



CAN CATS & RABBITS LIVE TOGETHER?

Indoor house cats will typically peacefully coexist with pet rabbits if given proper introductions and supervision. Some even develop close friendships. The key is starting with a well-fec house cat, not an indoor/outdoor cat. And never try to pair a rabbit with a high-prey-drive cat.

Exercise caution during introductions. If kitty is aggressive or rabbit is scared, stop the interaction. The good news is a majority of rabbit and cat introductions don't run into any major issues.

Start with your rabbit in a large cage, one with bars that are too small for the cat to reach in. Bunny should have room to run and stand up – movements your cat needs to become accustomed to. Provide a cardboard "hidey" box inside the cage so bunny can feel safe inside. When both animals are comfortable with each other's movements and smells (this can take days, weeks or months), move forward with your introductions. Hold kitty on your lap and let bunny investigate at his own pace. Continue short sessions until everyone is feeling comfortable and peaceful together. If bunny is new in your home, don't begin introductions until she is feeling confident and comfortable in her new environment.

Don't be surprised if the rabbit is the dominant personality in the relationship. Rabbits can be bossy and territorial, sometimes using a wary, defensive reaction from cats. Ideally, kitty will leave if the bunny is being too bossy but watch out for defensive swipes – this is the most



common way for a rabbit to be injured by a cat tree for kitty and a woden “hidey” box for bunny work great.

Cat claws and mouths carry harmful bacteria. Even a playful swat or love bite to your rabbit can cause a serious abscess (infection). Trim claws monthly. Consider using claw covers.

Don't use clumping cat litter. Clumping cat litter is dangerous to rabbits, as they are likely to ingest it and suffer a deadly intestinal blockage.

Keeping a high-prey-drive cat or dog separated from a pet rabbit is critical but difficult and dangerous. A split-second accident can be fatal for the rabbit. If you think a cat or dog is not trustworthy with a small animal trust your gut! Trying to keep them forever separated in the same home is incredibly high risk, and this approach has failed many times.

Cats CAN peacefully co-exist with pet rabbits!

An indoor cat plus a medium/large, confident bunny is a winning combination.

Always introduce carefully and supervise introductions.

Provide safe, private retreats for each animal.

Trim cat claws monthly and consider using claw covers.

Don't use clumping litter – it's dangerous to rabbits.



Article by Amy Ramnaraine, House Rabbit Society Educator