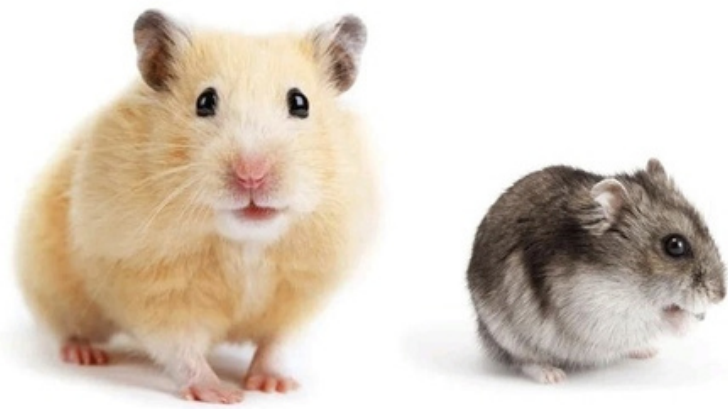


POTTIES & POTTY TRAINING



by

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&



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DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN POTTY TRAIN YOUR HAMSTER?



Please visit the Hamsters South Africa Website for more in depth information on potties - <https://www.hamsterssouthafrica.com/pottie-training-tips>

Hamsters are "creatures of habit" - they will instinctively use one designated area (or two) to urinate in. Some hamsters will even poo in the same area too.

Because of this instinct, they can be "trained" to you use a potty. Some hamsters "potty train" themselves, some will need a few extra clues, and the odd few will insist on peeing in the nest/bedding.

This is a helpful guide on potties and potty training to help encourage good potty manners for your hamsters.



POTTIES & BATHS

We recommend using two containers of litter/sand: one as a potty, and another as a bath or small digging pit. This will help you to keep the larger one clean for longer, and make it easier to simply clean the potty regularly.

In our experience, hamsters are more likely to use their potty if they have options.

BATH / SMALL DIGGING PIT (suggested size):

DWARF HAMSTERS - approx. 20 x 20cm or more (5-10cm sand depth)

SYRIAN HAMSTERS - approx. 30 x 30cm or more (10cm or more sand depth)

POTTY:

Size - at least 3x the size of the hamster (flat/floor space) with sufficient height for him to stand in. Sand/litter depth should be 5cm or more.

Hamsters seem to prefer privacy when it comes to their pee zone, so the potty should be set towards the back of the habitat, behind something, or with a covering/screen of sorts.

We also observe that most prefer an 'en-suite', so placing it near the bedroom/nest is ideal. Wherever you place it, make sure you have easy access for daily cleaning.

POTTY CONTAINERS

- You can use just about any container as long as it is not thin glass. 'Tupperware' or a lunchbox will absolutely fine, but some hamsters may decide to chew these at some stage, in which case you will need to get a harder container (ceramic, Pyrex/thick glass, metal baking tin, etc.)
- 650ml slanted cookie jars are perfect as they stand at an angle and have flat sides that can be covered with cardboard for privacy.
- Large glass jars are also great and can also be wrapped for privacy, and then tilted slightly to prevent too much sand from being dug out. Simply place a suitable little rock under the front opening.
- Whatever you use, make sure that the hamster can enter & exit easily (use rocks, branches, bendy bridges, steps, etc.)



POTTY TRAINING TIPS

Do provide a sand bath and/or potty in the habitat as soon as you bring the hamster home.

We advise holding off on providing a large deep burrow area of bedding substrate until your hamster is potty trained. He is likely to nest in it and pee there too....and that is a hard habit to break and difficult for you to control.

Try to avoid plastic hamster tubes. They are unhygienic and your hamster will most likely pee in them.

You should place the potty where you can access it easily in order to clean every day.

Even if your hamster never takes to using the potty for urinating in, it is still important to provide the sand for bathing.



Hamsters will usually pee in one particular spot only; usually in a corner, but some may do this in their bedroom too.

- It is best to start training by removing the soiled substrate, cleaning the spot properly, and place the potty over that spot where he normally pees, and then put a few pieces of the soiled bedding on the sand. Most hamsters get the idea pretty quickly.
- Once s/he's completely trained, you can gradually start moving the potty to where you want it to be, but be prepared to move it back again if the bedding starts being used again, or place a 2nd little potty over that spot.

Hamsters do tend to like the pee zone to be quite close to their sleeping quarters, almost like an en-suite:

- If he is also peeing in the bedroom, you may want to put the potty (or a 2nd little potty) outside the bedroom with some of the soiled nesting in the sand. Clean the bedroom/nest every day to remove the pee scent from that spot.
- Similarly, if he is only peeing in the bedroom, place the potty almost at the entrance of the nest with some soiled nesting on the sand. Clean the nest/bedroom every day until he stops peeing in there.
- If your sand bath is not very big, you will want two containers to ensure that both bathing and toileting can take place, with the toilet container near the nest.

Most hamsters prefer their toilet/s to be private.

- This could also be one of the reasons why he may be peeing in a corner or in his bedroom instead of in your well-intentioned placement.
- Consider making some kind of a "wall" around the potty,
- or switching to a large jar placed on its side and covered with cardboard, moss, paper, or whatever pleases you.
- Alternatively, under a shelf near the bedroom can work, but away from the front of the habitat.
- Make sure you can still access the potty easily to clean every day.

Hamsters will pee inside PLASTIC TUBES and it is a difficult habit to break.

- Note that even if they use the sand, they will still pee in the slippery tubes to make them sticky for better traction.
- Plastic tubes (commercial hamster tubes) are not recommended anywhere in the habitat due to them being bacteria traps and bug magnets, unless you are willing to completely dismantle and clean them every day.
- For the health of your hamster, we recommend you get rid of plastic tube configurations altogether. One or two flat/horizontal links will be fine for a dwarf hamster (too small for Syrians). If you're using them in place of ramps for access to a low platform, rather construct a proper ramp or disc steps.



UNSUITABLE POTTY CONTAINERS

These are **TOO SMALL** and don't provide enough space for even a dwarf to have a good roll and pee in!



WOODEN & CARDBOARD TOILETS ARE NOT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:

UNLESS you can snugly fit a proper waterproof container inside to prevent urine from soaking into the base & walls, don't use a wooden or cardboard box as a potty.

- Once urine soaks in, the wood will really stink! It is very difficult to wash pee out of wood.
- Cardboard will get soggy, also stink, and eventually disintegrate.
- If you're trying to potty-train a hamster to use something else as a toilet, it will be impossible once the urine smell has soaked into that spot.
- Soiled boxes will also not be possible to use for the next hamster.
- Since you can only use a non-toxic acrylic sealant for some protection, the coating will only stand up for so long against the corrosiveness of urine.



This guide was compiled by Hamsters South Africa and Hyggelig Pet Products.

Please visit the Hamsters South Africa Website for more in depth information on Hamster Care - www.hamsterssouthafrica.com