A rat’s habitat should be glass, plastic or metal, and should be escape-proof with a solid bottom. Rats love to climb and play, so a large and tall habitat is recommended. It is best to keep them in same-sex pairs and to not house male and female rats together.

A rat’s environment should be in placed in an area that maintains average household temperatures that is away from direct sunlight or drafts. 1–2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat. Proper bedding includes hardwood shavings or pelleted or recycled product. Cedar-based products are not recommended. Care of the habitat includes removing wet spots daily, changing bedding at least once a week, and cleaning its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water. After cleaning, rinse and allow to dry completely before placing the rat back into the habitat.

A rat’s diet should include 80% dry rat food and 20% vegetables and fruit such as broccoli, kale, cooked sweet potatoes, grapes, and bananas. Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Provide your rat with chew sticks as rats chew to maintain their incisor teeth, which grow continuously. Rats stay clean and do not need baths, but if necessary, clean it with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipes. Consult with a veterinarian if a rat’s teeth or nails seem too long.