

**TRAINING
SMALL**

MAMMALS



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Foreword

Owning a small mammal as a pet can come with its own set of benefits but it can also come with its own set of difficulties and headaches. Some small mammals can have some very bad habits. It will be the responsibility of you, the owner, to curve these habits and find ways to redirect them. Some of these habits may include not using a litter box or chewing on wiring around the house.

It is important to train any pet so that it understands what is expected of it from its new family. However, it is especially important to train smaller mammals, even more so if you plan on letting them out of their cages from time to time. Smaller mammals can be trained, despite many people's believes. A lot of people feel as if smaller mammals are too small to be intelligent and therefore they believe they cannot be trained. This is nonsense and do not be one of the people who believe this. Smaller mammals may be small but they are still living mammals so therefore they may be trained. It will take time and effort but it is possible.

There are different ways that you can train your small mammals and different animals may need different training approaches than others. It is important that you understand that the first method you try may not work. Do not give up hope and keep trying until you find something that works. Your hard work will surely pay in no time at all.

Training Small Mammals

Chapter 1:

Mammal Training Basics

Synopsis

If you have a small animal around the house that is exhibiting some unwanted behaviors it is time that you train your small mammal. Different behaviors from different animals will require different methods of redirection. It is important to keep in mind that training a small mammal is a lot different than training something bigger such as a dog or a cat. It requires special attention and a lot of time. The whole process can be made simpler however if you know the basics on training and have a general idea of where to start.

It can be very confusing when you look up information on training animals, especially small mammals, on the internet. There are so many different sources who offer so many different types of training methods and each one claims to be the fix all method. Most of the time these methods do not work. It is important that you take it back to the basics and a more traditional form of training. After all, why try to change training methods that have worked for decades?

The following chapter will go over the basics of training your small mammal. You will be provided with tips and tricks that should make the whole experience a lot easier and less stressful.

The following chapters in this book will go over the importance of training your small mammals and will give you some tips and tricks on how to do so.

The Basics

There are several different issues to deal with when it comes to basic training for small mammals. These issues are important as it almost always has a direct impact on the small mammal. Sometimes when not handled well the impact can be so severe that the pet's very life is put in jeopardy.

Being small in nature is already a minus point when it comes to training the animal. Therefore, any methods chosen would have to be done with the size of the animal being taken into consideration and this does cause complications as most training methods are designed for larger animals. However, on the positive side, these creatures are very intelligent and are capable of catching on very fast and adapt very well.

In order to train a particular small mammal to adapt to conditions provided, the pet owner must first take the time and effort to study the basic requirements of the breed in question and then closely emulate any of the necessary aspects that would be required for completing the comfort and safety of the animal through the training period. The handling of the animal during the training sessions is very important as most of these animals would not respond well initially to any human contact and may even perceive such advances as a threat.

However if the pet owner manages to train the small mammal in areas such as feeding times, toilet training and behavioral displays to the desired levels required, then the quest would have been considered successful by any standards. Often it takes a lot of patience and time coupled with the appropriate techniques and equipment to make this happen. Any disregard

of well-meaning advice and proven methods of training will usually result in detrimental effects for both the small mammal pet and the owner.

There are some basic things that you are going to want to train your small mammal. One of these is going to of course be letting you handle the mammal. This will come easy, but it will require time and effort. Basically, you will have to spend time every day handling the small mammal for short periods of time until the mammal becomes comfortable with you handling it. Once the small mammal is comfortable with you handling it you must continue to handle the mammal daily or else all of that work would have been for nothing.

Another basic thing you are going to want to train your pet to do is to be potty trained. This is especially true when it comes to rabbits that re allowed to roam freely around the home. This may seem quite difficult to you but it really is not. Rabbits naturally like to go to the bathroom in one place. All you really need to do is keep them locked in an area until they use a litter box. The rabbit will continue to use the litter box after that, even if you let them roam the house.

A lot of training a small mammal comes down to patience and time. You can basically train your small mammals to do anything you want. You just have to commit the time and effort that it takes. Trust me though, all of that effort and time will pay off when your small mammal is very well behaved and trained.

The sad truth is that many people often end up neglecting or getting rid of small mammals. The reason for this is the fact that they were not able to train them or did not want to put forth the effort it takes to train them. Do

not be one of these people! You must always remember that you made a commitment to that small mammal when you brought them into your family. It is now your responsibility to train the animal. Keep in mind, you chose the small mammal for a pet, it did not choose you!

The following chapters of this book will go into further detail about training small mammals. We will go over different types of small mammals and will discuss the different training methods that can be used on different small mammals. We will also go over things to be cautious of while training as well as things to look out for during the whole process.

Pay close attention provided because it will surely be of great help when it comes to training your small mammal to break its bad habits.

Chapter 2:

What Equipment is needed?

Synopsis

Depending on the type of training to be embarked upon, the equipment needed will usually be quite aligned with the specific needs required. This equipment can usually be sourced from pet shops and other stores that might cater to the needs of pets. You can also find this equipment through other small mammal owners that no longer need their equipment. This may actually be the preferred method because you will likely spend much less money on the equipment if you buy it used rather than new.

As stated before, there are different types of training equipment designed for training animals for different things. There is equipment for training your animal to be more agile while there is equipment for training your small mammal not to nibble on the cage. There is equipment for training rabbits to use litter boxes while there is equipment to help train mice's decision making skills.

One of the cool things about small mammals is the fact that some of them can be highly intelligent and you can train them to do many awesome things. You need to decide what you are going to be training your small mammal to do and then you will know what type of equipment you need.

The following chapter will go over the basics of training equipment and will shed some light on the different types of small mammal training equipment for you.

Get the Right Equipment

As the health and wellbeing of most pet animals are now becoming a priority for the pet owners, there is an increased number on sales on equipment that is designed for the very purpose of encouraging the mammal to be fit and healthy. These may include a whole range of equipment such as lumber jack new trainer mazes, lumber jack workout play sets, lumber jack lodges and many other items that would ideally cater to keeping the pet fit.

There are also several different options for training hamsters and gerbils to stay fit and these could include the more conventional methods of running on different types of circular mills or the newer attractions like running around inside a ball. All these prove to be pieces of excellent physical training equipment which will help to keep the small mammals fit and healthy. Exercise wheels are also a very popular choice and it seems very effective and certainly keeps the pet occupied and keeps them from being bored, especially since some breeds thrive better solo and with the least amount of actual physical human contact possible.

Other training equipment would be related to other areas of the pet life such as their toilet training regimen. This is a little harder to achieve in most cases but with some patience and perseverance, any mammal can be taught to use the appropriate equipment provided for the toilet facilities, thus minimizing the need to be weary of “accidents” around the house.

Mice are extremely intelligent and can be trained with many items you can find just laying around your house. For example, you can take some books from your bookshelf and arrange a small obstacle course that consists on

small stacks of books that are at different heights. It is important that you supervise your mouse as it does this obstacle course and make sure that it is safe at all times. You need to make sure that the stack of books is sturdy and that there is no chance of the books toppling down onto the mouse. You also do not want to make the stack of books too high. You need to remember the scale of the animal to the size of the book. Stacks of one or two will do just fine.

Hamsters are also very intelligent mammals. You can train the agility and problem solving skills of a hamster by using certain types of training. This equipment usually consists of exercise wheels. There are also sets of planks and other objects like ladders, teeter totters. All of these pieces of training equipment will train the hamster to focus its balance and agility. Just as with a mouse you may want to set up an obstacle course for your hamster. Like always with other animals, you need to make sure that all of your training equipment is secure and stable to ensure that the hamster will not get hurt. The last thing you want to do is injure your pet.

If you have a rabbit that has a chewing problem there is also training equipment that you can get for that. There is a spray that is made that you can get from your local pet shop or from an online market that deters animals from chewing. Rabbits tend to have a problem chewing on things around the house such as cords on the floor. This can be very dangerous for the rabbit as well as the entire household. If the rabbit chews all the way through the wire it will surely be injured and if the wire sparks it may start a fire. That is the last thing you want! This deterrent spray can be very helpful with this problem. It leaves a bitter taste in the animal's mouth

when it chews on things that have been sprayed by it. The best part is it that it is quick drying and odorless.

Most of the training equipment you will find for smaller mammals is pretty basic. Aside from the mazes and other types of intricate training devices most of the training equipment for smaller mammals can be found around your house. It is not like dog training equipment where there are harnesses and other types of mechanical training devices. Although a mouse would look cute on a leash!

Just search around online and in your local pet shops. There are always new pieces of training equipment for all types of animals of being created. Just give them a try a find something that works for what you are trying to accomplish.

Chapter 3:

Guinea Pig Training

Synopsis

Everyone knows that you can train a dog or a cat. Are you aware of the fact that you can train a guinea pig as well? Well it's true and it is not really all that difficult! You will just have to commit to your training and always keep in mind the goal set in place.

Guinea pigs are very cute and cuddly; it is hard to imagine that an animal so adorable can destroy your house. Well you better start to believe it because these adorable little creatures tend to have some very destructive habits. One of these bad habits can be the guinea pig chewing on everything in sight that it can reach inside of your home. It can be quite embarrassing when company comes over for dinner and you are spending the entire evening trying to hide chew marks on all of your furniture. Do not worry, there are certain measures you can take that will train your guinea pig to stop destroying your things. Keep in mind, the guinea pig is not chewing on things to intentionally ruin them. The animal is trying to fulfill a natural desire that comes from its instincts. Do not think that your pet has a personal vendetta for you because that is not the case. You need to find the underlying source of the behavior and find a way to break the habit.

The following chapter will go over different ways in which you can train your guinea pig. I know at times it may seem as if your guinea pigs bad

habits are becoming too much to deal with but you must not give up. With enough time and effort you can surely train your guinea pig.

Break the Bad Habits

Guinea pigs are highly intelligent mammals and it is sometimes fun to be able to teach the pet guinea pig some tricks and responsive reactions when called upon. This can all be achieved if the owner is very patient and calm when going about the training session and ensuring their tone of voice used is controlled and soothing. Incorporating a lot of praise when the desired outcome is reached would help the guinea pig feel good.

A guinea pig can be trained to follow simple commands mainly by using food and other treats as an incentive. By slowly recognizing its name when it is called, the guinea pig will initially associate this with getting rewarded with treats. Eventually, the guinea pig will be able to recognize the owner's voice enough to display some level of excitement and respond accordingly.

Guinea pigs can also be taught to sit up and beg. Although this may seem cruel initially, it will eventually be viewed as quite entertaining. The sitting up position is one that is natural for guinea pigs thus getting them to do this for a treat would not be stressful for them and it would not be damaging to any of their tiny muscles.

Litter box training is also something that can be taught to a guinea pig quite easily as they are highly intelligent creatures, however they do not always resort to using the litter box and sometimes there are "accidents" outside. By placing the litter in the general area where the pet goes for its toilet routines, the guinea pig will eventually use the facility for this purpose.

The owner should always remember to ensure the training sessions are calm and friendly in nature so that the pet is not in distress in anyway.

Giving it a treat when the desired results are shown and ignoring it when the desired results are not forthcoming is definitely better than punishing it.

Training a guinea pig will require time every day. You should devote at least thirty minutes a few times a day to training your guinea pig. With enough time and commitment you will surely begin to see results with the behaviors of your guinea pig in no time at all.

It is also a good idea to introduce a routine into your guinea pig's life. This will help the guinea pig feel calm and secure. If you want to make any progress with the training of your guinea pig it is important that they feel content in their surroundings. One of the best ways to accomplish this is doing the same things at the same time every day. Begin feeding the guinea pig at the same time every day and clean their cage the same day of every week. These small creatures feel like they are in a world of danger at all times due to their small size. A routine will help them realize that there is no danger or threat of being harmed and they will be more open to training.

Always remember to keep a soothing tone, no matter how frustrated you may become with the process of training your guinea pig. Trust me; if you try hard enough you will have the best behaved guinea pig around and you will be much less stressed as things around your house will no longer be getting destroyed.

It is not the animal's fault that it has these habits. You have to remember that it is just a guinea pig and that it is your responsibility as the owner to curb these habits. Another thing you may want to consider is getting the guinea pig chewing blocks. This will help a great deal with their chewing.

Chapter 4:

Rabbit Training

Synopsis

Although rabbits are considered highly intelligent animals, they can be a rather stubborn lot and will only respond to commands on their own terms, somewhat similar to feline behavior. However, it is possible to train a rabbit to some degree of success with a lot of patience and some knowhow.

Understanding what is likely to motivate the pet rabbit to cooperate would be the better way to go about the training session. Once this is successfully identified, then the owner will be able to make the training session more fruitful and thus get the rabbit to cooperate. Ensuring there is an adequate amount of time set aside without any distractions to conduct the training is important. Training session should not be too long and neither should they be too short. The ideal time span to start with would be for about 30 minutes and eventually lengthen it to about 1 hour.

The following chapter will go over the basics of training a rabbit and will give you some tips and tricks that should make the entire process much easier.

Training Your Rabbit

Training your rabbit is possible although it can be quite frustrating at times. Rabbits are comparable to cats with their personalities due to the fact that they will not respond to commands unless they know something is in it for them. They are not like dogs who you can call and the dog will respond out of sheer happiness to see the owner and receive attention. A rabbit must almost be bribed in the beginning stages of training them.

By using the rabbit's favorite treats as the initial incentive to get the pet's cooperation, the rabbit will be more eager to respond accordingly. However the pet owner must remember to keep the treat small and healthy and this should not eventually contribute to negative health conditions for the pet. Finding treats that are healthy and suitable, are as important as ensuring they are an attractive incentive to the pet.

Providing the specific area for the training to take place so that the pet understand better what it is required to do is important. Having the necessary tools to help make the training easier and more successful is also something that should be incorporated in the sessions. Once the pet rabbit manages to comply with all the various training techniques, the owner should start decreasing the treats given out and substitute it with pleasurable stroking or petting or any other affectionate displays.

The following is some step by step instructions to train your rabbit to do some simple tricks.

- **Stand on Hind Legs**

You can teach your rabbit to perform this trick by holding a treat in your hand. Now you are going to get down to your rabbit's level. Hold the treat over the rabbit's head and say the rabbit's name. Once you have the rabbit's attention lower the treat so that the rabbit sees it. Then you are going to say sit up and pull the treat up making the rabbit stand on its hind legs. Give the rabbit the treat and then continue repeating the steps until the rabbit does the trick at least. At this point you will begin to reduce the number of treats and replace them with pets or other affectionate acts.

- **Teach Your Rabbit to Jump**

An easy way to teach your rabbit this trick is to have a treat in your hand. You want to make sure you are by a couch or other object that the rabbit will have to jump to get on. Start by giving the rabbit a treat so it knows that they are there. Then grab another treat and say the rabbit's name. Get the rabbit to focus on the treat and then hold it right in front of their face. As the rabbit tries to get the treat you will pull the treat back and hold it up somewhere high the rabbit has to jump. Keep repeating these steps and eventually the rabbit will jump on command. Just as with other tricks it is important to slowly take away the treats for the acts and replace them with affectionate acts.

As stated before, training a rabbit is more than possible. True, it may take more time and patience than training an animal such as a dog but a rabbit can offer its own set of benefits that make the effort more than worth it.

Chapter 5:

Training Hamsters, Gerbils and Rats

Synopsis

These small creatures are fairly easy to train if the owner is committed to doing so in the proper manner. In order to be able to do this the owner must first take the time and effort to explore all the various materials written on the subject for training these mammals.

Training the rat would perhaps be less challenging than the other two types of pets, while the gerbil would come in second and although the hamster comes in last, it does not in any way mean it would be rather hard to train. This is mainly due to the fact that these mammals tend to respond in different degrees of understanding and urgency, thus giving the perception that one is easier to train than the other.

The following chapter will go over the basics of training these three types of small mammals and will give you some insight to make the process easier for you.

Training Smaller Mammals

Training smaller mammals such as hamsters, gerbils and rats is much different than training a dog. Dogs can be easily trained due to their desire to please their owner. Other smaller mammals do not see things in the same manner. They look upon a request and analyze it to see what they will benefit from doing it. As stated before, with smaller mammals, you basically have to bribe them in the begging phases of their training.

For the more standoffish pet, there is a need to use incentives that the mammal will respond favorably to, and these would include all the tasty treats that it likes. However, the owner must remember to give out the reward immediately upon the successful display of obedience to the requests made so that the pet will be able to connect the two and be able to commit this to memory. Delaying the handing out of the treats will only confuse the animal and thus make the whole exercise worthless. As well, it is very important that you portion out your treats. You do not want to over treat your pet as this may cause problems with their health and may cause them to become overweight. You must remember not to hand these treats out like they are a part of the animal's normal diet. As well, if too many treats are handed out they will lose their meaning and will not be as affective.

Getting to know the pet and using all the appropriate handling techniques is important as it helps to make the pet feel comfortable and less likely to be stressed. Allowing the pet to get used to the smell of the owner by allowing it to cling to the owner or crawl on the owner is another way for the pet to

form the recognition bond. Using suitable toys and other tools to get the cooperation of the pet will also contribute to higher success levels in the training sessions.

A lot of training these smaller mammals comes down to patience and time. You must handle your smaller mammal on a regular basis to maintain a bond with them. If you use all of the provided techniques you will surely be able to train your hamster, gerbil, or rat with little to no difficulty.

Chapter 6:

What to look out for While Training

Synopsis

There is a delicate process that is involved with training your pet. While training your pet it is important to always make sure that your pet feels safe and respected during the process. Causing the pet to feel unsafe will only be damaging to the bond that you have with the animal. Damaging the bond that you have with the animal will make it much more difficult to train the animal affectively.

The training session should in no way be only a one sided experience where the orders are issued and the pet is expected to perform accordingly. In order to keep the training sessions light, enjoyable and productive, the owner would have to be sensitive and alert to the pets behavioral patterns and responses.

The following chapter will provide you with some information of some things you should watch out for while training your pet.

The Warning Signs

There are some warning signs that you should watch out for while training your pet. You need to make sure that your animal feels safe, secure, and happy through the entire training process. Training an animal that is not in a sense of safeness and that does not feel content is basically next to impossible.

Being able to recognize if the pet is beginning to be stressed out is important, as stressed out pets tend to behave badly and thus making the training session a complete waste of time and effort. When this becomes evident in the pet's temperament, the owner should immediately stop the training session and focus on calming the pet with a soothing voice tone and eventually leaving it on its own or placing it back into its housing. The owner must always remember to end the training sessions on a soothing and happy note even if there was not much or nothing achieved at all. This is to ensure the pet does not react negatively every time it perceives the owner's presence is to be linked to an unpleasant training session.

When the training sessions consistently don't seem to be able to achieve anything and both pet and owner are becoming increasingly frustrated, it would be time to stop the current ineffective methods and focus on finding new ways to encourage the pet to conform in the training session. This could be done by talking to other more experienced pet owners, to get tips that would be useful and beneficial to both parties. Also some tools or equipment used may not be as suitable as first imagined, thus the need to replace such items with ones that would more likely be acceptable to the particular training intended.

Wrapping Up

Although the methods of training a small mammal might be a bit different than training an animal like a dog, but it is more than possible. They just require a lot of time and attention. If you approach your training with the right techniques it is sure to be a success.

I hope this book has been helpful for you and has answered all of your questions about training small mammals. I thank you for your time and I wish you the best of luck!