

Gerbil Housing Maintenance

Keep your gerbil healthy with regular cage cleanings.

By Rachael Brugger

Gerbils Katie and Kallie/Courtesy Todd Sciore
Keep your gerbils' environment clean to minimize risks to their health.

One of the biggest dangers to gerbils is the exposure to bacteria. However, they produce little waste and are naturally clean animals, which will make cleaning your pet gerbil's cage an easy task. As a rule of thumb, do a major clean of the cage one or two times a month as needed.

Monthly Maintenance Checklist:

Put your gerbil in a temporary box. Its traveling cage will do. If you have a multi-unit cage, nudge the gerbil into one unit and close it off.

Toss all soiled bedding. A vacuum will aid you in removing all bedding particles.

Wash all walls and accessories. Donna Anastasi, president of the American Gerbil Society, recommends filling an emptied gerbil tank about 1/3 full of water and adding a few drops of bleach – about 1/8 teaspoon. Slosh the water around the sides and dump the bleach water and rinse thoroughly with clean water. You can also wipe down the cage a mild soap solution or a gerbil-safe cleanser found at a pet store. Be sure to rinse the walls and accessories several times to rid the cage of any chemicals.

Dry the cage and accessories with a cloth.

Refill the cage with fresh bedding.

Though the cage does not need to be cleaned often, it is good to do daily checks to make sure that your pet gerbil's home is safe. This will also help establish a trust relationship with your gerbil and it will look forward to this time with you.

Daily Maintenance Checklist:

Remove any soiled bedding.

Replace sand in sand bath.

Check for potential hazards. Stabilize accessories and platforms and close off any potential escape routes.

“Redecorate.” Add new toys and move accessories around the nest. Your gerbil will enjoy the challenge of exploring new toys and arrangements.