

THE ABC OF HAMSTERS

Hamsters are one of the most loved of all house pets. Not only do they look so cute but golden hamsters and dwarf hamsters make fun housemates. So that they too can feel at home with us humans, there are a few things that have to be borne in mind. The experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo have compiled a hamster ABC.

ACCOMMODATION: wire cages, terrariums and aquariums are all suitable. Hamsters can exploit their love of climbing in a cage but glass boxes are escape-proof.

BABIES: they come naked and blind into the world – but even after 12 days they're scrambling out of the nest with their eyes still closed.

CHILDREN: hamsters don't necessarily make children happy - and vice versa. They are only active at night and stroking and cuddling often only mean stress for these sensitive rodents.

CHINA: the Chinese striped hamster at up to 11 cm long is one of the largest of the dwarf variety.

DAYTIME SLEEPER: hamsters like peace and quiet during the daytime - a secure sleeping den is a must!

DIET: this isn't very rich in their barren homelands: the main thing is that they get ample protein. So, to a teaspoonful of pre-mixed food, just add a little piece of dog biscuit as well.

FREE RUNNING: potential hazards lurk everywhere in the home (power cables, heavy furniture, room plants). The animals can disappear nimbly into a corner and not come back out again.

PET POINTERS



with Maxi Zoo

GOLDEN HAMSTERS: these are by far the best known of the hamster clan.

HOMING INSTINCTS: all hamsters lay scent trails which are odourless to us so they can always find their way back to their den.

LONERS: golden hamsters don't want flatmates. Dwarf hamsters are the gregarious ones.

MALES: it's the female hamsters who mainly wear the trousers. Older Campbell

females will even attack their male comrades. Bear this in mind when you make your selection!

NOSE: hamsters have poor eyesight but an exceptionally fine sense of smell.

ROOM: these animals love to run and need plenty of space for climbing, playing and hiding.

SPECIES: according to their size, hamsters are subdivided into large hamsters (e. g. field hamsters), medium hamsters (e. g. golden hamsters) and dwarf hamsters (e. g. Dzungaria hamsters).

TAMENESS: with a lot of patience and love, hamsters can become trusting... maybe.

VITALITY: hamsters will display this when they wake up full of beans in the evening. The treadmill, which today has become almost synonymous with hamsters, is a real thrill for them.

WEAPON: in an emergency, defensive hamsters will use their small but sharp teeth.

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