

## Single, Pair, or Group?

Rabbits are social creatures and **most** rabbits enjoy having a companion of their own species. There are, of course, exceptions to this statement, just as there are humans who are happier **not** being married. Rabbits who prefer to remain single will often let you know by attacking any prospective companion. Most rabbits who lose life-long companions eventually want a new mate. However, some, like my Murray, grieve briefly and then seem to blossom in their new role as “King of the House.”



Rabbits bond deeply, either with another rabbit, with their primary human caretaker or both. If you decide to have a solitary rabbit, you should be prepared to spend several hours with him each day. Single rabbits do well in households where someone is home most of the time. A solitary rabbit is more likely to become bored if you are gone for long periods during the day — and a bored rabbit is often a destructive rabbit. Single rabbits are also more likely to become depressed if you leave them alone for vacations or business trips than are rabbits with a bonded mate.

If your rabbit will spend a lot of time at home alone, seriously consider adopting a pair or larger group. A pair of rabbits or a group that is housed together requires little more work than a single rabbit does. You may have to clean the litter-box more frequently or make larger



salads but this is a small price to pay for knowing your rabbit will not be lonely and bored while you are at work. It is also great fun to watch rabbits interact and play with each other. And don't worry. A rabbit who is bonded with another rabbit will still have plenty of love for the human caretaker who spoils him. Fred and Henrietta come running toward me together, asking to be petted. They also run down the hall with me, working as a team to try to get underfoot.

Many people will tell you that a pair of rabbits is less likely to get into trouble than a single rabbit. This depends entirely on the individual rabbits in question. Sometimes a pair of rabbits will manage to get into trouble far beyond what either could accomplish by themselves. Or one rabbit will teach another bad habits. I used to swear that my Trio — Frankie, Goldie, and Murray — were conspiring when they had their heads together eating salad. Frankie's job was to tear up carpet. Goldie's job was to remove wallpaper and the pattern from linoleum. Murray was the escape artist in the family. When Goldie was alive, she used to aid his efforts to find ways around or through the baby gates.



If you are interested in a pair or group of rabbits, seriously consider adopting an already-bonded group from a rabbit rescue organization. Bonding is a time-consuming and challenging job. Rescuers who foster have a lot of experience with bonding. Contact the shelters in your area to find out if there is a rabbit rescue group near you.

