

Mini 4H Rabbit Project

Learning About Domestic Rabbits

During this presentation you will learn:

- What makes domestic rabbits different from wild rabbits
- Some of the more popular breeds
- Proper handling
- General care

Wild Rabbits vs Domestic Rabbits

While both rabbits are born hairless and with their eyes shut the wild rabbits develop much faster than the domestic rabbits. Wild rabbits are weened from their momma's in just 2 weeks and are ready to live on their own by the time they are 4 weeks old. Domestic rabbits are weened around 6 weeks but can take up to 8 weeks.

*Wild rabbits eat clover, grass, roots, various flowers, plants and weeds that they find in the wild. Domestic rabbits depend on their care giver to supply them with a quality pelleted feed and hay.

*Wild rabbits stay under 4 pounds as a full grown adult. Domestic breeds range from 2 pounds to as much as 20 pounds depending on the breed.

*Wild rabbits have a brown body and white on the belly and under the tail. Domestic rabbits come in many colors which we call varieties

Popular Domestic Rabbit Breeds

A few of the more popular breeds of rabbits are:

Mini Rex

Polish

Mini Lop

Holland Lop

Californian

New Zealand

Netherland Dwarf

Lionhead



Mini Rex rabbits are a small, compact breed that has a very plush undercoat and extremely soft, velvety feeling fur, which comes in a wide variety of colors

Polish rabbits are a small, compact breed that have a short head with full cheeks, large eyes and short ears which point and touch each other all the way to the tip



Mini Lop



Holland Lop

Mini Lops are a 5-6 pound well rounded compact medium sized lop eared breed

Holland Lops are a 3-4 pound compact short lop eared breed



Californians have a commercial body type and should ideally weigh between 8-11 lbs. Their body is white with black only on the nose, ears, feet, and tail.

New Zealands have a commercial body type and are a large breed that will weigh up to 12 pounds as an adult.





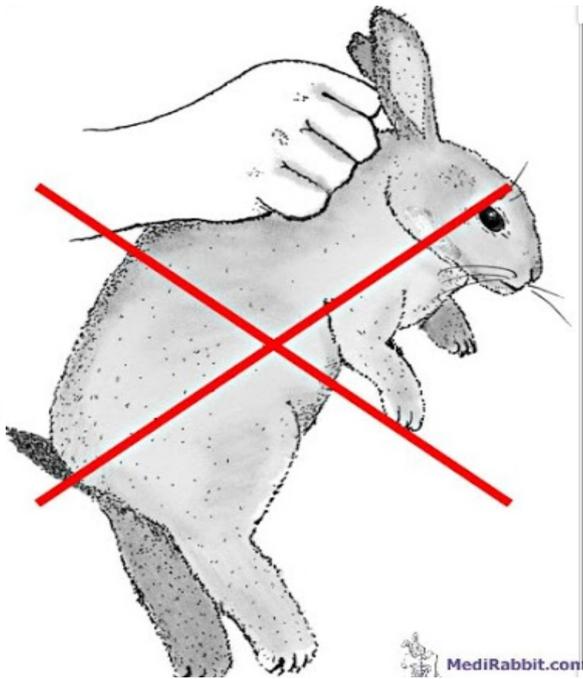
Netherland Dwarf has a short, compact body, with a round head, and a short, dense coat. Full grown it is about 2 ½ pounds.

Lionhead rabbits are a small breed weighing in around 3 ½ pounds. They are a wool breed and require lots of grooming.



Proper handling of a rabbit

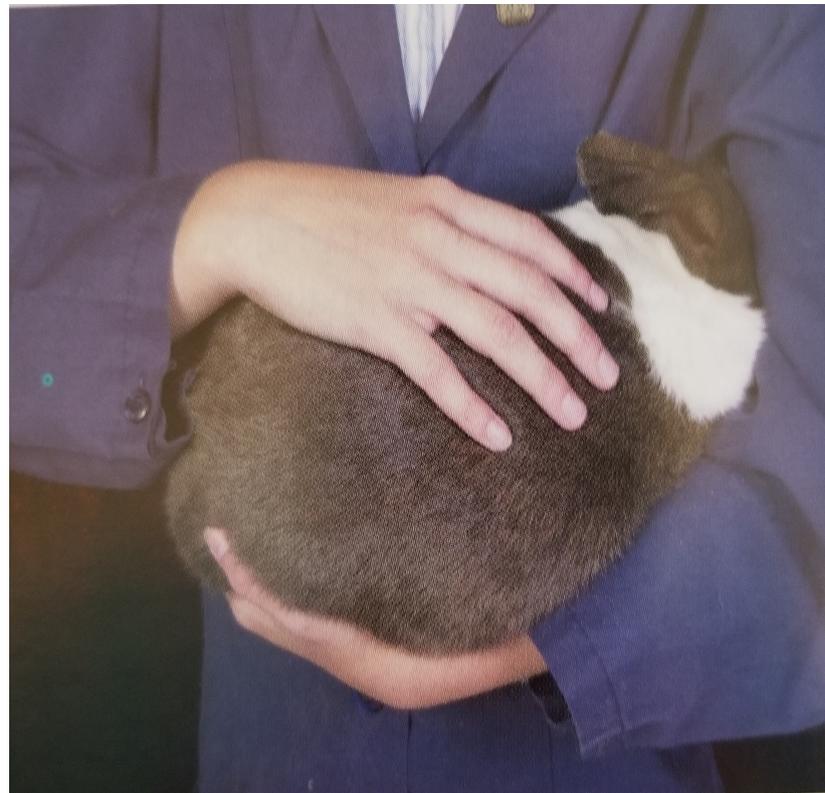
Knowing how to pick up, carry, and set down a rabbit is very important so your rabbit and you do not get hurt. **NEVER** pick up a rabbit by its ears or the scruff of the neck. This is painful for the rabbit. Always make sure your rabbit feels safe and secure in your arms.



To pick up a rabbit from its cage you need to put both arms inside the opened door, placing one behind the rabbits rump and sliding the other under the belly. Lift up on the front of the rabbit with the one hand while lifting and supporting its rump and hind legs in your other hand. In a scooping motion with your arms pull the rabbit towards you, being careful not to catch a toe or nail on the cage wire, head first through the open door.



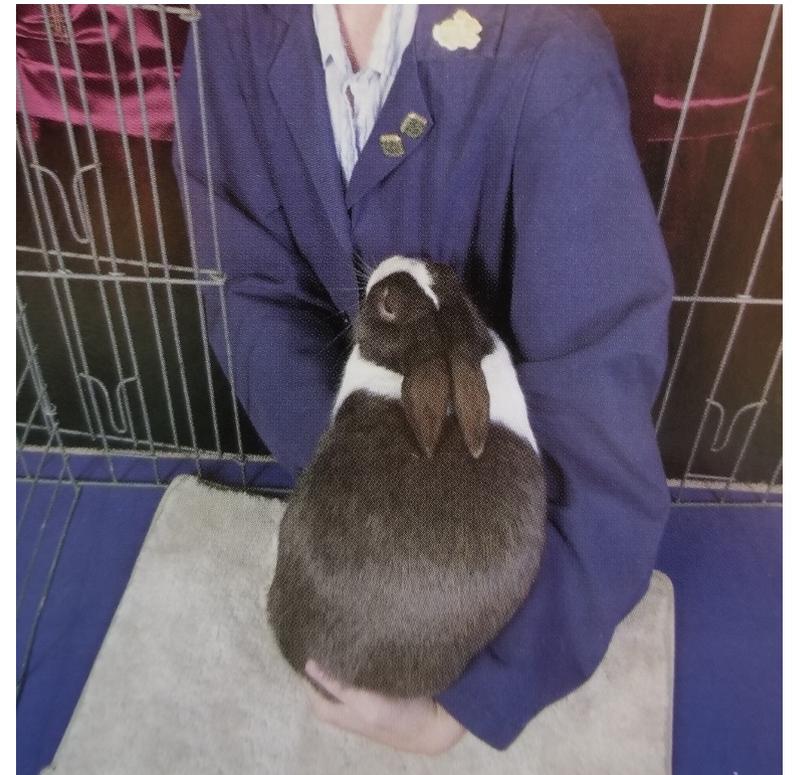
While supporting the rabbit in your hands bring the rabbit towards you and tuck its head into your elbow. Its eyes should be covered by your arm if you did this properly. Release the one hand from under its belly and place it on the back towards the rump to help support the other hand in holding the rabbit still. Now you may walk gently with your rabbit to your destination.



When setting your rabbit down lean towards the surface with your rabbit still secure in your arm and lower its rump first while still supporting the rabbit's weight on your arm. Gently remove your arm once it is safely sitting. Remember to always hold your rabbit firmly against your body when holding or carrying. This will help prevent the rabbit from struggling and possibly falling.



When picking your rabbit up off the table or surface where you had set it do it as if your are getting it from the cage, lean in and scoop it back up and tuck it safely and securely in your arm. Place the rabbit rump first back into the cage.



General Care

Every day you need to care for your rabbit. It needs fresh water at least twice a day and a good quality rabbit feed once a day. Hay can also be part of a rabbit's everyday diet but the main source of nutrients come from the pelleted feed. Getting a good quality feed for the rabbit is best found at a local farm store or feed and grain store.

A rabbit should get its nails trimmed monthly. This can be easily done by clipping off the just the tips like how you would a cat or dog's.

If the rabbit is housed inside it should have the cage cleaned daily to every other day to keep odor and flies away. If housed in a cage outside, in the garage or a barn the cage should be cleaned weekly.