



An estimation of the time and costs involved in keeping rabbits

This factsheet is intended to give current rabbit owners and potential owners an idea of the commitment involved in keeping rabbits well, both in terms of the time required to care for them and the financial costs involved. The estimated figures were agreed by a panel of recognised experts, with expertise in rabbit veterinary medicine, behaviour and welfare.

Please note:

1. *These estimations refer to the time and costs required to care for a single, or pair of healthy rabbits. The time and costs involved in caring for rabbits with health/behaviour problems that need additional veterinary or behavioural treatment are likely to be much higher.*
2. *The RSPCA recommends that rabbits are kept with at least one other friendly rabbit (unless there is a good welfare reason not to, as advised by a vet or qualified animal behaviourist). Therefore if considering acquiring rabbits as pets, the time and cost of keeping a pair of rabbits should be taken into account.*

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED TO CARE FOR A PAIR OF HEALTHY RABBITS

The time required to care for outdoor and house rabbits is thought to be approximately the same.

Daily activities include:

- Feeding & providing water
- Cleaning toilet area
- Basic health check
- Grooming (daily for long-haired rabbits)
- Putting the rabbit(s) out for exercise¹ or owner-supervised exercise time (e.g. in a rabbit-proofed garden or rabbit-proofed room(s) inside the owner's house)
- Interacting positively with the rabbit (providing company, play time)²

¹ N.B. Ideally the living enclosure (exercise area/run) should be permanently attached to the main shelter (large hutch, shed, indoor cage) so the rabbit(s) can choose where to be at any given time.

² N.B. If a rabbit has to be kept singly for welfare reasons, his/her owner will need to spend more time interacting with him/her every day to provide companionship.



The estimated minimum time required per day to undertake these tasks for a pair of healthy rabbits is 1 hour.

However the time required to complete these tasks could take much longer; for example if a rabbit is long-haired he/she is likely to require daily grooming or if a rabbit is housed singly an owner would need to spend time interacting positively with their rabbit every day to provide him/her with companionship .



Weekly activities include:

- Cleaning whole enclosure thoroughly
- Grooming (weekly for short-haired rabbits)
- Thorough health check
- Interacting with rabbit(s) – especially if rabbit is singly-housed (see above)

The estimated minimum time required per week to look after a pair of healthy rabbits is 10 hours.

However depending on the individual rabbits and circumstances involved, the time required to care for them properly could be much longer than this.



ESTIMATED COSTS INVOLVED IN CARING FOR HEALTHY RABBITS

Initial set up costs:

Expense:	Cost for one outdoor rabbit (£):	Cost for pair of outdoor rabbits (£):	Cost for one house rabbit (£):	Cost for pair of house rabbits (£):
Adoption fee/sale price <i>[N.B. Adoption fee may cover cost of neutering, microchipping, vaccinations & veterinary health check]</i>	25	50	25	50
Neutering	80	160	80	160
Microchipping	25	50	25	50





1st vaccinations (may require 2 visits) (£30) and veterinary health check (£20)	50	100	50	100
Accommodation (main shelter & living enclosure) and rabbit proofing	350 Includes: Hutch/shed/playhouse Run Rabbit-proofing garden (fencing)		250 Includes: Indoor cage/pen Rabbit-proofing (covering cables)	
Equipment:				
- Water bowl & bottle (&bottle snug)	8	8	8	8
- Food dispenser(s) (e.g. hayrack, food balls)	8	12	8	12
- Hiding places, toys, platforms & litter trays	12	20	12	20
- Grooming equipment	12	12	12	12
- Travel carrier (for 2 rabbits)	40	40	40	40
TOTAL:	610	802	510	702



Maintenance costs:

Expense:	Cost for one rabbit (outdoor or house):	Cost for pair of rabbits (outdoor or house):
Food: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hay (including bedding) - Greens - Pellets: 1 egg cup full (25g)/kg day for each rabbit <i>[Costs based on one average sized (2kg) rabbit]</i> <p><i>[N.B. 4kg bag of good quality pellets is ~£7.50]</i></p>	<p>£15/week; £60/month; £720/year</p> <p>£1/week; £4/month; £48/year</p> <p>4kg bag costs £7.50 & will feed 25g for 160 days; therefore over a year 2.28 bags would be required. This will cost £7.50 x 2.28 = £17.11/year.</p> <p>[5p/day; 36p/week; £1.43/month; £17.11/year]</p> <p><u>Total food costs:</u></p> <p>Total per week: £16.36 [~£16]</p> <p>Total per month: £65.43 [~£66]</p> <p>Total per year: £785.11 [~£785]</p>	<p>£20/week; £80/month; £960/year</p> <p>£2/week; £8/month; £96/year</p> <p>4kg bag costs £7.50 & will feed 50g (25g per rabbit/day) for 80 days; therefore over a year 4.56 bags would be required. This will cost £7.50 x 4.56 = £34.22/year.</p> <p>[10p/day; 71p/week; £2.85/month; £34.22/year]</p> <p><u>Total food costs:</u></p> <p>Total per week: £22.71 [~£23]</p> <p>Total per month: £90.85 [~£91]</p> <p>Total per year: £1,090.22 [~£1,090]</p>
Bedding & cleaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspaper - Hay - Cleaning product 	<p>Free</p> <p>Cost given under food</p> <p>25p/week; £1/month;</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>Cost given under food</p> <p>25p/week; £1/month;</p>



	£12/year	£12/year
Insurance	£2.5/week; £10/month; £120/year	£5/week; £20/month; £240/year
Other potential maintenance costs:		
- Vet fees (routine preventative health care only: vaccinations & health check)	£50/year	£100/year
- Additional/replacement equipment (e.g. toys, shelters, litter trays) & repairs/additions to accommodation [N.B. cost could be much higher, depending upon the type of owner & rabbit(s)]	£10/year	£10/year
- Boarding [for a two week period]	£5/day for a two week period = £70 [Annual cost]	£7/day for a two week period = £98 [Annual cost]
Total per week {Food, bedding & cleaning, insurance}	£19.11 [~£19]	£27.66 [~£28]
Total per month {Food, bedding & cleaning, insurance}	£76.43 [~£76]	£111.85 [~£112]
Total per year {All maintenance costs}	£1,047.11 [~£1,047]	£1,550.22 [~£1550]

Annual cost

Excluding initial set up costs, for either outdoor or house rabbits:

For one rabbit: £1,047

For a pair of rabbits: £1,550



The time & costs involved in keeping rabbits

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Lifetime cost:

Assuming both rabbits live for 10 years (lifespan is 8-12 years):

For one outdoor rabbit: 10 years x £1,047 + set up costs (£610) = **£11,080**

For a pair of outdoor rabbits: 10 years x £1,550 + set up costs (£802) = **£16,302**

For one house rabbit: 10 years x £1,047 + set up costs (£510) = **£10,980**

For a pair of house rabbits: 10 years x £1,550 + set up costs (£702) = **£16,202**



Potential additional veterinary costs:

The above costs do not include any veterinary treatment required for illness, injury or disease, or any behavioural therapy required.

Estimated costs for some common rabbit health problems are given below:

- Dental: £60-200 – For a rabbit with chronic dental problems the frequency of dentals could be every 4-8 weeks.
- Gut stasis treatment: £100-300 (including drugs & x-rays). If rabbit cannot be nursed at home (i.e. owner is not experienced/does not have time to hand feed the rabbit) hospitalisation at a veterinary practice would be required, which costs around £25/night.
- Ear problems – common in lop breeds. Likely to cost £400-500 initially, but may require ongoing treatment and this cost would not include advanced imaging such as CT scans which are recommended. Costs could increase to £1000 if surgery and diagnostics such as a CT scan are required.
- Limb fracture: £500-1000 – but costs could easily exceed this.



OTHER USEFUL LINKS:

- [Rabbits' welfare needs](http://www.rspca.org.uk/rabbits): www.rspca.org.uk/rabbits
- [Find a vet](http://www.rspca.org.uk/findavet): www.rspca.org.uk/findavet
- [Find a behaviourist](http://www.rspca.org.uk/findabehaviourist): www.rspca.org.uk/findabehaviourist



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