

When I first considered adopting rabbits I struggled with what their living space would be like. I didn't like any of the cages on the market. There were a number of guides online on custom living spaces. I found them to be a little too ambitious and permanent for my tastes. So it was that I came up with my own idea. You can easily put this together for under a hundred dollars. But if you are not careful, you can find yourself spending more than you need to.

What you will need:

1 Dog exercise pen (50\$ to 70\$)

- You can find these at pet stores easily enough.
- Generally you will want one that is at least 3 feet in height.
- Most pens come in 8 sections of 2 feet. This allows for many different shapes. I tend to stick with a pen that is 4 feet by 4 feet.
- Keep in mind your rabbit's needs with regard to accessing the pen. Doors for these pens do change slightly and this can make a difference. More on this later.

Two 3 foot by 5 foot carpets (15\$ to 30\$ each)

- You can find these almost anywhere.
- These will form the bottom of the pen.
- You will want the surface of the carpets to be larger than the area of the pen.
- You will want to pay attention to the material the carpet is made of.
  - If you know your rabbits like chewing or ripping up certain types of carpet, then I would suggest avoiding them.
  - If you are just getting your rabbits, I would recommend getting two different types of carpet and see which are more agreeable with your new friend.
    - Knotted rugs tend to resist bunny destruction the best. I have also found that my rabbits take the least interest in the knotted rug.
    - Tufted rugs seem to be irresistible when it comes to rabbit attention. My rabbits love to lay on their tufted rug and to rip out the tufts.
    - You cannot use carpet or bath mats that have pile. A rabbit's first time to chew it may also be the last.
    - **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR RABBIT TO EAT ANY PART OF A RUG.** A blockage in their intestines can occur that will kill them.
  - Above all, be sensitive to your bunny's tastes and choose an appropriate covering.
  - If you do not feel that any rug is completely safe, you can always cover the rug with a sheet.
- You can alternatively try an old blanket which is very inexpensive. I have not tried this however.

1 Shower Curtain (at most 7\$)

- You can find these anywhere.
- The shower curtain will be the moisture barrier between your carpet and the bunny rugs.
- You can use linoleum as an alternative. This raises the cost a lot though.

That is all you will need.



Start off by laying down the shower curtain where ever you wish to keep the rabbits. If the pen is going to be next to a wall or in a corner, be sure to let the curtain have about 6 inches to run up along the wall.



Once you have the shower curtain down, place the two rugs over it. Again, if the pen is going to be against any walls, you will want the rugs to run up along the walls. This aids in cleaning and protecting your walls. Make sure the carpet covers up all of the shower curtain. If any of the shower curtain is showing, simply fold it over itself and under the rugs.



Now that the rugs are in place, you can set up the exercise pen. You will want to make sure it is snug against any walls. If it is against walls and you do not want the walls scratched, I would suggest putting an old sheet over the pen so your wall does not get scratched. Be mindful of where you place the entrance to the pen. Also pay attention to how you will keep the pen open if the rabbits are to have free access in and out at any time. You can either have them use the door. This will require jumping in and out often. Young rabbits really seem to enjoy this. But if you have an elderly rabbit, you may want to consider just opening one section of the pen so no jumping is involved. If you allow your rabbit free access to your home all the time you may be tempted to not have a complete enclosure with the pen. Depending on your rabbit's tastes this might be okay. However I can say my rabbits prefer the closed off space. It gives them a very clear idea of what space is theirs and what is not. They also feel much more secure with the pen closed on all sides versus leaving one side open. For rabbits that like to push the pen out of its regular shape, one can make a frame of 1x4" boards to go around the edge and hold the pen in place.



After you have the pen up you can put everything else that the bunnies will have in the pen. Shelter, toys, food, litter, hay and water are all kept in my rabbits' pen. The pen is very easy to clean up as it can be taken down and put up very quickly. I tend to clean it a little every other day for spot clean up (5 minutes tops). I vacuum it out ever other week. Also, once the rugs have shifted down off the walls I pull everything down and take the rugs outside to be thoroughly cleaned. This happens about every 3 to 4 months.

