

HOUSING

Rats need to be housed indoors in a cage that is adequate in size for the amount of rats within. There is some controversy regarding whether pet rats are fossorial or arboreal. Many pet groups insist rats are arboreal as they enjoy climbing. Science and natural habits indicate rats are fossorial as they live in burrows underground in the wild.

Domestic rats do seem to enjoy climbing, however they also enjoy burrowing and foraging. It is also dependent on the personality of your rats. Ideally, you want a cage that allows for floor space as well as climbing/hanging space. A rat should never be forced to climb to be comfortable.

Scientifically speaking, rats need between 0.5-2 square meters per rat. This is **floor space** per rat, not volume. The minimum height of a cage should allow the rat to stand fully upright on its hind legs, without the head touching the top of the cage.

The more levels you have in a cage, the more floor space you have and therefore the more rats can fit. It is imperative to note that hammocks and areas designated purely for sleeping, such as sputniks, do NOT count as floor space! It is the equivalent of hanging beds from the roof in your home. Yes there is more place to exist but the space is purely for sleeping. Levels and Floor Space allow for running, playing, wrestling, etc.

WHEN DECIDING HOW MANY RATS SHOULD GO INTO A CAGE, YOU MUST CONSIDER SEVERAL FACTORS

- ❖ Activity level of the rats (if they are lazy, more can go into a cage. If they are active, less can go into a cage)
- ❖ How the colony functions as a whole (do they fight when confined to a smaller space? Do they prefer to cuddle together, or have their own space?)
- ❖ How often do you want to clean (more rats= more cleaning)
- ❖ How much free roaming time do they get (out of cage time).
- ❖ Size of the rats

Below we will go into the various types of cages available, the costs of the cages, the pros and cons of each cage and our personal recommendations.

Many of the cages below require some form of modification to be suitable for rats. If you do not plan on doing any modifications, please choose a different cage.

TRADITIONAL CAGES



- These types of cages are often more geared towards giving the rats height over floor space, and usually do not offer much in the way of digging opportunities without additional customisation
- Girls tend to like this type of cage more. You can create levels by buying actual levels (either Perspex or metal), by hanging baskets or making wooden levels




DEEP BASE CAGES




- These types of cages are often bunny cages.
- They often have wide bar spacing so make them unsuitable for females or young rats. This can be rectified by covering the cage in mesh.
- They provide ample room for burrowing, but can often lack in climbing room.

DIY CAGES

- There are many ways to make a DIY cage.
- The pros are that you can customise it for your needs (height, floor space, deep base, levels, material it is made of, etc).
- Cons are that you may find you need tools you do not have, or may battle if you are not handy.

<u>CAGE</u>	<u>COST & STORE</u>	<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS & MODIFICATIONS</u>
 <p>XL Rat Cage ✓</p>	R750 from Pet Mania	<p>Perfect for 2-3 rats with daily out time.</p> <p>Small bar spacing for babies</p> <p>Good floor space to size ratio</p>	<p>No more than 3 rats at a time (and no more than 2 if your rats are big)</p> <p>Not much space for creativity in decorating and enrichment</p> <p>Custom correx base or container required for adequate substrate</p>
 <p>Penthouse ✗</p>	R1100 from Pet Mania	<p>Small bar spacing for babies</p> <p>Opportunity for creativity with decor and enrichment</p>	<p>Small door size</p> <p>Poor floor to size ratio</p> <p>Custom correx base or container required for adequate substrate</p> <p>Only good for 4 rats with no additional levels</p>

 <p>Mansion ✗</p>	<p>R1380 from Pet Mania</p>	<p>Small bar spacing for babies</p> <p>Opportunity for creativity with decor and enrichment</p> <p>Can be turned on side for better floor to size ratio- good for 6 rats with no additional levels</p>	<p>Small door size</p> <p>Poor floor to size ratio when upright</p> <p>Custom correx base or container required for adequate substrate</p> <p>Only good for 4 rats with no additional levels</p>
 <p>Savic 95/Equivalent ✓</p>	<p>R6030 from Catbox Pet Hyper</p> <p>R4492 (replica) from CR Pet Cages</p> <p>R2715 (knockoff) from CR Pet Cages</p>	<p>Adequate floor space for 8-12 rats</p> <p>Opportunity for creativity with decor and enrichment</p> <p>Full size doors (except in the case of the knockoff which only half the doors open)</p> <p>Replica has large, deep metal bases. Perfect for deep bedding</p>	<p>Savic 95 has shallow plastic pans which do not allow for adequate substrate. Will need large dig boxes or custom correx bases</p> <p>Knockoff has slightly wider bars, unsuitable for babies</p> <p>Savic rusts quickly if not taken care of correctly</p> <p>Expensive (Savic)</p>
 <p>Gentlemans Rat Cage ✓</p>	<p>R1500 from Pet Mania</p> <p>R1377.40 from CR Pet Cages</p>	<p>Good for 4-6 rats</p> <p>Deep base for adequate bedding</p> <p>Opportunity for creativity with decor and enrichment</p>	<p>Bar spacing not appropriate for babies</p> <p>Relatively small door</p>

 <p>Zeno Range ✓</p>	<p>R3,979 from Pet World</p> <p>R3099 from Pet World</p>	<p>Deep base for adequate bedding</p> <p>Opportunity for creativity with decor and enrichment</p> <p>Small bar spacing for babies</p> <p>Good for 4-8 rats (depending on specific cage)</p>	<p>Small doors</p> <p>Expensive relative to similarly sized cages from other suppliers</p>
 <p>Bunny Cages (variety) ✓</p>	<p>R449.50 from CR Pet Cages</p> <p>R960 from Pet Mania</p>	<p>Many sizes available so you can get what you need</p> <p>Deep base for adequate bedding</p>	<p>Bar spacing too large for rats. Need to be meshed</p>
 <p>Bin Cages ✓</p>	<p>R200+</p> <p>R230 for 160 litre from Makro</p> <p>Mesh from R60 p/m</p>	<p>Customisable</p> <p>Deep base for adequate bedding</p> <p>Correct mesh=correct bar spacing</p> <p>2-6 rats per bin dependant on size</p>	<p>Requires certain tools</p> <p>Requires effort</p> <p>Bin size limited horizontally</p> <p>No front door unless you make one</p>

Please chat to us BEFORE buying a cage if you are a new owner. The above is only a few of the options out there. Only the cages with the ✓ are options we personally recommend, however there are plenty more out there that we can chat with you about