

## How to bath a guinea pig. For new or nervous owners.

We bathe pigs every day so take this for granted but as we did 3 baths in one morning the other day in the chaos of the shelter, for owners who were understandably a bit nervous about doing it for the first time, perhaps a mini tutorial would help.

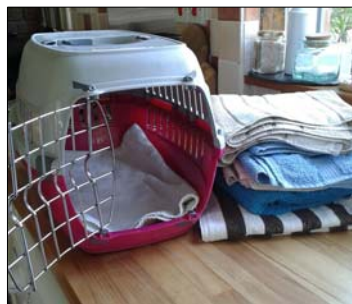
Everyone has their own method of course, but this is a personal perspective and written very much for novices.

### Read this before you start! And print or have to hand during bathing

It makes sense to time this on cage cleaning day of course so a clean piggy goes back into a clean cage. A kitchen/utility sink is the ideal place for the bath. **BE PREPARED!** Have everything ready. Don't just plonk your pig in the sink and then think about what happens next. They may freak out, attempt to leap out of the sink, you'll panic = not a good start!

Have the work surface prepared with the following items:

1. A carrier lined with a towel – facing away from the sink. Too close and they may try and leap into it before you want them to. Their field of vision is about 3ft and in my experience, a carrier is their safe haven and preferable to being put in a sink!



2. Towels – maybe 3 or 4, just in case you need them all. You don't want to be hunting in the airing cupboard for extra towels mid bath time.

3. A tea towel lining the sink (so they don't slip about when you put them in) but away from the plug hole so water can drain away.



4. A giant saucepan or preserving pan filled with baby temperature water (dip your elbow in to get it just right). I find this method preferable to faffing around with taps trying to get the temperature and water flow just right.

5. A large plastic jug

6. Your chosen shampoo - decanted into a jam jar and shaken up with some warm water so it's already lathered and ready to go but with lid removed (you will be holding piggy with one hand when you need it so don't want to be trying to unscrew it one handed!)

7. Hairdryer and a comb or brush

Step 1. Place piggy into the sink and hold him gently around his head end so you have him secure. Talk to him in soothing tones all the while. He may wriggle a bit at this point but hold him gently and firmly so he doesn't leap around in the sink.

**DON'T** take your supporting hand away from him and walk away thereby leaving him 'alone' in the sink. Your hand roots him and helps calm him. And yes – guinea pigs can jump, when they really want to!



Step 2. Sing or talk to him all the while. The sound of your voice reverberating around the sink will calm him. I'm sure many think I'm nuts doing this but I find it really does work and has helped me bathe numerous lunatic/unhandled pigs without too much fuss – especially if I lean right into the sink so it sort of echoes!



Step 3. With your free hand, use the jug to gently pour the warm water from the pan over his body, from neck end downwards. Water should not be poured directly over their head but you can work the water up around his face and under his chin. Repeat this until he is fully soaked. At the right temperature it won't be too much of a shock and should be quite soothing.



Step 4. Lather the shampoo mix over from rear end upwards but be careful around ears, nose and head so work upwards from his body towards his top end. By now you should be able to hold him whilst lathering the shampoo all around his body with both hands.



Step 5. If he is having an anti parasitic or anti fungal shampoo, he will need to soak in the chosen shampoo for at least 15 mins so wrap him in a towel, still covered in the shampoo and pop him in the carrier for the due time. It doesn't matter if he shakes the towel off in the carrier, the suds will still do their job. If he doesn't need to soak then you can progress straight to the rinsing stage.



Step 6. After the allotted time, put him back into the sink (holding and singing.....!) and rinse him off using the jug and pan of lukewarm water until the suds have completely rinsed off.

Step 7. Wrap him up in a new, dry towel and rough dry him.



Step 8. Use a hairdryer to dry him properly. Keep it moving, about 8 inches away, on the lowest/quietest warm setting and hold him with his head facing the crook of your arm so he can't escape, whilst gently brushing, combing or ruffling his hair. Once they get used to this they usually love the hair drying part!

**Phew – all done! But make sure that if piggy lives outside he is fully dry before going back into the hutch.**