



Gerbils: The Complete Guide to Gerbil Care (Complete Care Made Easy)

Donna Anastasi

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Who doesn't wish to share his or her home with a cage full of "Furry Mongolian Friends" aka gerbils!? Author Donna Anastasi certainly does! She describes these irresistible critters as "quiet, clean, friendly, curious, active, and easy-to-please." In deciding whether the gerbil is for you, Anastasi offers this advice: "If you are looking for a seemingly limitless cache of cuteness--from their long, fanning whiskers and large almond-shaped eyes to their bunnylike hind legs and tufted tail tips--then gerbils are for you!" Clearly bitten by the gerbil bug, the author begins by providing some basic natural history about gerbils, their origins on the Mongolian range, and an overview of their behaviors. Anastasi defends her favorite pocket pet and asserts that the gentle gerbil does not deserve its Latin name (*Meriones unguiculatus*), which translates as "clawed warrior." Filled with terrific color photographs, *Gerbils* summarizes the basic needs of these adorable rodents, specifically addressing their housing requirements, the cost and commitment involved, and their interactions with children and other pets. The following are devoted to purchasing a healthy gerbil from a pet shop, hobby breeder, or shelter; introducing the gerbil to the home; housing and feeding; taming and handling the pet gerbil; health considerations and potential household hazards; breeding and raising the young; and exhibiting gerbils at shows.

The discussion on housing covers the selection of the ideal enclosure, basic housing setup, accessories, safety, and a guide to cleaning the tank. The chapter "Taming and Handling Your Gerbils" offers a step-by-step socialization process to acclimate the gerbil to its new handler and surroundings plus instructions for handling the gerbil and discouraging nipping. All keepers will be interested in the chapter on keeping gerbils healthy through smart preventative care; topics covered include allergies; broken limbs and head injury; teeth, tail, and ear problems; dehydration; diarrhea; heat stroke; hypothermia; mites, and more. Gerbil enthusiasts who are looking to become gerbil midwives will find complete instructions for breeding and raising pups (baby gerbils) in the chapter about reproduction. It covers planning a litter, setting up a breeding tank, mating, caring for the pregnant mom, birthing, fostering, growth cycles, weaning, handling pups, and more. The chapter "Fun with Gerbils" offers ideas for games, art projects, photographing, and training gerbils to do seven fun tricks. Resources include lists of publications, clubs, organizations, and websites. Glossary of terms and index included.

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