Chinchillas are happier, healthier, more outgoing, overall better pets for their owners if they have a same-sex chinny companion. They are herd animals and a companion will bring them security and a lower stress level.

Chinchillas are very territorial. They will not bond if opposite sex chins are in the same household because they will scent the opposite sex chin and become aggressive and territorial with their cagemate.

Some chins won’t ever bond with another because of past experiences, and others that have been in breeding may always need to be singles. All chins have different personalities, so be prepared with an extra cage if your chins don’t get along.

This is the stress bonding method, chins bond through anxiety and a “new” neutral environment:

* + Trim each chin’s whiskers. Dominant chins will chew off the other chin’s whiskers. If they all have short whiskers, they will think they are submissive and be less likely to claim territory or be aggressive.
	+ Remove them from their cage and put them into a temporary or travel cage
	+ Completely empty the cage you will put the chins into, wash each item to remove all scent of the other chins, and rearrange the location as you put items back into the cage. If you have a Critter Nation or similar cage, close one level. Your goal is to make the cage seem completely different to the chins, they should think it’s a new and foreign place.
	+ Take the chins on a ride in your air-conditioned vehicle to get the new chin. Bring a separate carrier for the new chin. If you’re trying to bond two existing pets, take them out for an hour while you’re doing errands, maybe while you buy new shelves or accessories. Use separate carriers.
	+ When you return home, place a large pan of fresh dust in the cage, and place all chins into the cage at once. They will explore the cage together and enjoy the dust, so they will smell alike.
	+ Watch them closely. The chins will chase and mount each other; this is normal behavior while they work out their “pecking order” and get to know each other. If you see any fur pulled out, biting, a cornered chin defending himself, or very aggressive behavior, separate the chins. You can repeat the process in a few weeks.
	+ Some chins will stay separate and hide for up to two weeks, this is normal for older chins. Be patient and let them bond when they are ready.
	+ Leave them in their cages, with no outside play time or holding, for **two weeks**. The chins need this time to bond, settle in, and feel safe in their new environment without distractions.

MLS 3/18/17