



## CAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Home sweet home; this is the life! This is what we want for our rattie family members, isn't it? A cozy and comfortable, safe yet stimulating environment. However, all cages are not created equally so we like to help adopters make the best possible cage choice the first time they buy a cage.

Some **DOs** and **DON'Ts** to help guide you in your cage selection:

**Do** get a cage big enough for the number of rats you are planning to house.

We always recommend getting a cage that will fit at least 3 rats, even if you are only planning to get a pair. This is especially important for males, since they get much bigger than females do. The more space the better as it makes for happy rats and allows plenty of room for accessories! Rats require 2 cubic feet of space per rat minimum. Use this cage calculator to determine how many rats can be comfortably housed in a specific size cage: [Rat Cage Calculator](#)

**Do** get a cage designed specifically for rats.

Multi-level cages designed specifically for rats are best. Vertical style cages allow more room for climbing as well as placement of accessories such as hammocks and igloos. We have found that adopters who attempt to modify a cage made for guinea pigs, birds, sugar gliders, etc. usually become frustrated with its limitations and end up purchasing a rat-specific cage in the long run! Cages designed for other types of pets may also feature primarily vertical rather than horizontal bars, which can make it much more difficult--if not impossible--for rats to get the climbing exercise they love and need. Many ferret-style cages are acceptable, provided the wire spacing is appropriate for your rats. Rat cages typically have 1/2 inch bar spacing whereas ferret cages typically have 1 inch bar spacing (see next "Do").

**Do** get proper bar spacing based on the ages and sizes of your rats.

It is best to get narrow bar spacing (1/2 inch) so that babies or smaller rats cannot escape. 1 inch bar spacing is acceptable but only for large adult rats. Some adult females can escape from 1 inch bar spacing!

**Do** get cages with powder-coated wire, as opposed to galvanized.

Make sure the cage you plan to use has powder-coated wire rather than galvanized, as galvanized wire is not good for rattie feet. It is much harder to clean and therefore increases the chances of your rat developing foot issues such as bumblefoot. Powder-coated cages are much easier to clean and are more gentle on rattie feet!

**Do** place your rat cage in an active location in the home.

Rats are very social creatures and like to be “where it's at”! Bedrooms, especially children's bedrooms, are not the best option for placement as rats can be busy during the late evening and early morning hours and their antics can interfere with their human's sleep. We also do not recommend rat cages be placed in a child-specific play area as it is very important that young children be supervised when handling small pets. Kitchen areas, family rooms, living rooms, etc. are great places for rat homes so they can see the ebb and flow of the family and be a part of the activity.

**Don't** use plastic base cages.

Avoid plastic base cages if the cage sits on top of the plastic rim, rather than down inside it. (ex: Super Pet Cages are notoriously a bad choice as rats frequently chew right through the plastic bottom!)

**Don't** use wire floor grates.

Avoid cages with large spaces on the floors (over 1/2 inch) or wire floor grates as little rat feet can get caught in them and your rat could be seriously injured. If the floor grate cannot be removed, cover the floor with tiles or linoleum.

**Don't** use cages that have floors with pull-out trays.

Rats can, and will, escape from these types of cage bottoms and/or get their leg stuck and injured while trying!

**Don't** use a glass tank to house your rats.

Not only are glass tanks small, but they also do not permit air flow and thereby allow odors (such as ammonia from urine) to build up within the tank, which is unhealthy for your rats' respiratory systems. Urine will also pool on the bottom of the tank making a glass tank an overall unhealthy living environment.

### **Recommended Cages**

#### **Midwest Critter Nation and Ferret Nation Cages -**

[Midwest Critter Nation](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NJ0DAE/) or <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NJ0DAE/>

The Critter Nation cage is by far a favorite amongst the rat community due to its ease of cleaning and spacious layout. Manufactured by Midwest, the Critter-Nation has 1/2 inch bar

spacing, whereas the Ferret Nation cage has 1 inch bar spacing. There are single versions that house 5-6 rats and double versions that house up to 12 rats. Add on units are also available.

**The Critter Nation can be ordered from a variety of online sites.**

**Petco Rat Manor -**

<https://www.petco.com/shop/en/petcostore/product/you-and-me-rat-manor-habitat>

Pricing varies between store and internet sales

The Petco Rat Manor can house up to 3 rats. However the ramps are a bit steeper and some feel the cage design is a bit flimsier. The shelves and ramps can be taken out and washed, and the cage can be folded up and put into the tub to scrub. It can also fold for traveling.

**Marshall Folding Mansion -**

<http://www.ferret.com/item/marshall-folding-mansion-ferret-home/650715/>

An option for families that travel with multiple rats, this powder-coated cage will house 12-14 adult rats. It folds and is easy to transport. However, it is only suitable for large adult rats as it has 1 inch bar spacing. In addition, the ramps are somewhat steep which is difficult for older rats. It also lacks a full floor and only has multiple mini-platforms, thus there is no continuous play space, only ramp to ramp.

**Frisco Cages - FRISCO Small Animal Cage**

Similar to the Critter Nation in style. Multi-level with add on options.

**Prevue Rat Cages - Prevue Pet Products Earthtone Dusted Rose Rat & Chinchilla Cage | Petco**

[Prevue Cage on Amazon](#)

While not MRR's first choice for a cage, it is a more economical option. We would only recommend 2-3 rats for this cage and plenty of accessories.

Pros:

small bar spacing

only one opening, which helps prevent rat escapes, for the newer fosters / adopters

Plenty of room to hang hammocks and accessories

flat metal ramps, nothing for toesies to get caught on

Cons:

Because of the one opening, it's not super convenient to get in there and spot clean

Ramps and shelves can start to rust at the edges after about a year  
Not a whole lot of floor space  
Not as easily able to be assembled / disassembled as a Critter Nation

### **UNACCEPTABLE CAGES**

#### **Super Pet Deluxe Cages**

We will accept this cage if you already have it, but it is best to avoid this type of cage. This is a plastic base cage and rats are notorious for chewing their way out of the plastic corners! We have heard of this happening so many times, we feel it is not worth spending the money on this cage type!

Despite being touted as a “rat cage”, this cage is barely big enough to house 2 rats and is so narrow, accessories do not fit. The plastic ramps and platforms fill up all the limited space and once again, it has a plastic base which rats can chew through.

#### **All Living Things Cages**

These cages are best to avoid, since they too have a plastic base. This is also a very narrow cage which makes it difficult to fit in accessories such as igloos and hidey houses. The wheel that comes with the cage is made of a metal grid, rather than a smooth surface. This type of wheel can cause injury to rattie toes and feet; smooth surface wheels are best. Also, the shelves are all plastic which means they will pool urine and the ramps are somewhat flimsy. The base is also a thin plastic and– guess what?– we've had rats chew right through the corners! It just isn't a good buy for the money.

#### **Marchioro Rat Cages**

These are single story rat cages, better for old infirm rats. Their designs are similar to guinea pig cages. There is no room for accessories or vertical space for climbing. The cages also have plastic bases so rats can chew out of them.

### **GLASS TANKS OF ANY KIND!!!**

Not only are glass tanks small, they do not permit air flow and thereby allow odors (such as ammonia from urine) to build up within the tank, which is unhealthy for your rats' respiratory systems. Urine will also pool on the bottom of the tank making a glass tank an overall unhealthy living environment.