Stimulate Your Small Pet, How to

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Small pets are very active, and require a high level of daily mental and physical stimulation to maintain their overall health. Enrichment is something that an owner can do to maximize the effects of exercise and activity your pet gets. There are two important parts to small pet enrichment: creating a stimulating cage environment and bonding and interaction.

Each small pet enjoys different toys, so be sure to take individual needs into consideration when searching for a toy.

RABBITS like toys they can burrow in, dig in, shred, toss, chew, nudge, roll, and jump on.

GUINEA PIGS like to explore and chew. Ramps, small shelves, wobble toys, paper bags, cardboard tubes, tunnels, and wooden chew toys work well.

HAMSTERS like toys and accessories they can chew on, hide in, explore, and climb. This includes an exercise wheel, places to hide, a nest box with nesting material, wooden chew toys, tunnels, and tubes.

creating a stimulating cage environment

Many small pet owners mistakenly think loading the cage with toys creates a stimulating environment. While it may work for a day or two, your pet will quickly become tired with the toys or overwhelmed. Here are some ways to create a beneficial and stimulating environment:

- **Choose** toys carefully based on the individual animal's likes and dislikes
- **Find** toys that stimulate natural instincts such as chewing, gnawing, foraging, burrowing and hiding
- **Rearrange** the cage often

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GERBILS like climbing, chewing, and burrowing. Good things to include are wood pieces, ladders, ramps, platforms, wooden chew toys, an exercise wheel, and a nest box.

MICE are very active and curious, so look for toys that allow them to climb, chew, and burrow. This includes an exercise wheel, tunnels and tubes, ladders, cotton ropes, chew toys, hiding spots, and a nest box.

RATS are very intelligent and like to explore, chew, hide, and climb. Choose toys they can carry around, shred, or push. This includes wooden chew toys, tunnels, tubes, exercise wheels, and nest box.

CHINCHILLAS love to climb and jump, so lots of shelves, ladders, and platforms are a must. They also like toys they can chew and climb on such as branches, wooden toys, exercise wheels, blocks, and tunnels.

- **Rotate** toys in and out of the cage to keep them fresh and new
- **Observe** your small pet with each toy – if she doesn't like it, avoid putting it back in and try a new toy instead

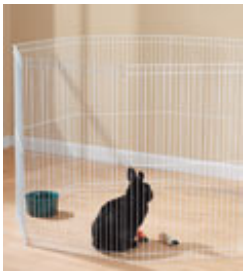
bonding & interaction

Creating a stimulating environment is only part of small pet enrichment. The other very important half is spending time with your pet! It's important to interact with your pet daily. Many people think of small pets as caged animals, but they still need daily handling and human interaction outside of their cage. Most small pets can spend time playing in a playpen, in a pet-proofed room, or use a Run-About-Ball.

There are many fun and easy ways you can provide toys and enrich your pet's environment. Use your imagination and give them attention every day – you will reap all the rewards of a healthy, happy critter!

WE RECOMMEND

Run-About Balls are interactive exercise toys.



Exercise Pens allow your pet to roam indoors or outdoors while being safely contained within your view.

Knot Nibbler contains a wood ball that rattles around inside of the all-natural wood chew toy to keep your pet interested and active for hours.

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