

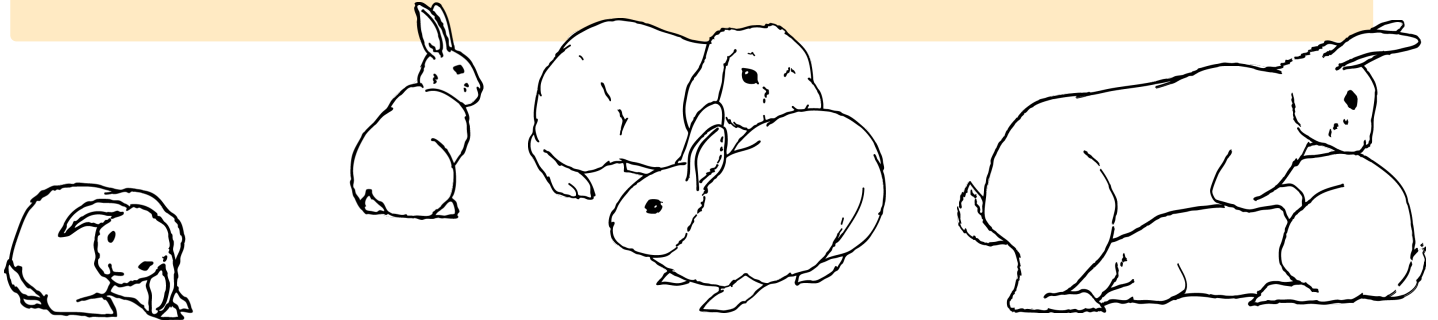
Behaviour: When Two Bunnies Meet

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Neutral Territory

Rabbits must be introduced on neutral territory - a space neither rabbit usually has access to - to prevent territorial aggression. When rabbits meet they have to establish whether the other rabbit is there to challenge them for territory or to form a social group, and if it's the latter where they fit in the social hierarchy. This process can take several days, and you'll see them progress through different behaviours.



Ignoring

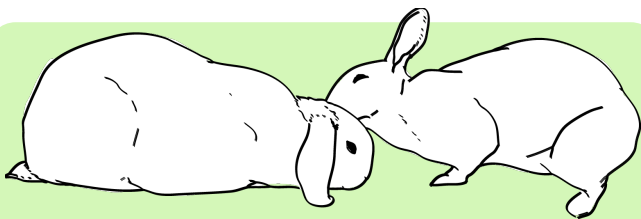
Rabbits may begin by completely ignoring each other. Despite appearances, they are actually paying close attention, waiting to see what the other rabbit will do and signalling they aren't a threat by being non confrontational.

Chasing

Most introductions involve some chasing. The chasing rabbit is saying 'I'm the boss', and if the other rabbit moves out the way they acknowledge this. Chases are usually short dashes and slow hops interspersed with more ignoring..

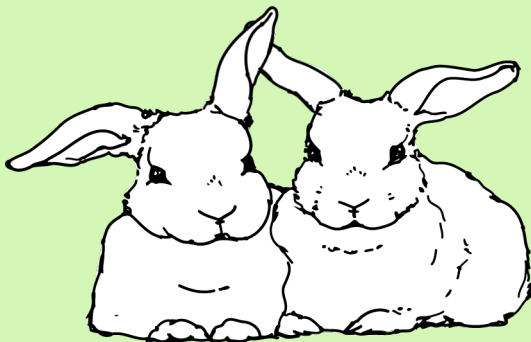
Mounting

Both male and female rabbits (even when neutered) use mounting to establish hierarchy. It's normal and will lessen over time. Mounting backwards (as pictured) should be discouraged though, to prevent bites to sensitive areas!



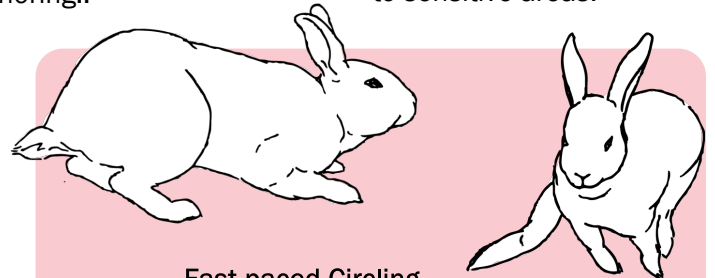
Requesting Grooming

Grooming is often the first sign of friendship. Rabbits ask to be groomed by stretching their head forward, chin on the floor. Sometimes a request will be ignored and sometimes one rabbit will do all the grooming. Either way, that they are thinking about grooming at all is a sign they are quite relaxed.



Snuggling

Once rabbits have made friends they frequently rest in contact with each other or close by.



Fast-paced Circling

If both rabbits attempt to chase each other they can end up rapidly circling almost nose to tail. This can turn into a fight, so it should always be interrupted and the rabbits separated.



Fighting

Rabbit fights are fast-paced as they spin and tumble over each other biting and kicking. Rabbits should immediately be separated and checked for injury.



Bonded: Happy in each other's company they can move to their permanent living space.



Separate: Aggressive towards each other - seek expert advice before continuing.