

## Identify Hamster Body Language And Stress

**Hamsters communicate with body language and vocalizations.**

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Hamster Pooch/Courtesy Y. Thompson

Hamsters can't speak, but they can communicate using body language and vocalizations.

Hamsters can't talk, but they can tell us a lot about what they're feeling through their body language and vocalizations. If you're observant, it's easy to learn what a hamster is trying to tell you.

Here are some examples of hamster body language and sounds and what they mean.

Chewing on cage bars: "I'm bored; please get me some new toys to chew on or put me in a bigger cage so I have more room to run and play."

Eyes barely open, ears laid back: "I'm sleepy; give me a little more time to wake up or I might bite."

Grooming: "I need to clean up after play or naptime."

Running, interspersed with grooming: "I'm agitated, confused or excited."

Sitting up, ears forward, without moving: "I see something interesting."

Squeaking: "I'm not happy and I might not feel good. Put me back in my cage."

Yawning or stretching: "I feel great; I've just had a good day's sleep."

Like every animal, a hamster needs a safe, comfortable environment to remain free of stress and anxiety, which can lead to health and behavior problems. Hamsters indicate stress by biting, squeaking and overeating.

If your hamster appears to be stressed, take a look at its living quarters to see if changes can improve the environment. Keep the cage and bedding clean, avoid waking the hamster during the day, cage Syrian hamsters or dwarf species that fight with each other separately, provide a running wheel, tunnels and chew toys, place the cage in an area where it's not exposed to drafts or high temperatures, and provide plenty of food and nesting material for a mother with babies.