

Foot-Biting Ferret

How can an owner stop a ferret from biting people's feet?

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Q: My ferret Bear enjoys being handled and does not bite hands or fingers. However, he bites shoes, socks and bare feet very hard. I have tried scruffing him and shouting no, but he returns within a half second to offend again. He even pushes up pant legs to bite a sock or some skin. I have put him back in his cage when he does this, but I get no results. Should I try a bitter spray? Any more advice would be wonderful. I hate to sit in odd positions to protect my feet when playing with him.

A: Biting feet seems to be a favorite pastime of ferrets, especially young ferrets. My theory is that feet smell really good. They have been outside and all over the place, so they carry a wonderful variety of odors and they smell especially like you.

I do not usually suggest a bitter spray unless you know the ferret doesn't like it, some ferrets seem to enjoy the taste! However, it can work. This means you need to spray your shoes or socks anytime you play with Bear.

When we have young ferrets in our home, we always wear shoes and also tuck pant legs into our socks or wear boots. I usually also tuck in a shirt so they can't climb up inside that either. Like most biting problems, patience and preventive measures work wonders. Eventually, your ferret will realize that feet, like hands, are not that much fun.