

Hamster Care: The Complete Recovery Standard

1. The Enclosure: Floor Space is King

Commercial cages are often dangerously small. Hamsters are terrestrial animals that require a minimum of **600+ square inches of unbroken floor space** (e.g., a 40-gallon breeder tank). Provide 6+ inches of deep paper-based bedding for burrowing. Ensure the wheel is solid-surfaced (never mesh) and large enough to keep their spine straight (10-12 inches for Syrians).

2. Nutrition: The Foraging Mindset

Provide a high-quality, pellet-based mix fortified with seeds and grains. Supplement with small amounts of fresh vegetables a few times a week. **Scatter-feed** the dry mix across the enclosure rather than using a bowl to encourage natural foraging behaviors.

3. Social Dynamics: The Solitary Rule

Syrian hamsters are **strictly solitary** and will fight if housed together. While some dwarf species can tolerate pairs in the wild, the stress of captivity makes solitary housing the safest, most recommended standard for all hamster species at Recovery Pets.

THE REALITY CHECK: Hamsters are a 2–3 year commitment. They are crepuscular (active at dawn/dusk) and easily stressed by daytime noise or handling. If you seek a pet active during the day, a hamster is not the right choice.

4. Health: Recovery Red Flags

- **Wet Tail:** A fatal stress-induced diarrhea. Any sign of illness requires **immediate, emergency exotic-vet care.**
- **Cheek Pouch Issues:** Monitor for lumps that do not disappear or foul odors.
- **Overgrown Teeth:** Provide safe, hard woods or mineral chews to maintain dental health.

5. Enrichment & Sustainability

Use clean, empty cardboard boxes as "hideouts" and tunnels. Because hamsters are constant chewers, cardboard is the perfect sustainable, disposable, and free enrichment material.

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