



Bonding with your hamster can be a long and difficult process. Hamsters have not been domesticated nearly as long as dogs and cats have, so bonding with them can prove to be more challenging. It can take quite a while to bond with your hamster. Here are some quick tips on how to bond with your hamster:

1. Do not compare your hamster to others. Every hamster is different so not every hamster will be the same when it comes to bonding and human interaction.
2. Let your hamster settle into their enclosure. The number of days you wait to let your hamster settle in depends on how comfortable the hamster seems, if they have been in a human home, if they are skittish, and if they have had a traumatic past. A hamster who came from a home where they had plenty of human interaction might only take a couple of days to settle in whereas a hamster who is very skittish or has had something traumatic happen in their life, will most likely take a bit longer. Settling in is important because it will be easier to bond with a pet who is used to their environment.
3. Get your hamster used to you. Things like associating your smell, sound, and the way you move with your hamster can all help them get used to you. You can take a bit of toilet paper, rub it on your hands and arms, and put it in the enclosure so that your hamster can start getting used to your smell. Another thing you can do is sit next to the enclosure and read books or work on your computer while either reading out loud or simply talking about what you are doing so that your hamster will become familiar with your voice.
4. Create a routine with your hamster. Feeding your hamster, changing their water, or spot cleaning at the same time every day will show your hamster what the routine is. Your hamster may even start to wake up earlier if they know that you are coming to give them food.
5. Practice lifting them out of the enclosure with a mug or measuring cup, so they get used to the sensation of being lifted. You can put a treat in the mug or measuring cup, so they want to climb in and then simply lift them up and out of the enclosure and right back in. It is important that you don't rush them and putting them right back into their enclosure will start to get them more comfortable with being lifted.



6. After your hamster has gotten used to being lifted with a mug or measuring cup, you can do the same thing with your hand. Again, be sure to put the hamster right back.
7. After a while your hamster will associate being lifted as a positive thing because they get to leave their enclosure. They now know that this is the only way to get out of the enclosure. You can let them onto the floor for some floor time or just let them climb on your hands and legs while sitting so they get even more used to you.
8. Snuggle sags or fabric pouches can be very useful bonding tools, however not all hamsters like them so you might not want to use them. You can also wear your hoodie backwards, so you have the hood at the front, and use this as a snuggle sack. Snuggle sags are dark, soft, and safe so this might make your hamster feel more comfortable.





9. Bathtub/free-roam bond with your hamster. Bathtub bonding is where you sit in a dry bathtub with the drain closed and let your hamster roam around the bathtub. You can put some toys in there and this allows your hamster to explore as well as climb up onto and explore you and get even more comfortable with you. If you have a hamster-proof room (ex. a bathroom with the door, air vents, and toilet blocked off), you can do the same thing with your hamster. Not all hamsters will enjoy this as this can be a big step. Some hamsters may fear the open space and display some erratic or anxious behaviors. If you notice this, the best thing that you can do is simply put them back in their enclosure.



10. Use treats to bond with your hamster. Treats/food can be very helpful tools in the bonding process. If you have a picky hamster who won't take or be motivated by treats/food, it will be quite a bit trickier to bond with them. If your hamster will take food and treats, they will think of you as the food-bringer which is a positive thing. Because you will probably need to feed your hamster more during bonding you won't want to use very fatty treats such as baby puff snacks, sunflower seeds, and corn. Instead, use things like dried vegetables/fruits, or just their normal seed mix. See the "diet" section for more about food and treats.
11. Have time and patience with your hamster. It is nearly impossible to create a bond with your hamster the day you get them. Usually it takes weeks, months, or even years to get a very special and trusting bond with your hamster. The most important thing is to keep trying to bond with them because the more regularly you can attempt to bond with them, the stronger your bond will end up being.

One thing that is worth mentioning is that some hamsters are "ghost hamsters". A ghost hamster is not a species of hamster, it is just a common term for a hamster who generally doesn't like human interaction. A ghost hamster is a hamster who usually doesn't come out until; very late in the night, or once you have left, or only if the lights are off, or only if there aren't people around, and they usually don't like human interaction. Hamsters don't need human interaction to survive so ghost hamsters aren't likely to live any shorter or have more health problems or anything like that. The most important thing about ghost hamsters is to **not force them to come out or play with you because it could make the problem worse**. Giving your ghost hamster a happy healthy life is the best thing you can do for them, and you might need to just let go of the human interaction piece of hamster care. If you have any more questions about ghost hamsters, you can check out Victoria Raechel's YouTube video "What is a Ghost Hamster?".