

## Restless Ferret

**Owners seek an answer to their female ferret's sudden restless behavior.**

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Posted: December 1, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

**Q:** Our 2-year-old, female ferret just started acting restless and unruly in her cage. This began about five days ago. Her nervous behavior is alarming to us. When put into her cage, she runs up and down between floors, and back and forth on each level. She wants out, but when let out, she wants back in the cage. She remains restless for hours. I check back on her after about two hours, and she's still awake and running around.

Her cagemates have not changed their behavior. She gets plenty of out-of-cage time; the ferrets are out of the cage about six to seven hours a day. She has been eating more and her tummy is fuller than usual. However, her bowel movements are frequent and normal looking. Also, she is spayed and the cagemates are neutered.

The only time that she rests is when she is out of her cage; she climbs into her favorite drawer and goes to sleep. She is not looking to play with us or her cagemates when she is out. What is going on with our little girl? We are not familiar with females, only having one before her. Is this typical of females?

**A:** This isn't typical of any ferret behavior, male or female. Any time you notice a sudden change in behavior, take your pet to visit the vet. Explain your ferret's sudden behavior and appetite changes.

If she gets a clean bill of health from the veterinarian, try some one-on-one playtime with her. Play interactive games, like tug, or plan some training sessions to encourage her to think and play. Check out some great enrichment ideas from Bob Church, published by Ferrets magazine.

Generally, any way that you can stimulate your ferret's brain as well as increase its exercise is a great idea. Offer her food from a treat ball or hide food around the room/cage so she has to "hunt." You can also give her a box of leaves to play in or find other ways to stimulate her. But make sure she is healthy first.