



Guide to Hamster Cages

You should provide your hamster with the largest home possible. In the wild, a hamster burrow has many rooms and can be several feet underground. The domesticated hamster similarly prefers large spaces. If the cage is too small, your hamster may become bored, protective, and nippy. The minimum size for a hamster cage is 360 square inches but some sources are adopting 450 sq. in. as the new minimum. Square inches are calculated by multiplying the length times the width. Height does not affect the square inches but you still need to pay attention to the height to ensure its high enough for the wheel.

Of the dozens of hamster cages sold at pet stores and online, many are not suitable for hamsters. A cage may be too small, unsafe, or impractical. This guide will help you navigate the choices and pick the cage that is best for you and your hammy. Prices, availability, and details are always subject to change and may vary depending on where you live.

Recommended Cages for Syrian or Dwarf Hamsters

Prevue Pets 528 Universal Small Animals Home. Roomy one-level wire cage.

Advantages: Roomy; space for multiple nesting houses and wheels with room still for burrowing. Easy to clean. This cage has 617 square inches of space.

Disadvantages: Shelf may need to be removed.

Modifications: Add a solid wheel. Use care packet as reference to purchase wheel.

Available from: [Amazon](#)



Lixit Animal Care Savic Mickey 2 Mice and Swarf Hamster Cage, X-Large. Large one-level wire cage with accessories.

Advantages: This cage is bright and easy to assemble! At 630 square inches it will give your hamster lots of room to roam! It is easy to clean and comes with accessories for your hamster. Check to make sure each accessory is appropriate.

Disadvantages: Wheel is not suitable. Pricey.



Modifications: Add a wheel fit for your hamster. Use our care packet to determine which would be best. Remove the shelf or cover it with cardboard.

Available From: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Lixit Animal Care Savic Hamster Heaven Metro Cage. Very roomy one-level wire cage.

Advantages: Roomy; space for multiple nesting houses and wheels with room still for burrowing. Easy to clean. For those for whom money is not a consideration, this is an excellent choice.

Disadvantages: Pricey; no wheel.

Modifications: Add an appropriately sized wheel for your hamster. Use our care packet to determine which wheel is best.

Available from: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Single Unit Midwest Critter Nation. Stackable, roomy cage.

Advantages: Stackable; easy access into the cage; stands on its own. This cage has two large doors which opens up one whole side of the cage. This may create an easy escape for your hamster.

Disadvantages: Pricey. No wheel. No tub so bedding may fall out. Doors may create an escape route or let bedding fall. Ramp needs to be covered.

Available from: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



An aquarium tank should be at least a **30 gallons breeder**, with no sharp edges at the corners or cracked sides and a well-fitting top with no gaps or holes. The lid should be secure and well-ventilated, with a wire mesh top instead of air holes, which do not provide enough air for your hamster to breathe



normally. The aquarium's advantages are that it minimizes odors and retains bedding and food. It will also your hamster safe and confined, as long as the top is secure. The disadvantage is that there can be a lack of ventilation, and it must be cleaned often so that odors do not build up in the cage. Aquariums are bulky and can be heavy. **Do not use an aquarium smaller than 30 gallons breeders.**

Make Your Own Cage

With a little elbow grease, you can make a homemade hamster cage that is cheaper and much bigger than anything you can find in a pet store! Things you'll need:

- large plastic bin
- electric drill with drill bits
- small hacksaw
- hardware cloth
- Phillips screwdriver
- ruler
- marker
- 1/4 - 20 x 1/2 machine screws with nuts and washers (about 20 of each)
- all-purpose snips

1. Select an appropriately sized bin for your hamster cage. 105-110 quart works best, just no smaller than 105 quarts. We use a 200 qt bin. Make sure to check the height so your hamsters' wheel will fit, a Syrians wheel is 14 inches tall.
2. On the bottom side of the lid, mark the area you will cut out for the vent with a marker. Be sure to leave some space on each side for the hardware cloth.
3. Using the hand drill, drill two holes very close together so that they overlap. Do this at each corner. This will be the hole where the hacksaw will go through.
4. Using a small hacksaw, cut along the lines you drew to cut out the piece of plastic from the lid.
5. Take the hardware cloth and place it over the hole you just cut out of the lid to see how much cloth you will need.
6. Using snips, cut out the amount of hardware cloth needed.
7. Now cut off any pieces that are sticking out of the hardware cloth.
8. Place the hardware cloth over the hole and mark where you will need drill for the machine screws. Do this along the entire edge every few inches. Make sure you keep the hardware cloth in place to get accurate drilling spots.
9. Drill out holes where you marked in step (Tip: If you are unsure as to which size drill bit to use, test them out on the piece of plastic you cut out from the lid.)
10. Place a washer and machine screw on the bottom and secure it with a nut on the opposite side. Do this on four opposite sides to secure the hardware cloth. Then screw in the remaining holes. Use a screwdriver if needed to fasten the bolts tight.
11. Add accessories such as water bottles (a wall-mounted bottle with release latch is recommended; simply drill holes in the side of the bin for mounting).
12. Clean your hamster cage bin out. Make sure you remove any plastic shavings and fragments.

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For additional photos, visit <http://thehamsterplace.com/how-to-make-a-bin-cage/>



Cages We Do NOT Recommend

Among the cages that are **not suitable for hamsters** are the following:

Most **one-level cages** are just too small. This includes the **All Living Things one-level cage**, **All Living Things Deluxe 16" Starter Kit**, and **My First Home**.

All versions of **S.A.M.** cages are not recommended (a few examples are the Blue Knight Castle, Palace and Clubhouse kits, and Down Under Outback). The reason is that they are almost entirely solid plastic, allowing little ventilation. Some also contain wire floors, and though they may have tubes and towers, they actually provide very little floor space. They also have small wheels. Save your money for a better cage.

Critter Trail cages are very popular and come in one, two, and three-level versions. But the cage is made of cheap plastic parts that don't fit together very well. It can be difficult to assemble and to put back together after cleaning. If any part is not snapped in tight, the hamster can find the loose part and get out. The Petting Zone door must be snapped shut every time, or the hamster will be able to push it open. The Petting Zone area itself is poorly ventilated and can become filthy and smelly over time. The water bottle is of poor quality. The wheel is too small for Syrian hamsters. Finally, the door can become loose over time, so the hamster can easily push it open.

All Living Things three-level cage contains wire floors that must be covered with solid materials to protect hamsters' feet. The wheel is too small for Syrians. Save your money for a better cage.

Coast Cages Del Mar Hamster/Rat cage has wire floors that must be covered with solid materials to protect hamsters' feet. The wheel is attached to the side of the cage and does not come off for cleaning. There are no doors on the bottom level, so if your hammy is on that level and you want to get him or her out, you have to lift off the whole top. Save your money for a better cage.

What about wheels? Wheels should be made from one solid piece and should not have spaces between rungs as this can cause injuries (the hamster's legs can fall through the rungs and break). Wheels for Syrian hamsters should be at least 10 inches in diameter. We recommend the Wodent Wheel or the large Comfort Wheel for either Syrians or dwarves (both widely available online) We recommend the 6.5-inch Silent Spinner for dwarf hammies and 12" for Syrians; available at PetSmart).

Questions? E-mail hamsters@smallangelsrescue.org.

Updated 5/15/19