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RAT CAGES

Rats are kept in cages similar to a large bird cage. They need good air ventilation, so should not be kept in enclosures with completely solid walls, and absolutely NEVER in a glass aquarium.

There aren't many good rat cages available and although many cages are described as being suitable for rats, a lot of these are far too small or have bar spacing which is far too wide for rats. Also be aware that accessories that may come with a "rat" cage might not be useable – for instance, the drip drink bottles that come with most cages are usually meant for larger animals like rabbits and guinea pigs, etc., so are not suitable for rats. The ball size is too heavy for rats to use, and they won't be able to get any water out of them.

Most people start out with a smaller, less expensive cage and upgrade to a bigger and better one, or in a lot of cases upgrade several times! So in the long run it's cheaper to invest in a better cage in the first place. A good quality cage will look better, last longer, be easier to clean and decorate and will make life with your new pets much easier and more enjoyable.

Style of Cage: Cages differ a lot in their design and quality so it's a good idea to actually see all the options before purchasing - taking into account where the cage will be placed and how you will be keeping your rats. For example, you may prefer a freestanding cage on wheels if you are going to be moving the cage from room to room. If you are not going to litter train your rats, you will need a cage with a deep base to spread with litter, but if your rats use a litter tray to toilet in then you don't have to have a cage with a deep base.

Bar spacing: **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!** Rats can squeeze through very small spaces! Bar spacing should not exceed 1.25cm. Young rats or small adults may be able to get out of anything over 1.25cm. PLEASE CHECK THE BAR SPACING BEFORE PURCHASING.

It's a good idea to check a newly purchased cage to make sure there are no bent bars, any places where the bar spacing is slightly wider, or other odd gaps that might allow rats to escape or get stuck trying to get out. Any gaps can be securely covered with non-chew material such as a patch of Mouse wire (available from Bunnings), held in place with enough cable ties (preferably metal ties) to hold it close to the bars so the rats can't push in between.

Cages with wide bar spacing can be made escape proof by covering the entire cage with mouse wire, but this far from ideal. It's a lot of work to do, and almost impossible to cut the wire without leaving sharp edges - a huge number of cable ties are needed to attach the wire all over. The wire also makes it very hard to clean the cage.

Size: Bigger is definitely better. Please look at the measurements of the cages listed. We highly recommend investing in a spacious cage. But take into account how much usable space the cage has – rats can't fly, they can only utilize the spaces they can reach.

Shape/Flooring/Levels

Cages with a good amount of horizontal space are best. A wide cage with a few large levels is much more practical than a tall, thin cage with lots of small platforms. Rats need good sized flat areas to safely run, wrestle and play with each other and their toys, as well as providing plenty of room to place hide houses, boxes, food dishes, etc.

Always use all the levels/platforms that come with the cage. Most cages will benefit from adding additional levels which can be clipped or attached to the bars with cable ties, wire hooks, etc., to keep them in place. If you have a tall cage, it is vital that platforms, hammocks and other items are placed strategically throughout the cage as safety nets, to prevent a rat falling all the way from the top to the bottom of the cage. **Falls can cause serious injury and can be fatal.** It's also important to provide ladders, ramps and other items which are not too steep so the rats can easily get to the various levels. Some rats are good climbers but a lot are not. Old rats or rats suffering from hind leg degeneration often have trouble climbing at all, and need to be housed in a single level cage.

Rat cages should not have wire flooring, these can cause ulcers and injuries to rats' feet. If your cage has wire levels, they should either be replaced with solid levels or covered with some sort of solid sheeting. Perspex is the best option as it is easy to clean and rats don't chew it, but any solid plastic sheeting or outcut vinyl flooring will work. Any company that cuts/moulds plastic should be able to make levels and trays to measure, but the AusRFS can provide details of companies that our members have used. In addition, some people also like to cover their cage levels with fleece fabric, others prefer to lay down newspaper. However, these last two options are only recommended if your rat is NOT a chewer.

Galvanized cages should never be used, unless you have it painted or powder coated first, as your pet may become very ill and possibly die from zinc poisoning. Galvanized cages are very rare nowadays.

Metal cages can be professionally powder coated to protect them, give them a new look or colour. The AusRFS can advise of a company that some of our members have used.

The AusRFS sometimes has the small cage listed on page 11 and other new cages for sale to the public. We also occasionally have second hand cages for sale, but they are always offered to club members first.

Buying second-hand can be a good option and a bargain can often be found on Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree, or eBay if you know what to look for.

The AusRFS is available to give advice, including what accessories to buy and how to set up a cage. Please see the accessories page of our website. An internet search on words like "rat cage set up", "rat cage decoration", etc., will provide some good ideas, but remember everyone keeps their rats slightly differently, and things that work for some people or rats may not work for others.

The following pages contain details of the most common cages currently available. The ones on the last page are cages we do not recommend. Of course not every cage can be listed, so if you see a cage for sale, new or second hand that you are not sure about, please free to send a link to the AusRFS and we can check to see if it's suitable for rats.



CRITTER NATION – Double Unit or Single Unit

Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

These excellent quality cages have been the benchmark rat cage in the US for many years. Critter Nation is the original cage of this style and still the best. The large doors open up the whole front of the cage, making cleaning and decorating a breeze, and also allows trays and levels to be easily inserted. The cage is on wheels and is easy to move around. The door latches very are secure. The bar spacing is ideal for rats – even babies.

These are American cages, available for purchase from the US via Amazon, and a great option if you can get free shipping from the USA. Extra platforms and ramps are available which are well worth purchasing. Extender units are also available which can be added onto a single unit to make a double unit.

Please Note:

This company makes another cage called Ferret Nation which is designed for larger animals and is NOT suitable for rats. The Ferret Nation cage has a bar spacing of 2.54cm which is far too wide for rats. Please note the Model Numbers listed below to ensure you are buying the correct cage.

CRITTER NATION – SINGLE UNIT

Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

Model No. 161

Price: \$295

Size: 91.4cm x 63.5cm x 97.8cm

Bar spacing: 1.27cm



CRITTER NATION – DOUBLE UNIT

Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

Model No. 162

Price: \$486

Size: 91.4cm x 61cm x 160cm

Bar Spacing: 1.27cm

This cage can be divided into 2 separate living quarters by blocking off the ramp access between the levels. Some owners keep their rats in the top section and use the bottom section for storage if their rats don't need access to the full cage.



FERRET KINGDOM & FERRET KINGDOM JUNIOR

These cages are no longer commercially available, but details are included as these cages were the best cage available in Australia for many years and are still spoken of in rat circles. These cages can still occasionally be found second-hand.

Because FK and FKJ cages were so highly regarded, they have been copied – a lot! Copycat cages are sometimes advertised as Ferret Kingdoms, so please make sure you know what you are buying. The copies can look very similar in a photo, but the quality can be very different - bar spacing is one common difference, some have fake doors or gaps where rats can escape.

PuppyPower was the sole seller of this cage, so if a new cage is advertised as a FK or FKJ, it's a fake.

Genuine FK & FKJ cages are very sturdy and excellent quality, providing plenty of room. The large doors open up the whole front of the cage, making cleaning and decorating a breeze, and also allow trays and levels to be easily inserted. The cage is on lockable wheels and is easy to move around. The door latches very are secure. The 1.25cm bar spacing is ideal for rats – even babies.

FERRET KINGDOM JUNIOR

Price: \$325.95 the last listed price

Size (including stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 98cm

Size Living Space (excluding stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 60.5cm

Bar spacing: 1.25cm

Ferret Kingdom Junior provides half the cage space of the Ferret Kingdom – it's basically the bottom section of the Ferret Kingdom, so it takes up the same floor space, and just half the height.

If you prefer the cage to be up higher, you don't have to use the stand. The cage can be placed on a table or cabinet.



FERRET KINGDOM

Price: \$545.00 the last listed price

Size (including stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 159.5cm

Size: Living Space (excluding stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 121cm

Bar spacing: 1.25cm

This cage can be divided into 2 separate living quarters by blocking off the ramp access between the levels. Some owners keep their rats in the top section and use the bottom section for storage if their rats don't need access to the full cage.



BUDROL – METAL CAGE

This cage comes in 2 sizes - a single and a double unit.

The best Critter Nation / Ferret Kingdom style cage currently available for sale in Australia.

Both units have large doors that open up the whole front of the cage, making the cage easy to clean and decorate. The trays and ladders are removable for easy cleaning. The whole cage is metal, no plastic.

The bar spacing is perfect for all rats. However, the deep tray does not sit flush with the cage bars, so it is not suitable for baby rats (under about 6 weeks), as they could get caught in the space between the bars. However, this cage could fairly easily be modified to make it suitable for little babies.

The deep tray makes this cage good for “messy” rats as it stops litter, etc., being kicked out. It is also suitable for rats that are not litter trained, as the whole tray can be covered with a layer of litter.

As with all cages, adding additional levels will increase to the useable space in this cage.

Available on the Budtrol store on ebay. The store is located in Sydney and dispatches quickly Australia wide. Please note: this shop sells many animal cages. A few other cages listed look similar but have large bar spacing and are not suitable for rats. The seller is good at listing which of their cages suit which animals. The cages listed on this page and page 6 of this document are the only ones this seller lists as suitable for rats, and the only 3 we recommend from this site.

Tips: We recommend not installing the swing flap on the top right of unit as it can damage the door if it's closed hard against the flap in the down position. The swing flap is not needed to secure the door - there is a bolt to hold the left-hand door, and the middle latch secures the right hand door to the left. With no swing flap to hold up, the doors can be opened one handed - a big advantage when holding rats!

These cages don't have inbuilt bottoms. The full sized slide out trays act as the bottom of the cage. We haven't encountered an issue with this as the trays fit snugly. If owners are concerned then a sheet of custom cut perplex or similar solid sheeting can be placed under the tray.

SINGLE UNIT

Cage Name: 9mm Bar Spacing Rat Cage Hamster Cat Ferret Rabbit Cage Hutch Enclosure

Price \$300

Size: 83 cm (H) x 93.5 cm (W) x 63 cm (D)

Bar spacing: 9mm

Construction: All metal

A great option for up to 6 rats.

2 fully opening doors.

This cage comes with casters which makes it easy to move it around. However, the cage sits very low to the ground, making it a little inconvenient to access. One option is not to use the casters and place the cage on a cabinet or table.

Link to this cage on Budrol eBay shop

<https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/231445760705?hash=item35e33e0ac1:g:JEQAAOSwG5teOLDN&frcectupt=true>



DOUBLE UNIT

Cage Name: 9mm Bar Spacing 161cm Double Rat Cage Hamster Cat Ferret Cage Rabbit Cage Hutch

Price \$550

Size: 161c (H) x 93.5cm (W) x59cm (D)

Bar spacing: 9mm

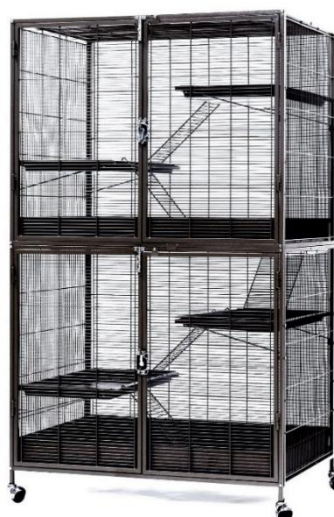
Construction: All metal

The largest rat cage currently available.

4 fully opening doors.

Link to this cage on Budrol eBay shop

<https://www.ebay.com.au/str/budtrol?trksid=p2047675.m3561.l2563>



BUDROL ROUNDED CORNER - LARGE FERRET CAGE - 4 LEVELS

Price: \$300

Size: Length 94cm x Depth 59cm Height 161cm (including stand)

Cage size: Length 92cm x Depth 55cm Height 115cm

Construction: aluminium cage, plastic levels and ramps.

Door size: 48 x 40cm

Bar spacing: 8mm

Floor bar spacing: 8mm

Platform access hole diameter: 15cm

Although this cage is of fairly light construction, weighing less than the previously listed cages, it is good quality, and durable if not knocked around.

The levels and ramps are made from durable plastic, and though rats could chew them, we have not heard of this happening.

This cage has a metal pull out litter tray on the bottom, but the wire cage base sits on top of this. Therefore, something solid needs to be placed on top of the wire base so that rats are not walking on the bars (eg. Perspex sheet, corflute, or vinyl flooring offcut, etc.). This makes the metal pull out tray useless. If you are handy, you can probably work out a way to modify the metal tray to use to cover the wire bars.

This cage has rounded corners which would make replacing or adding levels a little difficult.

It has 2 good sized doors. The levels are small and have access holes positioned over the ramps, which takes away some of the usable area of the levels.



Available on the Budtrol store on ebay. The store is located in Sydney and dispatches quickly Australia wide. Please note: this shop sells many animal cages. A few other cages listed look similar, but have large bar spacing and are not suitable for rats. The seller is good at listing which of their cages suit which animals. The cages listed on this page and page 5 of this document are the only ones this seller lists as suitable for rats, and the only 3 we recommend from this site.

Link to purchase:

<https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/232018492601?hash=item3605613cb9:g:nIEAOSwHP1eDH-2>

AVI ONE FLIGHT CAGE

Model Number 603

Approximate Price: \$230

Measurements: (cage only) **Length** 65 x **depth** 43.5 x **height** 70cm.

The stand is about 70cm high bringing the total height to about 140cm

This is a bird cage, but it can be modified to make it suitable for rats by putting in levels and ramps or ladders. It is a sturdy, well-made cage, and the wheels make it easy to move. The large door gives very good access to the cage.

Although this cage has a metal pull out litter tray on the bottom, the wire cage base sits on top of this. Therefore, something solid needs to be placed on top of the wire base so that rats are not walking on the bars (eg. Perspex sheeting, corflute, or vinyl flooring offcut, etc.). This makes the metal pull out tray useless. If you are handy, you can probably work out a way to modify the metal tray to use to cover the wire bars.

There are about 5 different Avi One flight cages which are the same design, but different sizes. Model number 603 and 604 are reasonable sizes for a small number of rats and seem to be the better ones for the price. The bigger models are quite expensive so other cages listed here would be better value.

There are many other styles of bird cages that can be modified to make them suitable for rats. Please check the bar spacing and the size of doors.

Where to buy

Online or pet supply stores - shop around - the prices vary a lot.



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Avi One Cage - as comes
(setup for birds)



Avi One Cage with levels and ladders added
to make it suitable for rats.

BONO FIDO - GREEN PLASTIC BASE CAGE

Brand: Bono Fido

Price \$160

Size: 100cm x 64cm x 53cm

Bar spacing: 9mm

Optional stand available.



This and the cage listed on page 9 are the best options for those looking for a moulded plastic base style cage.

It can house up to a few rats, provided they are out of their cage a fair amount of the time.

This is a reasonably good quality cage and is lightweight for the size. The bars are plastic coated which can be damaged if chewed, the exposed metal prone to rusting over time.

This cage can be used for all rats, including newborns, as the bars are a consistent small spacing. If using for babies, please check for bent bars which may leave a gap big enough for babies to get out – this commonly happens around the top corners of this style cage.

The deep base makes it suitable for “messy” rats or those that are not trained to use a separate litter tray, as the whole base of the cage can be covered with a layer of litter if necessary.

Because it is wide rather than high, it is a very good option for old rats who can’t climb well.

The cage features 2 doors, which are a reasonable size. The wire top unclips from the base for cleaning and to get houses, litter trays and other larger objects in and out of the cage.

As for all plastic base cages, they are not suitable for rats who are likely to chew their cage.

Comes with a litter tray, drink bottle, 2 food dishes, tubing with ventilation holes and a corner shelf.

Tips: Additional levels can be added to make more useable space for rats. Most owners don’t use the tubing which comes with this cage as it is hard to clean and only attaches with chains. It is better to replace them with ramps or ladders.

Where to buy

This cage is sold by a few sellers.

Habitat Pets was the seller with the best price at time of printing. They have several stores located around Melbourne.

<https://www.habitatpets.com.au/products/bono-fido-ferret-and-rat-cage>

PET ONE - PET ONE RAT STARTER KIT CAGE

Brand: Pet One

Price \$260 (without stand), \$308 with stand.

Size: 101.5cm L x 51cm W x 58cm H

Bar Spacing: 10mm

Colour of base: Grey or Beige

This is a more expensive and slightly smaller than the cage on the previous page, but with larger doors, and the smallest cage we recommend as a permanent home for rats. It can house up to a few rats, provided they are out of their cage a fair amount of the time.

The wire cage clips onto the plastic base.

This cage does not come with any levels so there is a lot of unusable space. Levels and ramps or ladders need to be added to this cage.

As for all plastic base cages, they are not suitable for rats who are likely to chew their cage.

Note: While we recommend the cage, the accessories it comes with are cheap, basic, and too small – single layer hammock, igloo, wooden ladder, food bowl, drinking bottle, and corner litter tray (see bottom picture).

The wheel pictured in the top picture no longer comes with the cage as this type of wheel is dangerous for rats. The store no longer sells these wheels.

Where to buy

Pet City was selling this cage for the best price at time of printing.

Link to cage without stand: <https://www.petcity.com.au/pet-one-rat-starter-kit-cage>

Link to cage with stand: <https://www.petcity.com.au/pet-one-rat-starter-kit-cage-with-stand>



SAVIC - ZENO 2 KNOCK DOWN SMALL ANIMAL CAGE

Brand: Savic

Dimensions: 80 x 50 x 70cm (L x W x H)

Bar Spacing: 9.5mm

Price: \$300

This cage is not good value for the price.

As the name suggests, this cage is designed to come apart for easy transport and storage. But it is NOT easy to assemble, and the wire panels tend to come out of the plastic frame sections when the top of the cage is unclipped from the plastic base.

This is the highest of the moulded plastic base style cages. Because it only has one small corner shelf, there is a lot of unusable space. This cage really needs extra levels added to make more usable space for rats.

The door is a reasonable size and has a very good catch.

As for all plastic base cages, they are not suitable for rats who are likely to chew their cage.

Where to purchase

This cage is sold by several sellers.

My Pet Warehouse had the best price at time of printing.

<https://www.mypetwarehouse.com.au/savic-zeno-2-knock-down-small-animal-cage-p-33820>



ALL PET - PLASTIC BLUE BASE CAGE

Brand: All Pet

Price \$150

Size: L - 78cm, W- 43cm, H - 50cm

Bar spacing: 9mm

This is a small cage. We do not recommend it as a permanent residence for rats.

This is a great holiday cage as it's easy to carry and get in and out of a car. It is suitable for housing sick or geriatric rats, also mothers with litters as it has consistent, small bar spacing, and the high sided, moulded base keeps babies safe.

This cage is a very good choice for owners who have free range rats and just need a cage to use as a base station or sleeping quarters.

Probably the best quality of all the moulded plastic base cages available. The bars are not coated so they don't chip and they don't tend to rust.



It's a lightweight cage for the size. The deep base makes it very suitable for "messy" rats or those that are not trained to use a separate litter tray, as the whole base of the cage can be covered with a layer of litter if necessary.

As for all plastic base cages, they are not suitable for rats who are likely to chew their cage.

The cage features 2 doors, which are a reasonable size. The wire top unclips from the base for cleaning and to get houses and other larger objects in and out of the cage.

They come with a good sized litter tray, drink bottle, 2 food dishes, tubing with ventilation holes and a corner shelf.

Additional levels can be added to make more useable space for rats.

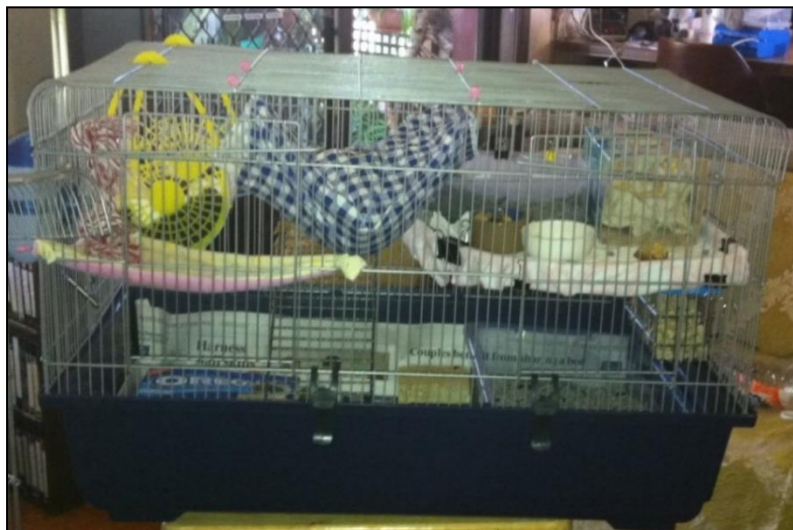
Tips: Most owners don't use the tubing which comes with this cage as it is hard to clean and only attaches with chains. It is better to replace them with levels and ramps or ladders.

Where to buy

The AusRFS sells these cages. We have an account with the importer, so can offer them at a very good price.

They are also available from other sellers such as Pet City in Brisbane, usually at a higher price than we sell them for - please take their shipping costs into account if not buying from AusRFS.

Here is the link to the Pet City store <https://www.petcity.com.au/cage-rat-2-level-w-tubes-allpet>



CAGES WE DO NOT RECOMMENDED

Examples of cages that look like Critter Nation & Ferret Kingdom, but are low-quality copies and not suitable for rats. There are many other copycat cages around - please be careful.

CRAZY SALES 4 LEVEL PET CAGE

Approximate Price: \$400

Size: 93cm L , 63cm D, 160cm H

Bar spacing: 1.5cm approx.

The bar spacing is listed as "150 approx.", but the gaps are often much wider in places, making this cage unsuitable for rats. It's also prone to rust.

Link to Crazysales website for information only
<https://m.crazysales.com.au/online-4-levels-pet-cage-rabbit-hutch-cat-hamster-guinea-pig-ferret-chinchilla-house-164819.html>

Please note: Crazy Sales sells other cages - none are suitable for rats.



TUCKER CAGE

Price: 189.00

Bar spacing: 2.3cm – far too big for rats

Only has 2 doors, the left side panels do not open.

Wire flooring.

Sold by from multiple sellers.

Link to Coops & Cages website for information only
<https://www.coopsandcages.com.au/product/tucker-rat-cage/>

Please note: none of the "rat cages" listed on this site are suitable for rats.

There is another cage which looks like this one. That cage has good bar spacing on the side panels, but huge gaps on the base where rats can escape.



This cage is widely available and commonly bought by first time rat owners looking for a cheap cage, without realising how big rats grow and how much space they require.

The AusRFS Rescue Service does not adopt rats to homes where they will be housed in this cage.

PET ONE – FERRET & RAT CAGE

Brand: Pet One. Model Number 505

Price \$100 (Approx)

Size: Length 61cm x Width 36cm x Height 60cm

Bar spacing: 900cm approx.

This cage is too small to house rats. It is a very basic, economy cage, known to fall apart and the trays are easily broken.

This cage would be alright to use as a base station and sleeping quarters for rats who spend all their time out of the cage. But even in this situation **there are much better options!**

The wire grill on the bottom of this cage is not suitable for rats to walk on (walking on wire can cause bumble foot in rats), so would need to be covered with some sort of solid sheeting. Some owners have modified this cage by taking out the bottom grill so that the rats have access to the bottom tray, but this makes the cage very easy to escape from as the cage doesn't have a bottom. Rats can get out between the bars and the ill-fitting plastic tray or chew an escape hole in the tray.

Please note: This cage comes in 2 sizes (that look the same). This model is small, the other is even smaller. There are generic cages available which look the same – the quality and measurements are similar, and none of them are recommended.

These cages are sold by various sellers.

Link to Pet One website for information only

<https://www.petone.com.au/small-animal/small-animals-cage-carriers2/item/316-505>

