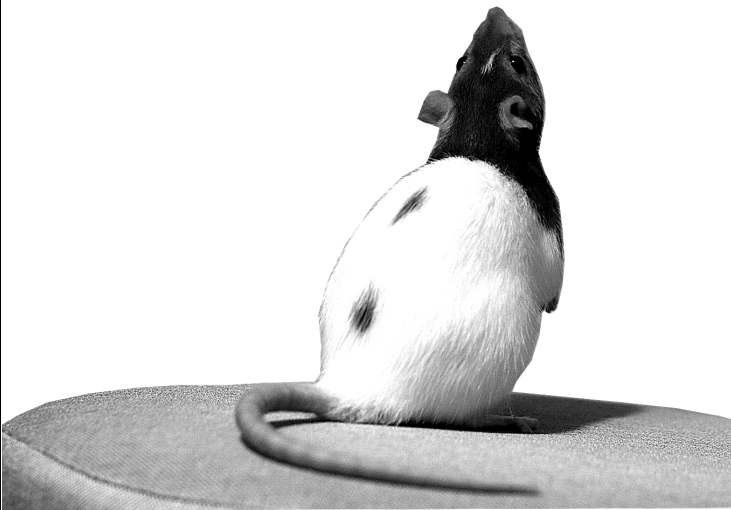


SCRUFFIANS RATTERY

CARE BOOKLET



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on your new babies! We hope you get a huge amount of enjoyment out of them. Please read through this booklet for a quick run down on how to care for your rats and how to settle them into their new home.

CONTACT

For more information, check the website:

scruffiansrattery.co.nz



Please feel free to contact us with any questions, updates, or concerns.

Email: scruffinasrattery@gmail.com

Phone: 0273284766

CONTRACT

1. The adopter accepts the responsibility for caring for above rat(s) and providing for its welfare.
2. The adopter agrees that above rat(s) will receive prompt medical care if and when it is needed.
3. The adopter agrees to provide companionship for above rat(s) with at least one rat companion of the same sex.
4. The adopter agrees to provide the above rat(s) with daily exercise in a safe environment.
5. The Buyer agrees to keep the above rat(s) in a safe and comfortable enclosure that is regularly cleaned.
6. The adopter agrees to feed above rat(s) a well-balanced diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, and provide clean water.
7. The adopter agrees that, if they are no longer able to care for their pet(s), the above rat(s) will not be sold or given to any pet shop, animal shelter, rescue, or re-homed in any way without first contacting the breeder .
8. The adopter agrees never to mentally or physically abuse the above rat(s).
9. The adopter agrees to keep the breeder updated on major health or temperament issues related to the above rat(s), including date(s) of death.
10. The breeder guarantees the that the rat(s) being sold, is/are in good health. The Breeder cannot guarantee the rats continued good health upon leaving the premises of the Rattery. The adopter has examined the rat(s) they are purchasing and agrees that the rat(s) appear to be healthy.
11. If the above rat(s) is being sold as a pet only (non-breeding), the adopter will not purposefully allow it to breed.

FIRST DAYS

The first days after bringing a new pet home are always exciting, but please give your new friends some time to adjust to their new environment without overwhelming them.

If you have other rats, don't put your new ones in their cage right away. Please have a look at the website (scruffiansrattery.co.nz) for instructions on how to introduce your new rats to your current ones.

When you get home, put your rats into their new cage, place the cage in a quiet room and give them a few hours to explore. They may be very active and interested in everything right from the beginning or they may stick to one area of the cage for a while before exploring new places. Make sure they have access to food and water.

After the rats have settled into their new home you can start getting them used to you. Put your hands in their cage and let them sniff, nibble, and lick your fingers. Don't make any sudden movements and talk calmly and softly to them. Reward them for interacting with you with treats.

When your rats are comfortable with you you can start getting them out of their cage for supervised out-of-cage play time in a safe environment. A couch, bed, or desk is a good place to let them run around as they are less likely to get lost behind something than if they are on the floor.

Enjoy your new babies!

HOUSING

Rats need a safe place to be when you're not around. Their cage should be chew-proof and safe from other animals that may try to break into it. It should have good ventilation and be made from non-toxic materials. Rats need at least 1.5 cubic feet/45 cubic cm of space each (imagine a cube with sides measuring 45 cm)

There are cages that are designed specifically for rats and many bird cages make great rat homes too. Expect to spend between \$100 and \$300 on your cage if you buy a new one, and \$50+ if you get a second hand one. Trademe is a good place to look (don't forget to check the bird section as well as the rat one). Some things to look for are:

- Correct bar spacing: 12 mm is best if you have babies as some can squeeze through bigger gaps.
- Ease of cleaning: coated or galvanised bars will be easy to clean and resist rust.
- Shelves/platforms: some cages have platforms that come with them but you may have to add them to bird cages yourself (see the website for a really good way to do this!)
- Access: the bigger the doors the better. Make sure the things you want in your rats home will fit through the door.

If you are going to use loose bedding in your cage make sure it is safe for rats. Aspen shavings or recycled paper kitty litter are the best options. Avoid pine shavings and clay or crystal based kitty litter.

Outfitting your cage can be done cheaply with things from dollar stores, or more expensively with things from pet shops. As a bare minimum, your rats will need:

- Food dishes: heavy ceramic ones will be easy to clean and hard to tip over.
- A water bottle
- A place to sleep: this could be an igloo, and covered hammock, or a cardboard box.

FOOD

Rats should have a grain based diet. You can buy rat mixes from the the pet store but these are often not the best choice. It is often better for your rats and much more cost effective to make your own mixes.

Our rats get a mix of oats, cornflakes, weet-bix, uncooked pasta, and seeds as their base diet. Other things you may want to add are low protein dog food, rice bubbles, dried fruit, cereals, shredded coconut, and dried rice. Bin-inn is a great place to get the things for your food mix but you can get everything from the super market too.

As well as the mix our rats get a few lab blocks each every day. You can get these from the NZ Rat Rescue website or their Trademe store. These not essential but will give you peace of mind knowing that your rats are getting the vitamins and minerals they need.

Rats LOVE variety so they will enjoy most fresh fruit and veggies (avoid oranges if you have boys though), little bits of meat, fish, and egg, as well as very small amounts of treat foods such as yogurt, or chocolate.

Rats usually wont over eat so they should have constant access to their dried mix. Fresh food should be given once a day and in small quantities so that it gets eaten before it has a chance to go bad.

It's a good idea to have at least two food bowls so that there are no fights over food.

VET CARE

Like all pets, rats sometimes need veterinary care. The most common problems are respiratory infections, abscesses, and tumors.

Respiratory infections will usually cause a rat to make a rattling sound when it breathes and it may look like it is struggling to breathe. Usually the rat will eat and act normally. Respiratory infections can usually be treated successfully with antibiotics which are mixed with the rat's food. Tumors are more likely to pop up in older female rats and have to be operated on and removed. Rats can be de-sexed which will almost always stop any hormonal aggression in males and lead to them marking less. It will also reduce the likelihood of both sexes developing tumors.

VET RECOMMENDATIONS (AUCKLAND)

PETstock VET Constellation drive

KV Varrsamy
09 479 7609

KV is the best vet I have been to for any animal. It's definitely worth talking your rats to her even if this isn't your local vet.

Other vet clinics with rat experience are:

Normanby Rd Vet (Mt Eden)
Whangaparoa Vet clinic
Pet Doctors (Mt Eden)

If you need to find a rat vet out of Auckland it's a good idea to ask on the RatClub Facebook page.

ENRICHMENT

Rats are surprisingly intelligent and love new things to play with and explore and challenges that get them thinking. Here are a few ideas of fun things that you can make or buy to give to your rats.

Nuts in their shells: Food is always tastier if you have to work to get it. All my rats have loved figuring out how to break into seeds. Walnuts are an easy starter nut and macadamias are a real challenge.

Hard boiled eggs in their shells: Only two of my rats have ever figured out how to get into an un-cracked egg. The two brothers would team up to roll the egg to the top shelf in their cage then push it off onto the edge of their food bowl to crack it. All rats will enjoy peeling eggs if you make a little hole in them as a starting point though.

Treats wrapped in paper or toilet rolls: Folding over the ends of toilet rolls with treats hidden inside is a good cheap way to give your rats a bit of a challenge.

Tissue boxes: Rats, especially girls, love pulling tissues out and making huts and nests in them. Rolls of toilet paper or paper towels are also pretty exciting.

Digging boxes: Rats enjoy digging so a plastic tub filled with soil and treats is great fun for them. Just make sure the sides of the box are high enough to stop dirt getting kicked out.

Chew sticks or blocks: Rat's teeth grow constantly and they wear them down by grinding them against each other and chewing things. It's a good idea to provide something safe (and replaceable) for them to chew. You can buy chew-able blocks at pet stores or use small branches from your garden (check that the tree they come from is rat-safe first).

Sprouted seeds: Fresh shoots are delicious and fun to dig up. You can buy soak seed from pet stores and soak the seeds in water for a few days to create a delicious mini-garden or grow some mustard seeds on paper towels for a fresh and tasty treat.

S C R U F F I A N S R A T T E R Y

scruffiansrattery.co.nz