

## Body By Chinchilla

### Exercise equipment and toys for your chinchilla.

*By Jessica Cordia*

Chinchilla Miguel/Courtesy Christin Schmitt  
Chinchillas need daily out-of-cage playtime, which should be supervised.

In the wild, chinchillas are active animals that regularly flee from predators. As pets, they need daily exercise to stay fit and healthy. A happy chinchilla is an exercised chinchilla. Exercise toys are good because they add excitement to your chinchilla's workout routine.

"There are lots of options out there. There are many different kinds of wheels, and there is a ball that they can get in and run around," said chinchilla owner Sarah Densmore.

#### Wheel

A good wheel is essential to your chinchilla's workout routine. Because chinchillas are confined to their cages, a wheel provides continuous access to running space. The wheel should be sturdy and made out of metal. Chinchillas chew plastic wheels, and may break frail ones. The wheel needs to have a solid platform (the surface your chin actually runs on). Wheels made from spokes are dangerous because tiny chinchilla feet might get caught between the rungs.

Saucers are an alternative to wheels. They are like wheels in the respect that they provide running space for you chinchilla, but they are parallel to the ground instead of perpendicular like a wheel. "I hear the saucer is the best in terms of safety and lack of noise," Densmore said. You may want to try both options and see which one works best for your pet.

#### Out-of-Cage Playtime

Besides the wheel, out-of-cage playtime is a good way to exercise your chinchilla. Let your chinchilla run around freely (with constant supervision) once a day. You can even play games with your chinchilla. "They love using my body as a jungle gym. I sit on the floor and they crawl all over me, and then run away when I try to pet them," Densmore said. These games keep your chinchilla active, and strengthen the bond between you.

#### Toys

Chinchillas need chew toys because their teeth continuously grow. Your chinchilla won't have a problem finding different things to chew on but you might not like its choices! Chinchillas will chew on shoes, books and furniture, so you give your pet alternatives. "Cardboard boxes or wood boxes are the best gifts. They love the combination of hidey-hole and gnawing opportunity," Densmore said. Chew toys can be acquired inexpensively by using your imagination. Just make sure the chew toys are made from a safe material that won't harm your chinchilla.