



French Angora Care Guide

French Angora rabbits are prized for their luxurious wool and calm demeanor. They are dual-purpose rabbits, bred for both their fiber and meat. Owning a French Angora requires commitment to regular grooming, care, and proper housing to ensure their health and well-being.

Caring for French Angora rabbits requires dedication, particularly to their grooming and wool maintenance. However, with proper housing, a balanced diet, and regular care, these rabbits can be wonderful companions and a valuable source of luxurious fiber. Whether you are raising them as pets or for their wool, Angoras thrive with attention, routine care, and a safe, clean environment.

Housing

Space Requirements:

- French Angoras are relatively large rabbits, weighing between 7.5 and 10 pounds as adults. They require adequate space to move, rest, and groom.
- **Indoor or Outdoor Housing:** They can be housed either indoors or outdoors, and can even be litter box trained!... but their environment should be well-ventilated, dry, and safe from predators. Outdoor enclosures should be elevated at least 24" - 32" off the ground and offer protection from extreme weather, including sun, wind, and rain.
- **Cages and Hutches:** The recommended cage size for an Angora rabbit is at least 30 in deep by 36 in long by 24 in high, or 24 in deep by 48 in long by 24 in high. The cage should provide a minimum of 7.5 square feet of space, not including the space taken up by food and water dishes.
 - In general, a rabbit's cage should be at least four times the size of the rabbit, plus three times its length and 1.5–2 times its width and height. The cage should allow the rabbit to stand on its hind legs without hitting the top, stretch out completely, and hop or leap 3–4 times.
 - An all-wire cage is best for an Angora rabbit because it keeps the rabbit off of wet and soiled bedding. The sides of the cage should be made of 2 in x 1 in wire, and the floor should be made of 1/2 in x 1 in wire. Wire that is too thin could cause injury to the rabbit.
- **Flooring:** Wire flooring is common, but provide a resting board to prevent sore hocks. Litter training is also an option for indoor rabbits.

Cleaning and Maintenance:

- Regularly clean the cage or hutch to prevent odor and disease. A simple bedding system using straw is optional and can help manage waste. If using straw, keep it dry,

so it can easily be blown out or removed from their fluff. Rabbit manure can be composted for garden use.

Feeding and Nutrition

Diet Basics:

- The diet of French Angoras should consist mostly of high-quality hay (about 70%), which helps maintain their digestive system and prevents wool block.
- **Pellets:** Supplement the diet with high-fiber rabbit pellets. For wool-producing rabbits, choose pellets with 16-18% protein. A ½ cup of pellets per day is typical for adult Angoras.
- **Fresh Greens and Vegetables:** Offer dark leafy greens such as kale, dandelion greens, and parsley. Introduce fresh food gradually to avoid digestive upset.
- **Water:** Always provide fresh water, using a bottle or bowl. Make sure it's available at all times.

Supplements:

- **Black Oil Sunflower Seeds:** These can be offered in small quantities to boost protein intake and improve coat quality.
 - **Papaya Enzymes:** These help prevent wool block by aiding digestion and breaking down ingested wool.
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Grooming and Wool Care

Grooming Frequency:

- French Angoras have dense wool that requires weekly grooming to prevent mats and tangles. During molting periods, grooming should be increased to 2-3 times per week.
- Use a steel-toothed comb, slicker brush, and a blower to remove loose wool. Grooming helps prevent wool block and keeps the rabbit in top condition.

Shearing and Wool Harvesting:

- Wool can be plucked, combed, or clipped every 80 to 90 days. Plucking is the gentlest method, but clipping may be necessary if mats form. Wool should be harvested to prevent overheating and matting, which can affect the rabbit's health.
- A blower can help remove debris from the coat and reduce the time spent brushing.

Preventing Wool Block:

- Wool block occurs when rabbits ingest too much wool while grooming themselves. To prevent this, ensure regular grooming, provide plenty of hay, and offer papaya enzymes or pineapple treats to aid digestion.
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Health and Husbandry

Routine Health Checks:

- **Eyes and Ears:** Check regularly for signs of infection, discharge, or mites. Clean ears with a cotton swab dipped in olive oil if necessary.
- **Teeth:** Rabbits' teeth grow continuously, so provide hay, chew toys, or wooden blocks to keep them trimmed.
- **Nails:** Clip the tips of the nails once a month to prevent overgrowth.

Common Ailments:

- **Wool Block:** Prevent by regular grooming, proper diet, and digestive supplements like papaya enzyme, pineapple, or simply fresh hay or green leafy veggies.
- **Sore Hocks:** Prevent by providing solid resting boards and keeping cages clean.
- **Parasites:** Check for external parasites such as mites. Treatment involves topical solutions or natural remedies like olive oil.

Vaccination and Veterinary Care:

- Regular veterinary checkups are recommended. Vaccination for Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) may be required depending on the region.
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Breeding and Reproduction

Breeding Age:

- French Angoras can be bred starting at around 6-7 months of age. Both males (bucks) and females (does) should be healthy and at a proper weight before breeding.

Mating and Gestation:

- Always bring the doe to the buck's cage to avoid territorial aggression. The gestation period is 30-32 days, and does should be given a nesting box around day 27.
- French Angoras can produce several litters per year, **but it's important not to overbreed** does to prevent burnout.

Weaning Kits:

- Kits are weaned at 6-8 weeks of age. Gradual weaning is recommended to avoid mastitis in the doe and to ensure the kits are healthy.
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Behavior and Socialization

Temperament:

- French Angoras are known for their calm and friendly demeanor. They are generally easy to handle and enjoy social interaction with their owners.
- Regular handling from a young age helps develop a strong bond and makes grooming and care easier.

Social Needs:

- While rabbits are social animals, French Angoras can be kept alone if given plenty of human interaction. If housed together, they should be spayed or neutered to avoid unwanted litters and territorial aggression.
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Environmental Enrichment

Toys and Activities:

- Provide toys such as cardboard boxes, pine cones, and wooden blocks are fun ways to keep rabbits mentally stimulated. This also prevents boredom and promotes natural behaviors like digging and chewing.
- Safe outdoor exercise in a secure, enclosed area can provide additional stimulation.