

Restraint Options During Ferret Grooming

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If you have ever tried to restrain a ferret while you try to clip her nails, clean her ears, or perform any other grooming activity, you know how difficult it can be! While some ferrets are more open to grooming, others will struggle wildly, making it quite difficult for you to actually do the grooming that must be done. So how can you get the job done?

Types of Restraint

There are two types of restraint you can use while grooming ferrets:

- Active restraint - the ferret is physically restrained by [scruffing](#), by a [harness](#), by being wrapped in a towel, or by some other method.
- Passive restraint - the ferret's attention is directed towards something else, generally a [treat](#), [FerreTone](#), [FerretVite](#), or another treat that takes some time to finish.

Which type of restraint you will need to use depends on what type of grooming you are trying to do and the individual ferret's personality. Some ferrets will become very angry or upset if they are scruffed, so for those types of ferrets, you would need to use another method of active restraint.



A Note About Scruffing

If done correctly, [scruffing](#) is not an aggressive action, and it does not hurt the ferret. Your ferret has loose skin at the back of her neck, and scruffing is simply when you use your fingers (not a fist) to hold her by this loose skin. This is how her mother would carry her kit (baby ferret) around or immobilize her.

Which Method to Use When?

As mentioned above, one of the deciding factors for which method to use will be what kind of grooming you are doing.

Clipping Nails

There are two types of restraint that work best when [clipping nails](#). The first and easiest way, especially for new ferret owners, is to have a helper. The helper scruffs the ferret with one hand, supporting her hind end with the other. While your helper holds the ferret immobilized, you will clip her nails.

The second method you can use while clipping nails is a passive restraint method. It takes a little more practice, but is generally less stressful for the ferret. Lay your ferret on her back in your lap or on a bed or blanket on a flat surface and drizzle a little [FerreTone](#) on the lower part of her stomach. (We recommend wearing old clothes the first few times you do this, as she very well may be surprised and splash some FerreTone around!) As she licks the FerreTone off, clip her nails. If she finishes the FerreTone before you are done, pour a little more on her stomach.

Cleaning Ears

While some ferrets will allow you to [clean ears](#) while you distract them with a [treat](#), the easiest way to effectively clean your ferret's ears is to scruff her with one hand and clean with the other. Scruffing allows you to hold her head still, a necessity when you're working around delicate ferret ears. After you have cleaned her ears multiple times with the scruffing method, you can try distracting her with a treat, but be very careful.

Bathing

The methods you can use during bathing are kind of a cross between passive and active restraint. While you obviously cannot use treats in the bathtub, sink, or wherever else you bathe your ferret, you should use other things to distract her while she's in there. You can fill the tub a couple inches with water and place toys in there for her to play with while you bathe her. You can talk to her soothingly and continuously while she's in the tub. You can allow her to play in the tub in water regularly so she's more used to having fun in there.

When you physically restrain a ferret in the tub, scruffing isn't going to be an option, since you will need to wash the fur that you're holding when you scruff her. Instead, we recommend using one hand placed around her body directly under her front arms to form a sort of cradle. This will leave one hand free to [shampoo](#), but still keep her both supported and restrained.

Brushing Teeth

Most ferrets are going to be very uncomfortable with the idea of your fingers in their mouth and touching their teeth, no matter how much you try to get them used to it. Therefore, physical restraint is almost always needed when brushing a ferret's teeth. Once your ferret is used to having her teeth brushed, you may find that simply placing a treat like FerretVite on the [toothbrush](#) will be enough restraint. However, you will initially need to scruff her or otherwise physically restrain her to allow you to do a proper cleaning.

WE RECOMMEND



[Ferret FerreTone & FerretVite](#) contain essential vitamins and fatty acids for healthy skin and coat.



[Professional Pet Products Waterless Shampoo for Ferrets](#) is a safe, non-irritating, hypo-allergenic formula that leave coats soft and shiny.



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[Finger Toothbrushes](#) make cleaning a breeze and can cleanse even hard-to-reach areas.