



## The Bunny Lowdown



**What is your Bunny  
trying to tell you?**



# The Bunny Lowdown



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# Introduction

Rabbits are complex and quiet creatures and fully understanding rabbit behaviour can be a minefield.

In the wild, Rabbits are prey creatures and it's very much in their best interest not to draw attention to themselves.

That's why their methods of communication and displaying emotion, may not be obvious to their owners.

Do you ever look at your pet bunny and wonder just what they're doing?

Do you ever wonder what your rabbit is trying to tell you?



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# Do I have a happy bunny?

Rabbit's show they're happy and content in a number of complex ways.

Let's run through them.

### **Ears**

For rabbits not of a flop-ear breed, when they're are happy their ears are generally close together, facing slightly backwards and pointing outwards.

### **Lying Down**

Rabbit's can show they're happy and relaxed just by lying down.

They do this in three ways:



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1. If they're lying with their legs tucked underneath them.
2. If they're lying with their front paws pointing forward and rear legs stuck out sideways. Their body will also be relaxed and extended.
3. If they're lying down with full extended and relaxed body. Back legs are stretched out behind their body and their front paws are pointing forwards.

My rabbit – [Ronnie](#) – demonstrates the second of those perfectly here:





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### Flopping

When a rabbit flops down sideways in his cage, this is a sign of happiness.

My old Rabbit – Dave (RIP) – loved to do this. He was incredibly dramatic when he did it too. He waited for an audience and then did a big song and dance about it.

We always thought he was bored and wanted out of the cage, but it turns out he was just really happy and content.

Flopping, however, is down to the tastes of the individual rabbit.

Some rabbits do it, others don't; Dave certainly did it a lot more than [Ronnie](#) does.



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### Lightening

This is the nickname we call [Ronnie](#). He got it from darting around the living room like greased lightening.

Or when he speeds down the stairs and comes crashing down into the shoe wrack opposite the bottom step.

Running around really fast is another way Rabbits show they're happy.

### Binkyng

Often accompanied by the lightening fast speed is a spot of binkyng.

Binkyng is where Rabbits leap into the air, twist their bodies and kick out their back legs.

For anybody who's ever seen a rabbit doing a binky, I think you'll agree; it's a sight to behold.

This is arguably the strongest sign a rabbit can give that they're happy.





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### **Buzzing/Honking**

Another sign of happiness is if your rabbit circles you, making buzzing or honking noises.

However, if other rabbits are present this could also signal they want sexy time.



# How can I tell if my bunny is marking their territory?

Has your rabbit ever rubbed their chin on you? Or have you ever seen them rub their chin on stuff around your home?

If they have, it means they're declaring it's theirs.

[Ronnie](#) does it all the time.

In fact, he does it every time my wife return from somewhere with animals. As soon as we let him out to play, he's on us; rubbing his chin all over us.

Apparently, he doesn't much like it when we pet other animals.

Because we're his property.



# How can I tell if my bunny wants my attention?

Rabbits also have a couple of ways of trying to get your attention.

## Nudging

Rabbits explore their environment by sniffing and nudging things with their noses.

If they nudge you, they may very well be trying to tell you to get out of the way or they could be trying to get your attention and they want you to stroke them.



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### Nipping

If nudging doesn't do the job, it could be followed up by nipping.

In this case they don't want to cause you harm, they just want you to pay attention to them.

This behaviour can be discouraged if they're only doing it to seek attention and are not just being aggressive.

Aggressive behaviour such as this can be diminished if you have your rabbit spayed or neutered.

[Ronnie](#) used to nip a lot, but it was only ever to seek attention. We discouraged it and after a time he stopped.



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### **Digging**

He does this more with my wife than with me.

He's forever climbing on her stomach and digging away at her clothes.

This is him actually vying for her attention; he wants her to do her special head strokes that he loves.

He get's his way more often than not.



# How can I tell if my bunny is showing me Affection?

The main way rabbits show affection is by licking you.

More often than not, when we stroke [Ronnie's](#) head, he's eager to return the favour by licking your hand.

He'll raise his head to prevent you from stroking so that you can present your hand for him to lick.

When he's had enough of licking you, he'll lower his head again.

This is him telling us that we may stroke his head again.

Aren't we privileged?



# How can I tell if I've NOT got a happy bunny?

## Thumping

Rabbits thump their back legs to warn you of something.

They do it by instinct whenever they sense danger.

[Ronnie](#) does this a lot. What danger he's sensing is anybody's guess, but I suspect he's mostly trying to warn me of danger when my wife tries to cuddle him.

## Growling

Rabbits growl when they're angry or stressed.

If they're growling at you, you may be invading their territory and they're telling you to back off.

Be careful, this may escalate to aggressive behaviour if it continues.



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### **Standing Up**

Rabbits stand up on their back paws, with their front paws raised when their unhappy.

It looks like they're boxing and quite often they will also be growling.

### **Kicking Dirt in Your Face**

If your pet bunny turns away from you, flicking his back feet this is also a sign that he's unhappy.

This is the wild rabbits equivalent of kicking dirt into another animal's face before escaping.

[Ronnie](#) does this sometimes after we've cleaned out his cage and he doesn't like how we've arranged his toys and bowls.





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# Do I have a bored bunny?

If your bunny is bored, they can show it in a number of ways:

1. Overeating.
2. Excessive Grooming.
3. Destroying all the things.

## Overeating

If a Rabbit is bored, this could lead to overeating.

If they have plenty of pellets and vegetables to eat, this could lead to an overweight and unhappy rabbit, which isn't something anybody wants.

It's a good idea to monitor this every time you take your pet Bunny to the vet.

If you think your bunny may be overeating, just give them hay.

Hay is very good for them and any vet will tell you: the more hay, the better.



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### **Excessive Grooming**

Rabbits groom themselves a good number of times a day, but boredom can lead to excessive grooming.

Excessive grooming is bad because it can cause your bunny harm; it can cause hairballs to form in the gut.

### **Destroying all the things**

A common problem with indoor rabbits is, they tend to destroy things when they're bored.

[Ronnie](#) is no exception.

He loves to nibble on things he shouldn't; phone cables, live power extension cables, t-shirts and anything else you can think of.

The worst has to be the carpet.

We allow the little guy to run up the stairs and onto the landing, but we shut all the doors to the bedrooms and bathroom so he can't – in theory – cause havoc.



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He's found a way.

He's taken digging up the carpet outside our bedroom door.

He managed to pull up a fair chunk of it before we put a stop to it (blocked it off with a clothes basket).

Then he started on the other bedroom door.

After a bit of research, we figured this could be down to boredom.

So we got [some of his toys](#) out and made more of an effort to play with him.

It worked.

He hasn't destroyed the carpet since.



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# Bunny Help

### Pet Insurance

[Pet Plan Pet Insurance](#) is a great place to start looking for pet insurance.

We pay approx £12 a month for Ronnie's [pet insurance with Petplan](#) and that's without the 10% discount you can get by [clicking on this link](#).

### Pet Supplies

I tend to get a lot of my pet supplies from [Amazon](#), but recently I've also been using Monster Pet Supplies.

I find they have a lot of decent selection of Rabbit food and a [fantastic selection of toys](#).

### Useful Bunny Lowdown Links

- [How much does a Rabbit cost?](#)
- [7 things you need before bringing your pet bunny home.](#)
- [What's safe for my rabbit to eat?](#)
- [What's a healthy diet for my bet bunny?](#)