

# Fancy Rat Care: The Complete Recovery Standard

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## 1. The Enclosure: Design for Athletes

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Rats are intelligent, active climbers. We require a minimum of 2 cubic feet of volume per rat. **Vertical height is non-negotiable** for exercise. Avoid glass tanks or aquariums, as they lack the ventilation necessary to prevent chronic respiratory disease. Ensure the cage is enriched with hammocks, ropes, and platforms.

## 2. Nutrition: Beyond the Bag

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A high-quality lab block should comprise 80% of their diet for complete nutrition. Supplement daily with fresh, bird-safe vegetables and occasional lean proteins (cooked chicken, hard-boiled eggs). Always ensure constant access to clean, fresh water.

## 3. Social Dynamics: Mandatory Pack

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Rats are highly social. Keeping a lone rat causes severe stress, anxiety, and depression. They must be kept in same-sex pairs or groups. Daily interaction with their humans is essential for proper socialization.

***THE REALITY CHECK:** Adopting rats is a 2-3 year commitment. They are high-intelligence animals that thrive on your time and attention. If you cannot provide 1+ hours of interaction daily, please reconsider.*

## 4. Health: Recovery Red Flags

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- **The "Sneeze" Rule:** Persistent sneezing or clicking sounds require immediate veterinary care.

- **Porphyrin:** Red discharge around the eyes or nose often indicates illness or stress.
- **Grooming:** Unkempt or greasy fur is a primary indicator of poor health.
- **Vet Care:** Annual exams with an exotic-specialist vet are essential.

## 5. Enrichment & Sustainability

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Use hammocks, ropes, cardboard boxes, and DIY foraging toys to keep their minds engaged. Supervised free-roaming in a rat-proofed area is essential. **Sustainability tip:** Use upcycled household items like clean fleece scraps or toilet paper rolls to create enrichment kits.

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For more guides and resource kits, visit: [recoverypets.net](https://recoverypets.net)