

How to Keep Your Rabbit Cool in Summer

Summer can be a blast, but for our furry friends, the heat can be a real challenge! Rabbits, with their thick coats, need a bit of extra help to stay cool when the temperatures start to climb. While wild rabbits might burrow underground to escape the sun's rays, our domesticated buddies often can't do that, so it's up to us to provide them with a comfortable environment.

Important Note: As tempting as it might be to cool your rabbit down by letting them swim or soaking them in cold water, this is a big no-no! The shock from cold water can actually be harmful, even fatal.

What Temperature is Too Hot for Rabbits?

When the mercury rises above 25 degrees Celsius (about 77 degrees Fahrenheit), it's time to take action. At this point, the risk of heatstroke increases, so keep an eye on the weather and bring your rabbit indoors if it gets too hot outside.



What to Do if Your Rabbit Gets Heatstroke

If you suspect your rabbit is suffering from heatstroke, don't panic! Instead of submerging them in cold water (which could make things worse), try this: gently dampen their fur and ears with cool water and get them to a vet as soon as possible. Quick action can make a big difference!

Tips for Keeping Your Rabbit Cool

1. Provide Plenty of Shade

- Make sure your rabbit's hutch or run is in a shady spot, away from direct sunlight. Consider using a gazebo or a sun sail for extra shade. If things

get too warm, moving them indoors can help, but always ensure they have a shady retreat.

2. **Offer Lots of Fresh Water**

- Hydration is key! Your rabbit may drink more water in the summer, so have plenty of fresh water available in both bottles and bowls. You can even toss in a couple of ice cubes to keep things cool. Try soaking some veggies in water too—it's a tasty way to keep them hydrated!

3. **Cool Surfaces to Relax On**

- Rabbits love to stretch out on cool surfaces. Consider placing ceramic or slate tiles in their shaded run. These stay cool and provide a comfy spot for your rabbit to relax. If you have some extra space, chilling these tiles in the fridge for a bit can be a nice treat for your bunny!

4. **Frozen Water Bottles**

- Freeze a large water bottle and wrap it in a tea towel. Place it in their area where they can lie beside it. Ice packs can work the same way, giving your rabbit a cool spot to hang out.

5. **Damp Towels for Extra Shade**

- Hanging a damp towel over part of the rabbit run can help create shade and a cooling effect as the water evaporates. Just make sure not to cover the entire run, or you'll block the refreshing breeze!

6. **Dampen Their Ears**

- Since rabbits lose heat through their ears, lightly dampening them can help cool them down. You can use a spray bottle to mist their ears, or simply dab them with a wet cloth.

7. **Grooming Time!**

- Regular grooming is essential, especially in the summer. Helping your rabbit shed their excess fur not only keeps them comfortable but also strengthens your bond with them. Long-haired breeds, like Angoras, might need daily brushing and a trim from a vet or groomer a few times a year to prevent matting and keep them clean.



Keeping Indoor Rabbits Cool

Even house rabbits can feel the heat, so here are some tips to keep them comfy indoors:

1. **Create a Breeze**

- Open windows for some fresh air, or turn on the AC if you have it. A little air circulation can make a world of difference!

2. **Use a Fan Wisely**

- A fan can be a great way to keep things cool, but don't blow it directly on your rabbit. Ensure they have the space to move away from it if they want. You can also place a cold, wrung-out towel on top of their run to create an evaporative cooling effect.

3. **Relocate to a Cooler Room**

- If your rabbit is in a sun-soaked area like a conservatory, consider moving them to a cooler room. Glass structures can heat up quickly, making it uncomfortable for your pet.

4. **Reduce Sunlight**

- Close curtains to keep sunlight from streaming in and heating up the space. Basements can be great for keeping rabbits cool since they tend to



be naturally cooler.

Risks of Hot Weather for Rabbits

Fly Strike:

One significant risk during the summer months is fly strike. This occurs when flies lay their eggs in a rabbit's fur, leading to serious health issues. Warm, dirty, or wet bedding creates a perfect environment for flies. It's vital to check your rabbit twice a day for signs of fly strike, including lethargy, loss of appetite, open wounds, or even visible maggots. Older rabbits or those with health issues may have a harder time keeping themselves clean, so they require extra care.

Heatstroke:

Heatstroke is another serious concern that can escalate quickly. Keep an eye out for signs like weakness, panting, warm and red ears, excessive salivating, confusion, or convulsions. If you notice these symptoms, don't delay—contact your vet immediately! Lay your rabbit on a cold, wet towel and create a gentle breeze to help cool them down.

By taking these steps, you can ensure your rabbit stays safe, comfortable, and happy during those hot summer days!