

Playtime for Ferrets: Exercise His Mind

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encourage stimulating playtime

Many ferret owners don't realize just how intelligent their ferrets are, and many think that it is natural for their ferret to sleep 20 or even 22 hours a day. However, this is a sign that your ferret is bored because his daily

activities and environment have become dull and monotonous. Ferret enrichment is a very important part of ferret ownership, and the purpose of it is to create new situations that stimulate your ferret's natural intelligence and abilities. There are many things that you can do to improve the quality of your ferret's life and to keep him interested in his surroundings.

Choose the right toys

The proper toys can be very enriching for your ferret, and they are necessary to keep your ferret occupied and happy. The toys that ferrets enjoy the most are those that stimulate their natural and instinctual behaviors, such as tunneling, hunting and digging. Toys that move, toys that make noise, and toys that "interact" with your ferret work well to challenge his hunting instinct. Due to their innate curiosity and problem solving abilities, ferrets also enjoy toys that require them to solve a puzzle or figure something out.

Another type of toy that ferrets love is an edible ferret chew toy. Ferrets naturally love to gnaw on rubber-like items, but obviously allowing your ferret to chew on rubber is very dangerous! Ingesting rubber can lead to serious, life threatening blockages, so you want to provide your ferret with a safe outlet for his natural chewing behavior. Ferret safe chew toys include:

- [N-Bone Chew Treats](#)

One of the toys that ferrets seem to enjoy the most is a tunnel. Ferrets in the wild live in burrows, so providing them with tunnels and tubes to play in simulates their natural environment, which is one of the most important parts of ferret enrichment. Some fun tunnel toys include:

- [Super Thru-Way Ferret Tunnel](#)

Using the toys in an enriching way

Now that you have the right toys, what do you do with them? Simply purchasing the toys and putting them in your ferret's cage or play area isn't enough. Because they are so intelligent, ferrets will quickly grow bored when they have the same toys to play with all of the time, and the toys will no longer be enriching. They will cease to become interesting and, instead, they will just be another part of a boring



environment. The key to successful ferret stimulation, including using toys for enrichment, is to keep things new and fresh. This doesn't mean that you have to buy an endless supply of toys every week! It just means that you have to be creative with the toys that you do purchase.

Rotating Toys

The easiest way to keep toys new is to vary the toys to which your ferret has access. You can cycle toys out individually, or you can group the toys and give your ferret a different group to play with every couple days. To do this successfully, it must be random. Don't decide that one day it will be hunting toys, the next day it will be tunneling toys, and the next day it will be puzzle toys. Mix a variety of different kinds of toys in one group, and rotate them randomly.

"Randomly" means that it should be on different days and at different times of the day.

If it seems that your ferret is getting bored with a particular toy regularly, put that toy away for a couple weeks or even for a month. Then place it back in your ferret's play area, and watch him play with his fun "new" toy.

Fun New Scents

Another way you can keep toys new and interesting is to change the scent of the toy. Ferrets have an incredibly keen sense of smell, so even the smallest change in the smell of a toy can make it more interesting for them. It is also very enriching to expose them to new scents that they haven't smelled before or in a long time.

Some examples of different smell enrichments you can do are:

- Place a few drops of a scent like lavender or vanilla on a toy.
- Put the toy in a plastic bag with some leaves or grass clippings for a few days.
- Leave the toy outside for a period of time (e.g., overnight).

The Ultimate Enrichment

As you can see, toys can play a huge part in ferret enrichment when they are chosen and used properly. However, the most important part of enrichment is you! Playing with their human companions is especially exciting for ferrets because those playtimes are always exciting and unpredictable; they're never the same thing twice. It's important to make sure that your ferret experiences something new each day, and what better way to do that than to play with them? So break out those ferret enrichment toys and go have some fun!

