



Teaching a Rabbit to Wear a Harness and Leash

Rabbits enjoy going outside, but it is risky if off-leash. The sight, movements, sounds, and smells are all too enticing for rabbits. Training a rabbit to accept a harness and a leash is a great way to get him safely outdoors!

- Select a lightweight body harness with a band that goes around the rabbit's neck and a band that goes around the rabbit's chest/torso. Never use a collar, since a rabbit can easily slip out of one or become injured. Also select a lightweight leash (6 ft or more)
- Hold the rabbit firmly, but gently, and kneel on the floor beside him
- Speak gently and soothingly to the rabbit as you slowly ease the harness onto him. Offer the rabbit treats while he is getting used to the harness to make the experience positive and rewarding
- If the rabbit is reluctant about wearing the harness, try again slowly later in the day or the next day. Do this until the rabbit is used to wearing the harness indoors
- Once he is used to wearing a harness, attach the leash and let him drag it along behind him until he gets used to the feel of a pull on the harness
- When the rabbit is at ease with the feel of the harness and leash, take hold of the loop end
- Walk inside for a number of days before venturing outside. If the rabbit has never been outside, get him used to it by putting his cage outside in a pet-safe area (in the shade)
- To coax the rabbit to walk along with you, offer him special treats. Place a treat on the ground a few feet in front of the rabbit, when he gets to that treat, repeat the process.



 Even the most confident bunny may panic if suddenly aware of open space, the constraint of the harness, and the approach of an unknown animal. With this in mind, it is best to stay within low traffic areas, away from dog kennels, when walking the rabbit. Take a towel with you to wrap the rabbit if he panics.

 If the rabbit doesn't take very well to walking on a lead, but enjoys the outdoors, there are a variety of outdoor playpens that provide room to explore and investigate in a safe, escape free environment.