

## Training A Deaf Ferret Not To Bite

**How do you stop a deaf ferret from biting after a play session?**

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**Q:** My roommate, on an impulse-buy, bought two lovable ferrets that are 4 years old from a person on Craigslist. They ended up being my responsibility after he realized the work involved to care for them (not that I'm complaining, I love the little guys). It turns out that Rufus is deaf. He has a tendency to attack the back of people's legs after they try to walk away after they play with him. Is there any way to teach Rufus not to bite like that? Is there a way we can teach him that playtime is over? He bites hard enough to leave bruises, so any advice would be appreciated.

**A:** I doubt the biting has to do with being deaf because it happens when your ferret is either frustrated or seeking attention and not when he is scared.

Try using an "all done" hand signal that is also used in dog training (any signal works, as long as your ferret can see it). As soon as you give the signal, walk away from him, but keep an eye on him. If you see him attempting to bite, simply gain his attention and give the signal again. Walk away again, paying attention to him; this time if he attempts to bite, place him in a short time-out.

Practice this a lot between just you and him so he can learn what the signal means. Do lots and lots of short sessions in which you play with your ferret, give the signal and stop. As soon as he doesn't attempt to bite you, start another quick play session. Patience, consistency and repetition are the key!

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