

In this weeks blog you will find information on proper housing size and other things you need to consider before bringing home bunny or Guinea Pig as pet, show or as a part of a breeding program.

Taken from the ARBA website, "ARBA Recommendations for the Care of Rabbits and Cavies This document is being created in order to provide guidance to all individuals who care for rabbits and cavies for the purposes of pets, show animals, commercial uses (i.e. food, fiber, and exhibition) and laboratory uses. This document is also meant to serve as a guide for individuals who serve in animal welfare and regulatory organizations. These recommendations provide a general guidance on the best practices in caring for rabbits and cavies. These recommendations are meant to work in conjunction with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) giving more concrete definition to the AWA and are not meant to supersede the AWA for those who are bound to follow the AWA for regulatory compliance. Section 1: Housing for Rabbits and Cavies Cage Size Rabbits and cavies need to be provided a cage of adequate size to accommodate species and breed specific behavior. Table 1-A provides minimum space requirements for one rabbit based upon the weight of the animal. Available cage space is calculated by multiplying the cage width by length and subtracting the space occupied by the feed and water dishes located on the floor of the cage. Feeders and waters fixed to the side of the cage, not coming in contact with the floor of the cage, need not be subtracted from available cage space."

Getting Started:

First, how big of a rabbit are you going to get. Second, how much space does each rabbit need in their cage?

Here are some basic minimum measurements that you will need to know for your rabbits according to breed and weight. Remember, these are just the bare minimum and you can go bigger. In fact, it is recommended that you do in most cases.

Maximum Senior Weight in lbs	Breeds	Required Cage Space	Required Cage Height
< 4.4	American Fuzzy Lop, Britannia Petite, Dwarf Hotot, Himalayan, Holland Lop, Jersey Woolly, Mini Rex, Netherland Dwarf, Polish	1.5 ft ²	14 in
4.4 - 8.8	Standard Chinchilla, Dutch, English Spot*, Florida White, Havana, Lilac, Mini Lop, Mini Satin, Silver, Tan*, Thrianta	3.0 ft ²	14 in
8.8 - 11.9	American, French Angora, Satin Angora, Belgian Hare*, Beveren, Blanc De Hotot, Champagne D'Argent, American Chinchilla, Cinnamon, Crème D'Argent, Harlequin, New Zealand, Palomino, Rex, Rhinelander*, Satin, Silver Fox, Silver Marten	4.0 ft ²	14 in
> 11.9	Giant Angora, Giant Chinchilla, Checkered Giant*, Flemish Giant, English Lop, French Lop	5.0 ft ²	14 in

Now, here are important measurements you will need to know if you are planning on having any babies.

Rabbits	Weight of Nursing Female		Minimum Floor Space Per Rabbit		Minimum Interior Height	
	lbs	kg	ft ²	m ²	in	cm
Female Rabbit with Litter	< 4.4	< 2.0	4.0	0.37	14	35.5
	4.4 - 8.8	2.0 - 4.0	5.0	0.46	14	35.5
	8.8 - 11.9	4 - 5.4	6.0	0.56	14	35.5
	> 11.9	> 5.4	7.5	0.70	14	35.5

Guinea Pigs also require a minimum amount of space as well.

Cavies	Minimum Floor Space Per Cavy		Minimum Interior Height	
	Square Inches	Square Centimeters	Inches	Centimeters
Weaning to 350 g (12 oz)	60	387.1	7	17.8
> 350 g (12 oz)	101	651.7	7	17.8
Breeders	101	651.7	7	17.8

Construction:

Plan according to the area you have specified for the rabbits to be housed and go from there.

There are many materials that you could use to make a rabbit cage but here are a few things to consider before jumping into it.

Wood is a great go to for making shelves and frames but also remember that wood absorbs all of that urine and any kind of ickies your rabbit may catch making it very difficult to clean 100%.

Chicken wire is very flimsy and does not support well.

The wire needs to be small enough for the rabbit so his/her legs don't get caught in it and big enough that their poops can fall through.

See my [Raising Rabbits for 4-H](#) , [How to care for a pregnant rabbit before, during and after babies](#) and [How to take care of your pet rabbit](#) Blogs for more information on raising rabbits and their proper general care.