

A Ferret Egg Extravaganza

Why not mix your love of ferrets with your decorating desire to create a ferret-themed egg?

By the Editors of FerretsMagazine.com

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Assemble your supplies before you begin to make decorating your ferret egg go more quickly.

Spring will soon be here — and thoughts of egg decorating pop into people's minds everywhere. If you're one of these people, why not mix your love of ferrets with your decorating desire to create a ferret-themed egg? Here is one method for creating your own original masterpiece.

Paper Dot Egg

Editors from FerretsMagazine.com and BIRD TALK magazine got together with Jennifer Bullington, an egg-decorating expert and part of the FERRETS' Circulation Department, to learn the secrets behind Paper Dot Eggs. Special thanks to Jennifer for showing us the ropes, and also to Ann Doering, for providing the setting for our egg decorating event.

Supplies needed (all available at either a craft store or grocery store):

- Egg
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Construction paper (acid free in brown, white or black for your ferret's fur)
- Glue (Elmer's white or Tacky Glue — must be a glue that dries clear)
- Pushpin
- Toothpicks
- Pipe cleaners, also known as chenille (brown, white or black — your choice for your ferret's feet and tail)
- Pom poms or felt (for nose)
- Plastic eyes
- Thread (for whiskers)

Estimated time to complete: Two hours or more, going at a leisurely pace.

Create Your Egg Ferret

Please note that the below steps are guidelines. Once you've made an egg using these instructions, feel free to experiment with different eyes, ears, feet, etc. to create your own unique egg ferret.

Begin by holding the egg over a sink or a bowl and poking a hole in the shell with a pushpin in order to drain the liquid.

STEP 1

Blow out the egg. With the egg positioned over a sink or bowl, take the pushpin and poke a hole into the top and bottom of the egg. A hole must be in both sides. When poking a hole, cradle the egg with one hand, making sure not to squeeze it, and push the pin in with the other.

Once you have a pinhole made, poke gently next to it to widen the hole to between 1/16 or 1/8 of an inch. The hole at the rear of the egg (the fattest part) will be for the tail. The hole at the front of the egg will be covered by the ferret's nose.

Once you have a hole in both the top and bottom of the egg, blow through one side with your mouth. The sink or bowl will catch the egg's liquid as it falls out. Blow gently. It takes several tries to get all the liquid out. When the yolk reaches the hole, you may need to poke at it with the pin before it will come out. Keep blowing until the egg is empty. Gently shake the egg to test if anything is inside.

When the egg is empty, rinse it out by running water over it and into the hole. Dry the outside of the egg gently and set it on a paper towel to let it drain a bit.

Note: An empty egg is very fragile. We lost one egg during the blow-out process and had to start over. Think of the pattern of your ferret egg ahead of time.

STEP 2
Prepare the dots. While the egg is draining, take the hole punch and start punching out the color construction paper you'll be using for the ferret's fur. We made a big pile of brown and white dots before starting.

STEP 3
Apply the dots. This step takes the longest. Think of the pattern of ferret you want to create — a stripe pattern, white underside, bandit eyes, etc. Then start applying paper dots from the back of the egg. It's recommended that you apply the dots in circles around the egg and move forward. Do not cover the two holes you punched at the front or back of the egg.

To apply the dots, get a toothpick and dip it in some glue. Use the glue-covered toothpick to smear a thin, even layer of glue over a small portion of egg. (Don't cover too much of the egg, or the glue will be dry by the time you try to place a dot.) When the glue is just about gone from the toothpick, use it to pick up a paper dot. One at a time, place a paper dot on the egg. The small layer of glue on the toothpick will make it tacky enough to pick up dots by touching them. Be sure to overlap the edges of the dots slightly as you apply them, so that the egg surface is completely covered. The size of your egg will determine the size of the ears.

It's up to you how many rows of brown or white you want to use. Just keep the pattern in mind as you apply the dots and keep going until you've covered the egg from rear to front.

Note: Don't worry about excess glue showing on the dots. Unwanted white marks should disappear as the glue dries.

STEP 4
Nose, eyes, ears, tail, feet and whiskers. You have two choices for the nose. Hole punch the felt to get a single pink felt dot. Apply glue to the back and paste it at the front of the egg, covering the hole. This is the ferret's nose. You may also choose to use a pom pom for the nose.

Again, apply glue to the back of the pom pom and place it over the front hole.

Eyes can be the plastic eyes as shown on a few of our samples. Some of us cut the plastic eye and used only the dark interior (black construction paper will also work). Whatever your choice, apply glue to the back and paste them above the nose where you'd like the eyes to be.

Get together with a group of friends to make your ferret-themed egg decorating a fun, social event.

Differences in egg sizes will change the size of the ear, so ears need experimentation. Start out by cutting a half-inch square of brown construction paper. Fold in half diagonally, making a triangle. With the folded edge facing forward, position the paper on the egg to see if the square is about the right size for the egg. The bottom of this triangle will be glued to the egg and the top will be rounded off to make the ear.

Once you have the size ear you like, use the scissors to round off the top of the ear, put glue on the bottom of the triangle and place it on the ferret. Repeat the procedure for the second ear.

The tail is made from a pipe cleaner, also known as chenille. Select the color pipe cleaner you want, and trim a piece to the length desired (1 1/2 inches is a good start). Bend the pipe cleaner 90 degrees at about 1/8 inch from an end. Insert this end into the rear hole. Push the cleaner in until the tail is the desired length. If it's too short, start over with a longer piece. Once the tail is the length you want, dab some glue around the edge of the hole to keep the tail in place.

Note: Chenille will need some time to dry after gluing.

The feet can be made from pipe cleaner or pom poms. Experimentation is again needed. For the pipe cleaner, cut off two 1-inch strips of the pipe cleaner you want to use for the ferret's front feet. Bend these in half and place them lengthwise against the egg where you'd like the front feet to be. If the proportions look good, go ahead and glue them in place.

For the rear feet, cut off two longer strips (maybe 1 1/2 inches) and bend them into a Z shape, with the middle section of the Z being very short. Bend one of the long ends inward and try positioning this part against the egg. See how this foot looks. It may take several tries at bending the leg to get it to look like you want with a section flush against the egg for gluing. Once you've got a leg how you want it, glue it in place and repeat the process for the second leg. If you choose to go the pom pom route, just choose a color and size and glue them on.

Whiskers are made from thread. Choose the color thread you want (white or brown). Cut two or three strips that are about 2 inches long. Cover these strips in glue and let them dry. Once dry, they will have some stiffness to them. Place them

under the nose, with an equal length on either side of the nose. If they seem too long, trim them. If too short, start over with longer pieces. Once the whiskers are the length you like, glue them in place under the nose.

Allow a little time for the glue on the egg to dry more completely, and your egg will be ready for display!