

ferretkeeping 101



You may think that a ferret is the perfect pet, but is he the perfect pet for **you**? Here are a few things that you need to know to make an informed decision about ferret ownership.

What you should expect to pay

While it seems like under \$200 isn't very much to pay for a pet, the truth is that expenditure is just the beginning. In addition to the supplies you will need to purchase for your new ferret, which can total in the mid to high hundreds, there will be the regular cost of [food](#), [treats](#), [toys](#), [bedding](#), [litter](#), and other products.

Additionally, you can expect high veterinary costs in your ferret's future. Ferrets need annual exams and vaccinations, as well as other veterinary care. Many veterinarians will charge higher fees for ferrets because they consider them "exotics." You may be charged a fee on top of the regular office visit fee just to walk in the door with your ferret. Ferrets are also prone to a variety of cancers, the treatment for which can be expensive.

We recommend that you either set up a savings account for your ferret's care or have a credit card entirely devoted to your veterinary bills. If you have these safeguards in place, you won't have to delay emergency medical care, and put your ferret's life at risk. Ferrets are expensive pets to care for properly, and if you feel that you cannot deal with these expenditures, you should save up to purchase a ferret in the future rather than getting one now.



Are ferrets legal where you live?

Ferrets are illegal in many areas, including California, Hawaii, New York City, Washington, DC, and other locations around the country. While they may be legal in your state, they can still be illegal under the local ordinances of your town or county. Check with your local Animal Control or Humane Society to see if they are legal where you live before bringing one home.

Likewise many landlords will not allow ferrets, so check with your landlord before purchasing your ferret if you rent. We recommend that you do **not** try to sneak a ferret into your home. No matter how careful you are, this will usually result in you having to find a new home or having to re-home your ferrets, which can be very stressful for them.

Cleaning up after ferrets

Ferrets eat several times throughout the day, and they completely digest the food in about three to four hours. This results in a lot of stool to clean up. Ferrets do use [litter boxes](#), but unlike cats, most ferrets will not use their litter box 100% of the time. Be prepared to clean up messes frequently. If the thought of scooping litter boxes every day and cleaning up accidents outside the litter box regularly is unappealing to you, then a ferret isn't the right pet for you.



Destruction to your home

Ferrets are very intelligent and curious animals. Because of this, they can be rather destructive in their attempts to explore every inch of your home. They scratch furiously at closed doors, both on the door and on the carpet in front of the door. They dig into sofas and mattresses. They will climb up onto every surface possible, and they can break things while doing it. They will pull books, movies and other items off of low shelves, and if there is a garbage can in the room, they will find a way to tip it over. Ferrets need to be heavily supervised when they are out of their cages, or you need to provide them with a completely ferretproofed room with lots of interactive toys and you as a playmate.



Ferretproofing

Ferretproofing is a way to keep both your personal belongings and your ferret safe. However, "ferretproofing" is a slightly deceptive phrase. There is no such thing as completely ferretproofed - ferrets are very determined animals, and they will eventually find a way to get to the things they want. Ferretproofing is a never-ending process that you will have to do each time you let your ferret out of his cage.

Provide ferret playtimes

Ferrets are not caged animals! While it is true that they do need a [cage](#) you cannot leave them in it all day. Keeping your ferret in his cage constantly with no time to run and play will result in a very bored, depressed and possibly ill ferret. Out of cage time and interaction with you is also necessary to properly socialize your ferret. Ferrets that bite and have problems with humans were not handled enough or trained as kits (baby ferrets). Ferrets need at least four hours out of their cage each day, at least two of which should be spent playing and interacting with you. If you do not have enough time to devote to a ferret, wait until your schedule is less hectic.

What's that smell?

Ferrets do have a natural musk to them, but when the ferret is cared for properly, the smell is no stronger than that of a cat or dog. To keep your ferret's odor to a minimum, scoop litter boxes daily, wash bedding (e.g., blankets, [sleep sacks](#) weekly and [wipe](#) the cage down weekly. Constant bathing will simply make the odors stronger - you should [bathe](#) a ferret no more than once a month. Bathing more often will strip oils from your ferret's skin and coat, which in turn causes your ferret to overproduce these oils and have a stronger odor. So remember - a clean environment equals a sweet smelling ferret!

Why you need a good cage

A [cage](#) not only acts as your ferret's burrow, a safe haven that is all his own, it also keeps him safe. There are too many dangers around your home - wires, appliances, cleaning agents, and more - to permit him to roam around freely without supervision. When you are not going to be home, keep your ferret in a cage or a ferret room (a room with nothing but the cage, ferret toys, and other ferret supplies in it).

When you do pick out a cage, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- The smallest cage you get should be 2' x 3'. This is for one ferret. The more ferrets you have, the bigger the cage needs to be.
- Never, ever use a glass aquarium. Ferrets need air flow, so you should only use a wire cage.
- Very small female ferrets can often escape from cages with widely spaced bars.

As you can see, keeping a ferret can be a great responsibility and you must think long and hard before considering having a fuzzy ferret share your life.



WE RECOMMEND



[Enzyme-based formula](#) removes new and old urine and feces stains.



[Shampoo](#) deep cleans and deodorizes; [Spritz](#) keeps odors at bay between baths.



2-in-1 ferret cage accessory is a hammock and [sleep sack](#).

