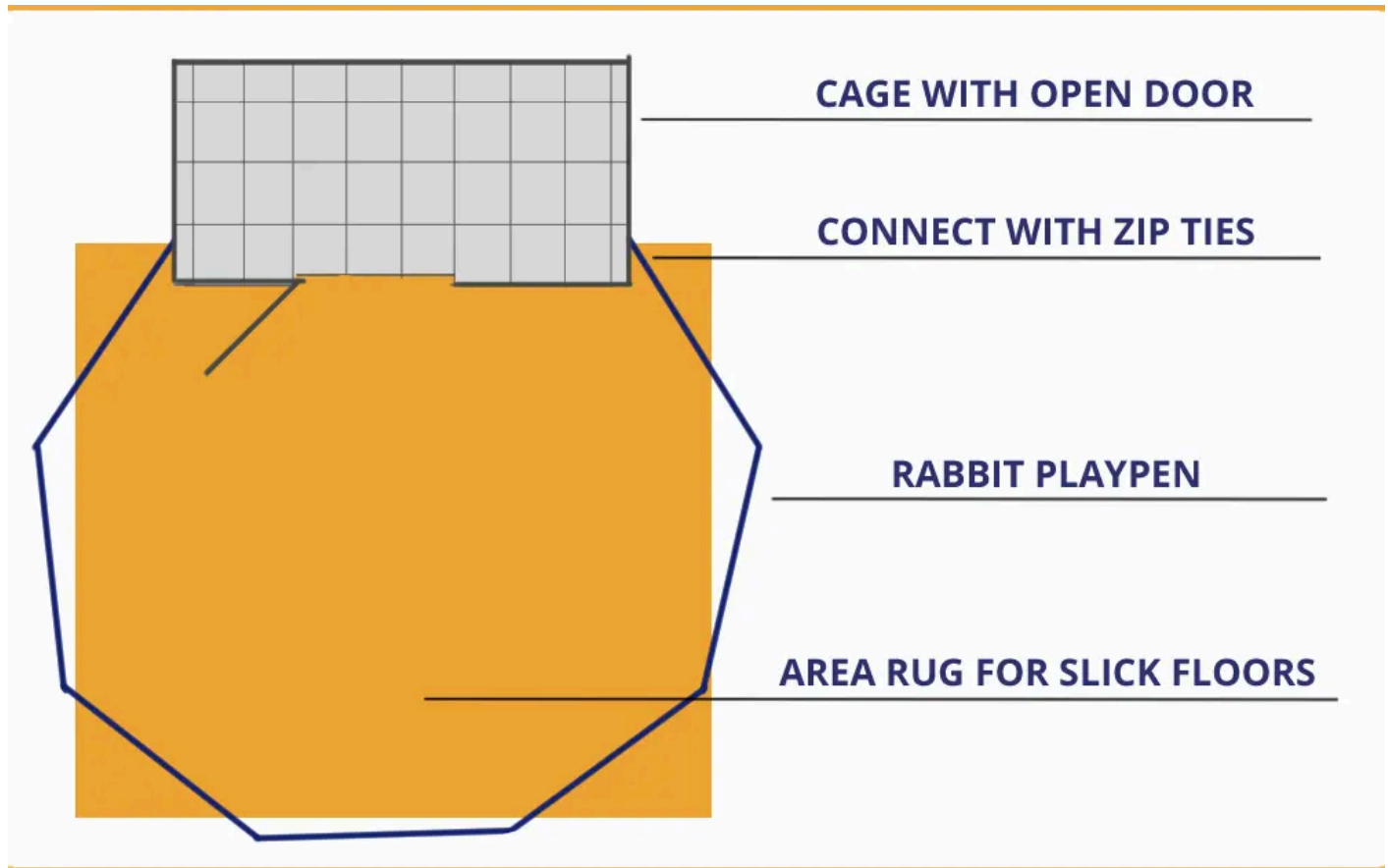
Ideally, rabbits will have at least 5 hours out of their enclosure to exercise. This is because rabbits are like sprinters rather than long-distance runners. They will happily run around, then take a rest for a while before exploring again.

The easiest way to make sure your rabbit has enough space is to stop thinking of them like a caged pet. Instead, think of them more like a companion pet (like a cat or dog). They may need a little more supervision, which is why you have an enclosure for them, but whenever you are home to keep an eye on them, you should allow them out to exercise. This time will also ensure that your rabbit gets enough attention since [rabbits are very social creatures](#).

How much space do you need for multiple rabbits?

If you have two rabbits living together, you'll want to use the guidelines for the larger rabbit to determine the minimum living space. You don't need to double the area because the two rabbits still have plenty of room to hop around. Typically a pet playpen will be plenty of space for a pair unless either rabbit is a giant breed.

If you're starting to add more rabbits to your home, however, you'll need to think about ways of expanding your rabbit's living area. While there are no specific guidelines available, I would try to double the space by the time four rabbits are living together. Any more than that, and you would need to consider giving your family of bunnies a whole room to themselves to make sure they have enough space to live happily together without feeling cramped.



If your cage is too small, attach a rabbit playpen to give your rabbit more space.

How to give your rabbit more space

If you already have a small cage for your rabbit or live in a small apartment with limited room for a rabbit enclosure, there are options to help you quickly improve your rabbit's living conditions.

- **Expanding their enclosure size:** If you have a small cage right now, you can easily attach an exercise pen to expand the area without completely replacing the home they are currently living in.
- **Providing more vertical space:** Rabbits also like to hop up on top of objects. If you can't quite give enough floor space for your rabbit, consider giving them more platforms and vertical space to move around it.
- **Use the space under furniture:** If you live in a small apartment, you can get a loft bed to use the area underneath for your rabbit's enclosure without losing any floor space. You could do something similar with space under a dining room table or a tall enough coffee table.
- **Free roam your rabbit:** Once your rabbit is litter trained and your home is rabbit-proofed, you might not need to keep your rabbit in an enclosure at all. You can allow them free roam of the place, just like a pet cat, so you never have to worry that your rabbit is kept in a space that's too small for them. [Find out more about how to free roam your rabbit.](#)

Sources:

1. "Housing." *House Rabbit Society*. <https://rabbit.org/faq-housing>.
2. "Rearing Up." *RWAF*. <https://rabbitwelfare.co.uk/rabbit-care-advice/behaviour/rearing>.



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Amy Pratt

Amy Pratt is a lifelong rabbit owner who has been specializing with rabbits at the Humane Rescue Alliance. She helps to socialize the rabbits and educate volunteers on the care and behavior of these small mammals.

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My name is Amy and I am the Bunny Lady! I am a lifelong rabbit lover and have been specializing with rabbits at my local animal shelter. I am here to make sure all of you rabbit lovers have everything you need to care for your fluffy little bundle of joy.

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