

The Critter Connection, Inc
P.O. Box 371
Durham, CT 06422
www.CTGuineaPigRescue.com

Housing & Cage Location

Housing

Guinea pigs need ample room to move around in their cages. Unfortunately, many people buy the same cages that some pet stores house their guinea pigs and other animals in, not realizing that those cages (which are only about 22 inches long) are way too small for even one guinea pig. Further, they sometimes get cages with wire bottoms, which are not suitable (and are even harmful) to guinea pigs' small, delicate feet.

Guinea pig cages need to have a solid bottom to them, which is why **larger cages** by companies like Hagen and Marchioro are suitable. Additionally, these plastic cages are easy to clean with solutions of vinegar and water, or Nature's Miracle enzyme cleaner (available at any pet store), or even just hot water and baby shampoo.

For the guinea pigs in our rescue, we build our cages out of Neat Cubes and Coroplast supplies. Cavy Cages, at www.cavycages.com, shows many designs of cages that you can build and has all the supplies you will need. These cages are easy to clean, and easy to expand.

Every cage should be set up with:

- proper bedding, such as CareFresh, pine, aspen, or some of the recycled-paper bedding products. **Do not use cedar!**
- Shelter, such as a plastic igloo or a wooden house. Guinea pigs need a hideaway in order to feel safe.
- A water bottle suitable for guinea pigs and rabbits, along with a holder to hang the bottle on the side of the cage.
- Food dish
- Hay rack

Location

We recommend keeping your guinea pig cage in a high visibility area so the pigs are part of the family home life. Guinea pigs are very social creatures that like to be in the middle of things; having them in the family's main living areas helps ensure that the pigs will get enough attention and handling. Additionally, if the guinea pig is a child's pet, having the animal in a high visibility area helps parents to monitor the animal and ensure that its food and water don't run out, and to keep an eye out for symptoms of illness.

Cages should be in an area where they are out of drafts and direct sunlight. While guinea pigs can be in the same room as an open window (say, one that is across the room), the

open window should not be next to their cage. Guinea pigs chill very easily from drafts, and chill can quickly turn into a cold that can just as quickly turn into pneumonia. If not caught in time, colds and pneumonia are fatal conditions for guinea pigs.

Likewise, guinea pigs do not do well with high heat and their bodies are easily stressed by hot weather and humidity. When the temperature reaches the mid-80s and/or the humidity is in the moderate to oppressive range, guinea pigs become lethargic; with prolonged exposure, and it doesn't have to be a very long time, heat exhaustion and heatstroke set in quickly. When the weather gets warm, make sure your guinea pigs are in a room with a fan or an air conditioner (but neither should be blowing right into the cage). The guinea pig species originates in the mountains of South America, where high temperatures rarely rise above the 70s, so the species is not conditioned for hot weather.

Your guinea pig cage also should be in a safe area where unsupervised children, cats, or dogs cannot reach them.