



Archie's Exotic Pet Rescue

www.archiesrescue.ca

Summer Cooling for Rabbits Education Sheet

Rabbits do not cope well in hot temperatures. They can easily suffer from heat stroke, which can be fatal. Rabbits have very thick fur coats and can't sweat to stay cool like humans do. To prevent this, you need to help keep your rabbit as cool as possible on warm, sunny days. Here are some simple and effective tips to keep your bunny cool and healthy.

What temperature is too hot for rabbits?

The ideal temperature for rabbits is from about 10-21°C, but rabbits can be comfortable in temperatures ranging from around 5-22°C. Depending on the humidity, rabbits start to show symptoms of overheating at temperatures above 27°C. Long-haired rabbits may begin to exhibit signs of overheating at temperatures as low as 21°C. If the temperature reaches 35°C, the rabbit will no longer be able to regulate their internal temperature.

Make sure your rabbit always has access to protection from direct sunshine and ample amounts of fresh, cool water. You should also brush your rabbit frequently to help them shed their excess fur as quickly as possible.



Tips to keep your rabbit cool

Not everyone has (central) air conditioning in their home. There could also be a power outage on a hot day, so you need to be prepared with ways to keep your rabbit cool.

1. Keep the air conditioning running

If you have air conditioning in your home, keep it running all day, even when you are not home.

2. Move rabbits to the basement

For those of you who live in houses with a basement, you have the option to move your rabbit pen down there (if it isn't there already!). Basements usually don't have as many windows, and therefore not as much direct sunlight heating the room. And of course, heat rises. The basement will naturally be the coolest part of the house.

3. Ceramic or marble tiles

Ceramic or marble tiles will stay cool even when other surfaces are starting to warm up, so they give your rabbit a nice place to lean against and cool off. You can even stick these in the refrigerator for an hour or so before putting them in your rabbits enclosure to make them especially cool. Have more than one tile in the fridge so you can alternate them through the day, or have one in two or three rooms. Many rabbits prefer to lay on a hard flat surface instead of any kind of soft bedding people get them.

3a. Dirt/Soil Cooling Tray

Plastic containers, often used as litter trays, with soil in them also provide a cool place for bunnies to lie down in, as long as it isn't in the sunlight warming the earth.



4. Spray water behind the ears

Most of a rabbit's body heat is released through their ears, so you can help them cool off by spritzing a little bit of cool water right behind their ears. You don't want to make them soaking wet. Just a light misting to help them out. Also, you'll want to be careful to make sure you don't get any water inside their ears. That can end up leading to an infection since the moisture can get stuck in the inner ear, especially with lop-eared rabbits.

Misting the back of your rabbit's ears with a spritz of water can help keep them cool in the summer, but be careful not to get any water inside the rabbit's ears.



5. Frozen water bottles

Fill up some old water bottles (or soda bottles, juice bottles, etc.) and freeze them. The next day, take them out of your freezer and wrap them in a towel or an old sock to place in your rabbit's enclosure. Like the tiles, this can make a nice cool surface for your rabbit to lean against. Just be sure to wrap them in something. It will be a little too cold for your rabbit to lean directly against, and you also don't want to risk their coat getting soaked by the condensation.

Using cooling pads or frozen gel ice packs is not recommended. It is best to stay away from anything other than frozen water. There is too much of a danger that the rabbit will break open the ice pack and ingest the gel that's inside.

6. Circulate the air

Open the door or window and use a rotating fan or ceiling fan to help circulate the air in a room. Stagnant air in a closed off room will trap heat, so you want to try to get the air flowing. You **don't want to blow a fan directly onto your rabbit** though. It will do them little good since they don't sweat from their skin, and it has the potential to cause respiratory problems with your rabbit.

7. Fresh water

Make sure your rabbit has plenty of fresh water so they don't get dehydrated, and never let your rabbit run out of that water. You can refill the water a few times a day to make sure it stays fresh and cool. If it's an extra hot day, try adding ice cubes in water bowl. These will keep the water colder for longer periods of time and it can be fun to watch a curious rabbit licking them. Make sure to use a water bowl that doesn't tip over!



Cooling Flop Bed with Frozen Water Bottles
in each side

