



Understanding rabbit behaviour

YOUR RABBIT'S BODY LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

A happy rabbit

These rabbits are relaxed and happy.

Rabbits 1-3 show ears close together, facing slightly backwards and pointing outwards. Eyes may be partially closed.

1



Rabbit is lying down, with a relaxed body posture and legs tucked under the body.

2



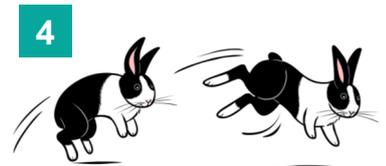
Rabbit is lying down, with front paws pointing forward and rear legs stuck out sideways. Body is relaxed and extended.

3



Rabbit is lying down with a fully extended, relaxed body. Back legs are stretched out behind the body and the front paws are pointing forward.

4



Rabbit jumps into the air with all four paws off the ground and twists in mid-air before landing.

A worried rabbit

These rabbits are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you near them.

1

Rabbit is in a crouched position, muscles are tense, head held flat to the ground, ears wide apart and flattened against the back, pupils dilated.



2

Rabbits who are worried or anxious may hide.



An angry or very unhappy rabbit

These rabbits are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1



Rabbit turns and moves away flicking the back feet. Ears may be held against the back.

2

Rabbit is sitting up on back legs with front paws raised displaying boxing behaviour. Ears pointed upwards and facing outwards, rabbit may be growling.



3

Rabbit is standing tense, with back legs thumping on the ground. Tail raised, ears pointing upwards and slightly turned outwards, facial muscles are tense and pupils dilated.



4

Rabbit is standing tense with body down and weight towards the back, head tilted upwards, mouth open and teeth visible. Ears held back and lowered, tail raised, pupils dilated.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS
www.rspca.org.uk facebook.com/RSPCA twitter.com/RSPCA_official

The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no: 219099 The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.

Illustrations: Lili Chin, © 2015. All rights reserved. With thanks to Julie Bedford, certified clinical animal behaviourist.