



## PET HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

### WOOD SEALING INSTRUCTIONS

The Base interior of our Pet Homes is supplied untreated. A pot of **pet-safe clear matte wood sealer** is provided for you to seal the base wood prior to use. It's essential that you follow this step, otherwise any urine that makes contact with the wood will immediately soak in. Two coats are required to achieve a water-resistant finish. If there is any sealer left over, you can always add a third coat which will add an extra layer of water-resistance.

**STEP 1** - First assemble the Pet Home by following the Assembly instruction sheet.

**STEP 2** – Apply as instructed below, depending on which type of Pet Home you have purchased.

- Apply sealer using a clean brush.
- Work the sealer into the joins where the plywood meets the walls, and the base corners.
- Brush along the grain of the wood as this will provide a better and smoother finish.

#### **Pet Home with Integrated Floor**

If you've purchased a Pet Home with an integrated base, apply the sealer to the plywood floor and the lower half of the walls first. Any remaining product may be used on the top half of the walls. (For a 120x60cm size, there should be at least enough sealer for two coats on the plywood floor and a single coat on the walls.)

#### **Pet Home with Separate Base Unit**

If you've purchased a Pet Home with a separate base unit, then seal the base of the Pet Home first, and any left can be used on the walls. For the 180x60cm base unit, there will be just enough sealer to apply two coats. Apply the sealer on the plywood floor, the interior base walls, and top rim.

**STEP 3** – Allow to dry for at least 2-3 hours before applying the second coat, making sure the wood is completely dry to the touch without any wet areas, before the second application.

**STEP 4** – Once the second coat has been applied, leave to dry for at least 24 hours before preparing the Home for your pet.

### USE A WATERPROOF LINER

To prolong the life of your Pet Home, we **strongly recommend** lining the base of your Pet Home with a **waterproof** lining material, such as a pond liner, puppy pads or waterproof-backed fleece liner. This is especially important for guinea pigs and hedgehogs as they produce more urine than hamsters. Although the sealer provides a water-resistant finish, prolonged exposure to damp will cause the wood seal to break down. The addition of a waterproof liner will prevent urine contacting the wood whilst keeping the wood dry, and will add years of service to your Pet Home.

## ADDING A SUBSTRATE LAYER

For small creatures that naturally burrow and dig tunnels such as hamsters and gerbils, add a deep layer of substrate (see below) whilst ensuring any liner is completely covered. The deeper the substrate the better, as it will provide a natural environment for burrowing, and will help protect the base of your Pet Home. Remember to leave enough height free at one end for a nesting box and wheel. For guinea pigs, you can use washable fleece blankets for comfort if preferred, on top of a waterproof liner.

### Types of substrate

- Wood Shavings – If used, wood shavings (not sawdust!) must be labelled dust-extracted.
- Megazorb - A highly absorbent, soft wood pulp bedding often sold in bales as horse bedding. Keeps odours low.
- Carefresh – A reclaimed pulp waste bedding with high absorbency, good natural odour control and low dust level.
- Ecobed – A warm, soft, absorbent bedding with a low dust level.
- Fitch – Recycled paper bedding which is soft, warm and very absorbent. Often sold in bales as horse bedding.
- Burgess Excel Ultra Absorbent bedding – A wood pulp bedding with high absorbency and odour control.
- Hamsters and gerbils may also appreciate a section of deep potting compost for creating tunnels.

## POSITIONING YOUR PET HOME

Wood is a natural product which expands and contracts with variations in temperature. We recommend you **DO NOT** place your Pet Home directly in front of radiators or windows exposed to direct sunlight. We cannot take responsibility for wood expanding or warping.

Positioning your Pet Home appropriately will also help ensure the temperature is comfortable for your pets, and reduce the risk of them overheating.

## PROTECTING CARPETS

The Base of our Pet Homes has been designed with an air gap underneath the plywood floor. This allows air to circulate which will help dry out the base in the event of contact with urine.

When placing your Pet Home on a carpeted or wood floor, we recommend additional lining material underneath the Pet Home to protect your floors. For deep-piled carpets, it is advisable to raise the pet home off the ground by at least a couple of centimetres to prevent the carpet making contact with the underside and allow for better air circulation. Castor wheels are ideal, but you can simply use a couple of wood batons with one at each end, to support the full width of the base.

## CLEANING YOUR PET HOME

Soaked and soiled substrate should be changed at least 2-3 times a week, and preferably spot-cleaned on a daily basis. Regular cleaning will keep your home clean, fresh, and dry, and will prevent mould and smells building up.

To perform a thorough clean, remove all substrate and lining material, and use a clean damp cloth to wipe the floors and walls. **DO NOT SPRAY A CHEMICAL CLEANING PRODUCT DIRECTLY ONTO THE WOOD** as this may adversely affect the wood sealer, and will only stain/dampen the wood further. Lining material should be washed or replaced regularly.

It's advisable to check your Pet Home on a regular basis for any damage caused by your pet. If any splintering occurs, then gently sand down the rough edges to avoid injury.