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BY SARAH
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HOW TO BUILD A RABBIT TRANSPORT CARRYING CAGE



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Introduction

At some point or another you'll find that you need to move and travel with your rabbit. This is usually as simple as a trip to the vet's office but may involve moving to a new house (so your bunny is in limbo for a day or two during moving) and other similar events. This means you'll need a transport cage!

Rabbit transport cages (often called a carrying cage) are relatively simple and cheap to make if you have the right tools and a little bit of time. My favorite carrying cages are all-wire construction (wire walls and top) with a plastic or metal tray at the bottom.

The great thing about making your own cage is that you get to pick the color (of the base) and the size that fits your rabbit perfectly.

This style of transport cage also allows easy access to your bunny with a top-opening door (my favorite!) and stays pretty cool since it has wire sides and a wire top. They also have a deep tray to keep bedding in the cage and not all over your car. I also like these cages because a small food and water dish can be easily attached to the side of the cage if you're going to be out with your rabbit for more than an hour or two.

Wire cages also have great ventilation and don't get hot and stinky like plastic transport cages can.

The Stuff You'll Need

You may have some of these things already around your house or in your workshop so do a quick double-check before you buy anything new.

It's a pretty short and basic list (our bunnies have simple needs) but I've always found that a picture is worth a thousand words...

Below are photos of the items you'll need to construct your own rabbit transport carrying cage. After you've reviewed the photos keep reading for a more detailed list of the items and where you can find them. (Note that " symbol after a number signifies that the measurement is in inches, EX: 12" = 12 inches.)

Tools



J-Clip Pliers



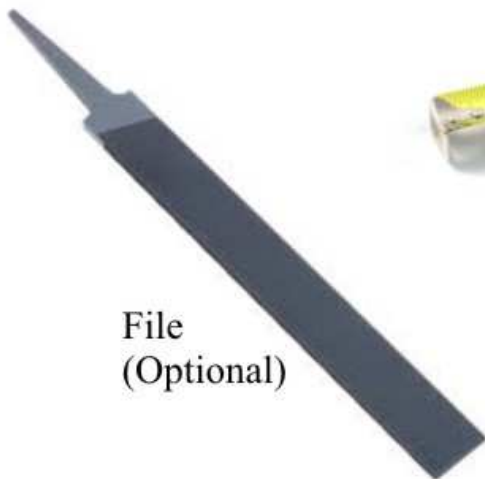
J-Clips



Wire Cutters



Tape Measure

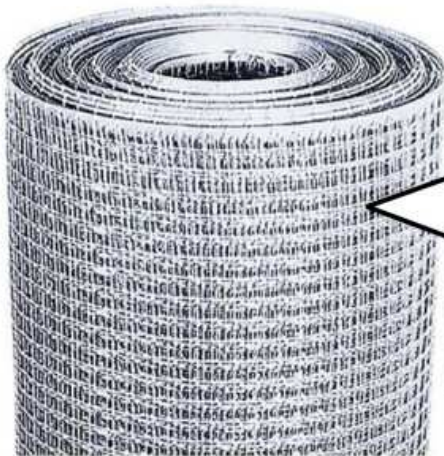


File
(Optional)

Construction Materials



Plastic Tub



1"x2" Hardware Cloth

OPTIONAL:
1"x1/2" Hardware Cloth
(if you want a wire floor)



Spring Door Latch (x4)

OR



Mini Bungee Cords (x4)

Nice Extras



Handles (X2)



Plastic Door Guards
(Shown in Black)



Spring Door Latch

OR



Mini Bungee Cord

Tools and Hardware:

- J-Clip Pliers
- J-Clips (one bag)
- Tape Measure
- Wire Cutters (with a pliers end is nice but not necessary) – Make sure these are a large-sized wire cutter, nothing is more frustrating than trying to cut wire with tiny, under-sized wire cutters. Your hands will thank you for getting a bigger size!
- OPTIONAL: Metal file to file down the sharp wire edges

All of the above items should be available from a well-equipped hardware store and are also available online (through many retailers including Amazon).

Construction Materials:

- Plastic Tub -
You want to select a tub that is bigger than your rabbit and gives them enough room to move around a little bit but not so large that it's cumbersome or hard to carry. A good rule of thumb is just enough room for your rabbit to lie down, if they wanted to, but not any bigger.

Keep in mind that smaller areas are better when moving your rabbit because if they become frightened or scared they may try to dash around the carrying cage. A smaller space will keep them contained and safer while being transported. Rabbits also seem to feel more comfortable when they are enclosed, I think it may give them the sense that they are “hiding”.

- Hardware Cloth (for the sides and top) with the following specs -
 - 1 inch x 2 inch sized openings.
Approx 4-6 feet long, depending on the size of your plastic tub (we'll get into more details on that exact size in the instructions below).

If you want a wire floor:

- 1 inch x ½ inch sized openings.

This piece should be slightly bigger than the over-all size of your plastic tub and we will cut it down to fit.

If you don't purchase the 1 inch x ½ inch piece your rabbit will sit directly on the bedding that gets placed in the plastic tub which is not a big deal, some people prefer wire bottom cages and some don't.

Attachment method for attaching the wire cage to the plastic tub, use either:

- Spring Door Latch (x4) – RECOMMENDED
- OR
- Mini Bungee Cords (x4)

All of the above items should be available from a well-equipped hardware store and are also available online (through many retailers including Amazon).

Hardware Cloth is sold in many places either by the roll or by the foot. Unless you are planning on making MANY cages you'll want to buy it by the foot.

Nice Extras (not needed but are nice to have):

- Handles (x2), big enough to comfortably fit your hand. These should also have a hook on each end that can be bent onto the cage wire.
- Spring Door Latch (x1) or Extra Mini Bungee Cord (x1) to keep the top door closed during moving.
- Plastic Edge Guards, to place over any sharp wire edges.

The handles and door latches (or Bungees) should be available from a well-equipped hardware store and are also available online (through many retailers including Amazon).

Plastic Edge Guards are more of a specialty item and will need to be purchased online or from a local feed or pet store, if available.

NOTE: Almost all of these supplies can also be purchased from online commercial rabbit cage suppliers such as KW Cages or Bass Equipment.

Preparing to Build

In this section we'll determine the sizes that are needed for the hardware cloth wire frame and we'll cut out and bend all the pieces from our hardware cloth.

To determine the size of the 1 inch by 2 inch hardware cloth (wire) that you'll need simply add up all the measurements taken in this "preparing to build section". I always like to add a little bit extra to the over-all size when purchasing my hardware cloth just in case.

For the Sides of the Cage (the Side-Frame):

- Take out your tub, your tape measure, and a piece of paper/ a pencil.
- Measure each side around the base of the tub.



- If your tub is square all the sides will be the same length, if your tub is rectangular you will have two sides that are longer and two sides that are shorter.
- Take the short-side measurement and round it down to the nearest inch. (So, if the tub was 12 & $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long you would round it down to 12 inches). Do the same for the long-side.
- Add those two sizes together, then times them by two.
EX: If your tub was 12 inches on one side and 14 inches on the other you would: $12+14 \times 2=52$ inches

This end number is the amount of 1 inch by 2 inch hardware cloth you will need to make the transport cage sides. In our example, we would need a piece of hardware cloth that was 52 inches long. You will need to also add enough to cut the door from the hardware cloth, which is explained in our next section.

- Cut this length out of the hardware cloth using wire cutter.



REMEMBER - Measure twice and cut once! After you've cut the hardware cloth you can't put it back together so double-check your measurements!

HEIGHT: The piece of hardware cloth you purchased probably came 2 feet to three feet high - which is too tall for our rabbit transport cage.

- Using a pair of wire cutters cut the height of the hardware cloth down to:
 - 14 inch high for small to medium sized rabbits.
 - 16-18 inches high for larger rabbits.

Now we're going to bend the corners.

- Measure out (with your tape measure) the length of the short side measurement on one end of your newly cut hardware cloth.
- Bend the wire over at that measurement to a 90 degree angle. This is one corner.
- Now measure out the long side length and bend the wire over to a 90 degree angle.
- REPEAT: Measure out (with your tape measure) the length of the short side measurement and bend the wire over to a 90 degree angle.
- You should be left with a square-ish wire box that fits inside your tub base. This piece will form the sides of your rabbit transport cage (the side-frame).

For the Top Door:

- Take the two measurements you wrote down for the tub base and add 2 inches to one side (only one side).
 - The side you add 2 inches to will be the front of the door (where you open it from) so make sure it's on the side you want.
 - EX: If your tub was 12 inches by 14 inches and you wanted the door to open on the longer side you would add 2 inches to the 14 inch side. The total size of the door would be 12 inches by 16 inches.
- Cut the door from the roll of hardware cloth using wire cutters.
- Bend a 2" lip, at a 90 degree angle, on the side that you added the extra 2 inches too.

This lip will be the front of the door.

Set this aside, we'll attach it later.

Optional – Wire Floor Bottom:

If you want to have a wire bottom for your cage then...

- Take the two measurements you wrote down for the tub base. In our example it was 12 inches by 14 inches
- Cut that measurement out for the floor from the 1 inch by ½” hardware cloth using wire cutters.
 - NOTE: the hardware cloth we’re using for the sides and the door is too large for the floor (your rabbit’s feet would slide through) which is why we’ve gone to a smaller hardware cloth for the floor only.

Optional – File Sharp Edges:

- File down the sharp edges where the hardware cloth was cut. If you are using Plastic Door Guards then you can skip this step.

Construction

In this section we will attach all of the hardware cloth pieces together using J-Clips. Go ahead and remove some from the bag and place in a low bowl to keep them contained but easy to grab.

Optional – Wire Floor Bottom:

It’s easier to attach the floor (if you’re putting one in) before you close up the sides of the frame. If you want to have a wire bottom for your cage then...

- Take floor piece you cut from the 1 inch by ½” inch hardware cloth.
- Slide it into the side-frame and position it 2 inches from the bottom of the frame.
 - This keeps your rabbit from sitting directly on the tub bottom and in the bedding that you place in there.
- Take your J-Clip Pliers and J-Clips.
- Place a J-Clip every 2” around all four sides of the floor attaching it to the side frame.

Assembling the Frame:

- Take the square hardware cloth that we cut and bent for our cage sides. Attach the two loose edges together using J-Clips and the J-Clip Pliers.
- Place a J-Clip every 4" and at the points where the top pieces and the bottom pieces meet.



- Set the side-frame into the plastic tub when finished. Wire should be facing out on all sides and the top should be open.

Now it's time to add a top...

Attaching the Top Door:

- Take the square hardware cloth that we cut and bent for our door.

- Place it on top of the side-frame. The lip should hang over one side and the edges on all other three sides should meet evenly with the side-frame.
- Attached the door to the side-frame with J-Clips placed along the opposite side of the lip. Only add J-Clips to this one side.
 - The door should open easily. Don't crimp down too hard on the J-Clips used for the door or the door will be difficult to open and close. Leave them on the looser side.

Finishing

Here we'll attach everything together and put on any of the subjected "extras" that you purchased, like handles or plastic door guards.

Start with your cage frame inside your tub base.

Attaching the Tub Base to the Frame:

If using Spring Door Latches – (Recommended)

- Take two of your spring door latches and attach them together at their base by threading one onto the other.



- Now take one end and clip it over the tub's lip.
- Take the other end and clip it over the side frame.
 - Make sure you put enough tension on the clips so that the bottom tub stays snug with the frame. If you need to you can always move the frame-side clip further up to get more tension.
- Repeat all the above steps with the other side.

If using Mini Bungee Cords -

- Clip one end over the tub's lip.
- Clip the other end over the side frame.
 - If you don't have enough tension (your bungee cord is too long) for this method that you can thread the bungee through the wire in the side frame and pull it back down so that both ends clip onto the tub.
 - Be careful to watch that your rabbit doesn't chew this!

Extra - Door Latch:

- Attach a spring door latch to the cage door by
 - Clipping the hook-end over the top lip of the door and seeing where the spring end falls.
 - Threading the spring end onto the cage wire.

OR

- Use an extra mini bungee cord to hold the door firmly in place.

Extra – Handles:

- Attach handles, if purchased, to the sides of cage (recommended for medium to large sized rabbits) OR attach to top of cage (if your rabbit/transport cage is small).

Extra - Plastic Door Guards:

- Measure all exposed edges along top of the cage and door.
- Cut plastic door guard material to length (using wire cutters or scissors) and push plastic cage guards onto the wire end. This will help to protect you and your bunny from being scratched by the raw wire edges.

Our Finished Transport Carrying Cage:



Once you are finished assembling your rabbit transport carrying cage remove the tub base and fill it with one to two inches of absorbent bedding.

You can also purchase mini travel water bottles and food cups to place inside the cage, if needed.

I also like to add my rabbit's favorite toy when traveling so they have something familiar and comfortable with them.

Bonus Tips:

Here we'll talk about making a transport cage that can hold multiple rabbits (if you're a many-bunny household) and also how you can adapt this same design to build a permanent cage for your bunny.

Making a Multi-Rabbit Carrying Cage:

You can make transport carrying cages that hold multiple rabbits instead of having one cage for each rabbit.

All you need to do is:

- Buy a larger tub to use as the base. The tub should be big enough to hold both rabbits comfortably.
- When you are finished constructing the carrying cage:
 - Cut a piece of 1 inch by ½ inch hardware cloth (the smaller hardware cloth) that is the depth and height of the cage.
 - Slide this piece into the existing cage and center in the middle.
 - Attached using J-Clips.

Voila! You now have a transport cage that is divided into two sections and can be used to transport two rabbits!

Making a Permanent Housing Cage:

The design you used for your new transport cage can also be used to make a permanent house for your bunny. All you'll need to do is make the over-all size substantially larger than what was called out for above.

You can read an article about cage size on our website at

<http://www.everythingrabbit.com/rabbit-basics/how-big-should-my-rabbits-cage-be/>

But the over-all thing you should keep in mind for your rabbit's permanent house is that bigger is better! Bunnies need space to roam and move about.

Also make sure that the minimum height for your cage (how tall it is from floor to ceiling) is at least 14 inches, taller if you have a large rabbit.

If you enjoy this instructional guide & would like to learn more about rabbits & their care then please check out our other books on Amazon!

Our website is www.EverythingRabbit.com

