

Gerbil Out-of-Cage Options

Create a safe environment for your gerbil to get out and run.

By Rachael Brugger

Gerbils love to run at top speed so getting your pet gerbil out of its cage everyday would make it very happy. However this is not necessary, especially if it has a cage companion. Letting your gerbil free in an open space at least once a week will fulfill its instinct to run.

Create a safe room for your gerbil to run around by eliminating hazards. First, remove anything that the gerbil might chew. This includes electrical cords, newspapers, magazines, plants, harmful chemicals and small plastic or wood objects. Also close off anywhere where the gerbil can escape or fall, such as a heating vent. Remember, gerbils can easily jump at least a foot high, so high platforms need to be secured or blocked.

You want to use this time to interact with your pet gerbil. Gerbils love being held, but do not try to constrain them. Allow your pet gerbil to run up and down your arms and shoulders. Do not worry about it escaping off your body because gerbils have a fear of heights and will not jump. As long as you keep steady, you and your gerbil should be fine.

When it is time for your gerbil to return to its cage, place the cage in an area where your small pet can climb in on its own. If necessary, carefully nudge the gerbil in the right direction or use a cardboard tube to pick it up and move it. If the gerbil runs under furniture, try not to move the furniture but cautiously coax it out by using a broom or patting your hand on the ground.

Avoid making any sudden movements or swooping motions. This reminds your gerbil of a preying bird and will frighten it. Do not lift a gerbil by its tail. You can gently use its tail to guide it in certain directions, but using too much force could break the appendage.