

Chinchilla Playtime

Ways to play with your chinchilla.

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Playtime with your chinchilla is important for several reasons: it strengthens the bond between you and your pet, it provides mental and physical stimulation, and it gives essential exercise to your chinchilla.

Toys

A good play session often involves toys. "You can provide chew toys, leaping ledges, large tree branches from Manzanita, apple, pear, maple and other safe woods," said chinchilla owner Lani Ritchey, a founder of California Chins. Chins love toys, especially ones they can tear apart like old tissue boxes and cardboard tubes from paper towels.

A good wheel is necessary. Your chinchilla will spend hours running on its wheel, so it get a sturdy one. "Plastic wheels just don't survive the wheel-junkie chin. [Chins] just destroy the wheel or eat it," Ritchey said. Make sure your wheel has a solid bottom. Chinchilla feet are very small, and can easily be broken if the wheel is made of spokes.

Play Areas

If you have adequate space, such as a patio or sunroom, a large play cage is an option. Ritchey said, "You can stock it with a dust bath, a wheel and climbing branches." Watch for potential predators when your chin is outside of its house cage. A leisurely evening play session can quickly turn into a gourmet meal for your neighbor's dog.

If your chinchilla likes to play on grass, you can set up a small fenced-in area in your yard. Make sure that the wires are close enough together so your chin can't escape. Add some sort of covering over the top of the fence because chinchillas are excellent jumpers.

Other Options

If you don't have enough room for an extra play cage, let your chinchilla run freely. You must supervise these out-of-cage sessions because your chinchilla can easily become trapped or lost in your house. Your chinchilla might also want to climb on you or be petted, so you don't want to leave and deprive your chinchilla of this interaction.

During playtime, chinchillas get tired, so make sure they do not overexert themselves. "Leave out some food, hay and treats for snacking because their blood sugar levels can crash, causing serious problems," Ritchey said.

Playtime is necessary for your pet's well-being and must be provided every day. Plus, there is nothing more fun than playing with your pet chinchilla.