

Ferret Care

General

Ferrets have playful and inquisitive personalities that make them entertaining companions. They are highly intelligent and need considerable amounts of training and attention to prevent them getting into mischief. A ferret can live singly, provided it receives ample attention, or with others and given appropriate care can live from 6-10 years.

Ferrets need lots of exercise, in a ferret-proofed area. They can squeeze through gaps as small as 2 in x 2 in, so block all spaces under appliances, heaters and furniture. Also remove spongy objects like foam pillows, sponges, Styrofoam or anything that could cause an obstruction if swallowed. Beware of bathtubs and other open containers of liquids which pose drowning hazards. Ferrets can also open cabinets and drawers, so secure them! Safe toys such as tubes and tunnels, cardboard boxes, rugged cat toys and balls will provide hours of fun.

Housing

For one or two ferrets choose a solid floor, as large as possible, to provide a safe place when they are not enjoying free exercise in your home. Aquariums and wire-floored cages are not suitable. Ferrets enjoy multi-level platforms, hidey-houses and soft sleeping areas, such as small rugs, hammocks or old sweatshirts. Add a litter-box, with pellet type cat litter, not wood shavings; a heavy food bowl and a water bottle.

Diet

A healthy diet is based on premium ferret food containing 30-35% protein, primarily from animal sources and 15-20% fat. Avoid foods containing mineral oil and large amounts of vegetable fillers. Dry food and fresh water should be available at all times.

Cleaning

Remove soiled litter daily and change the bedding weekly. The litter-box, food dish, water bottles and cage bottom all need washing weekly. Always rinse and dry the cage well before returning your pets.

Health

Male ferrets should be neutered to prevent unwanted babies, other benefits are reduced aggression, less odour and less spraying. Females who are not intended for breeding should be spayed as serious health risks can occur when females are kept alone. Consult your vet for more information.

Pet ferrets should be vaccinated against canine distemper and rabies. Find a vet with experience in treating ferrets and take him for annual check-ups. Be alert for signs of illness or injury and consult your vet if you notice something unusual. When considering buying a ferret, why not contact one of the many ferret rescue centres in the UK and take advice from them. They may be able to find you a suitable animal which has already been house trained and well handled.

Warning

Children should always be supervised by an adult when handling pets, to avoid accidental injuries either to pet or child. Ferrets do not mix well most other pets, never leave them alone together.