

Saved By Ferrets

This lighthearted nod to how ferrets can help conserve resources (please don't try this at home).

Article by Todd Leuthold; Illustrations by Thomas Kimball

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I've had ferrets for more than 10 years. After watching them for so long, I have discovered that there is more than just entertainment value in these little fur-buttons. With a little thought, these carpet sharks can actually save us energy and money.

Saving Energy

Heating Pads: Instead of using a heating pad to keep your feet warm at night, just carefully unhook a hammock full of ferrets and place them on your feet for an instant foot-warmer. The good thing here is that they don't cool off as time passes.

Power Generators: Need an additional source of electricity to run those new high-tech appliances? Hook up a cable to a wool carpet, attach the other end to a battery, then put teeny little socks on all of your ferrets and let them run around the room. In just a few minutes, you will have enough stored energy to power a computer. Get one of those little "pump" generators that create electricity by pressing on a pedal on the front of the device. Put this in front of your oven, plug the oven into the generator, put your dinner inside and then hang a treat over the generator. Your ferrets can take turns jumping on the pedal trying to get the treat. Be sure to let them have the treat after a few jumps, so they will keep coming back for more. If you have a dozen ferrets, your dinner should be fully cooked in no time at all.

Coffee Warmers: Do you wish you had a way to keep your coffee warm, without having to get up and put it in the microwave every few minutes? Just wrap a sleeping ferret around the base of your cup and enjoy warmer coffee for a longer period of time. If done on a regular basis, you could save several dollars a year.

Dish Thieves: If you hate doing dishes, you can always accidentally leave various dishes, silverware, glasses and other such unwanted items where your ferrets can get them. Eventually, these things will be stashed in a hideaway and you won't have to worry about them. Of course, you will end up having to buy new dishes, but those won't have to be washed right away, so you still save energy.

Garden Plows: Have you decided to plant a garden this year? Don't spend money on one of those expensive tilling machines if you've got ferrets. Prepare the area first by removing the grass and weeds from where you want the garden to be. After this is done, let your ferrets go out and plow up the ground for you. In no time, you'll have lots of freshly dug earth, ready for planting. If you've fed them well, the ground will be freshly fertilized, too!

Post Diggers: If done properly, you can also use ferrets to help dig post holes for putting up a fence to keep pesky neighbors from getting to your fresh veggies. Just get the holes started, and then tell the ferrets they can't play in the holes. They'll have those holes dug halfway to Australia in no time.

Saving Money

Budget Minders: Do you spend too much by using credit cards? Your ferrets can help you with this. Just leave your important credit cards out where the ferrets can find them. Putting a drop or two of Ferretone on the cards will help the ferrets find them faster. Once stashed, don't try too hard to find them. You'll save hundreds of dollars, or even thousands, once the cards are hidden and you can't use them!

Fabric Softeners: Do you waste money on fabric softener to make your laundered clothing take on a particular smell? Save the cash and let the ferrets play in the warm clothes. They will impart their own special scent on the clothing, letting any intruding ferret know just who rules the roost in this house.

Recyclers: One of the best ideas to come along in many years is recycling things we no longer need. Ferrets knew about this a long time ago. They are constantly emptying the garbage can and stashing the wonderful things they find there in various places to be found at a later time by a shocked and dismayed ferret caretaker. The best way to take advantage of

this trait is to find all of your ferrets' hiding places, then go through them regularly and separate the items into piles of recyclables or true trash. Be sure to reward your little fur-muffins for their work.

Child Trainer: Let the ferrets think that all of your children's toys are also ferret toys. Anything your kids don't pick up and put away becomes ferret property. If the kids want to keep their toys, they will have to learn to put them away when they are done playing with them. This might not seem like a money-saving idea at first, but you actually save money by not having to buy so many ferret toys.

Personal Trainer: One of the biggest industries in the United States is physical fitness. People spend hundred of dollars every year so they can run around a track, lift weights, swim and sweat in Olympic proportions. Well, you can put that money right back in your wallet if you have ferrets. Here are some sporting ideas that can give you the same workout, without having to shell out all of that green.

Track and Field: Leave your keys, money and other valuables where your ferrets can get them. Keep a close eye on them. The moment a ferret grabs them, chase that furball all over the house to retrieve the stolen item. You'll get lots of exercise. **Note:** This won't work if you use nonvaluables, as you won't have the incentive to get the pilfered items.

Swimming/Showering: Decide that your ferret's fur needs some cleaning. Fill the tub or start the shower and insert your ferret. Paddle like mad, trying to catch the ferret and give it a proper bath. Lather, rinse and repeat.

Aerobics: Catch a rambunctious ferret and place it on a kitchen counter. You'll get an aerobic workout as you jump back and forth trying to keep the ferret from knocking all of your items on the floor. This should be done at least twice per day to give your heart and lungs a workout. Try not to scream too much, though.

Sit-Ups: Place a hammock full of sleeping ferrets on your feet to hold them down while you do sit-ups. Doing the sit-ups slowly not only provides your belly muscles with a better workout, it also keeps the ferrets from waking up and scampering off to the ski workout area.

Ski-Workout: After waxing the floor, put several ferrets on the slippery surface, then try to catch them. Wearing padded clothing might be a good idea during this exercise. At least 20 minutes should be devoted to this exercise in order to get the maximum benefit. Wear socks, for best results.

Maid Service: Do you use a maid service to get your housework done? Don't waste your money. Doing housework can be fun and exciting, if you let your ferrets help you. Here are a few ideas that you can use to liven up your cleaning chores.

Mop Master: Leave a bucket with just about an inch of water and some ferret-safe cleaning solution on the kitchen floor. Wait. The result of a curious ferret and a tile floor will combine to have a wet floor that you only need to mop up to finish cleaning. Rinse ferret well afterward, to get rid of that lemony-fresh smell. Who wants a ferret that smells like lemons?

Dust Magnet: Do you have a polished wood or tile floor that you always have to dust? Problem solved! Just put some snacks in strategic places on the floor, and then invite a fluffy ferret to get the treats. As the ferret makes its way around, your floor is dusted as well. Just remember to brush out the ferret afterward. With proper planning, ferrets can also dust your tables, counter tops and desks. **Hint:** Trim your pet's nails before it begins so it has a better grip.

Sweep Monitor: Get out the broom and plunk a ferret on it. Sweep slowly, so the ferret doesn't have to work too hard to hang on. This way, you will do a much better job of sweeping, getting areas you might have overlooked if you had been sweeping faster, and the ferret gets lots of fun with a new game. **Bed-Making Gremlin:** Making the bed isn't nearly as fun without ferrets helping you. When you have three or more ferrets involved, the bed might not ever get finished, but you'll have spent at least a half hour laughing your backside off. You can finish up when the ferrets have all gone to sleep.

What Can Your Ferrets Do?

This article just saved you at least a couple hundred dollars, without you having to even walk out your front door. With a little thought, I'm sure you can think of lots more ways to save energy and money just by using a few ferrets to their fullest potential.