

## Preventing Ferrets From Burrowing Into A Sofa

**A ferret owner can't get her ferrets to stop burrowing in her sofa, despite trying several methods of preventing it.**

*By Ailigh Vanderbush*

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

**Q:** We have two female ferrets, one is about a year and half old and the other is just about a year. They are great and very entertaining, but they love to burrow, and have decided that my sofa in my family room is the best place. We put chicken wire on the bottom to stop them, but they then decided to go in from the top. They have totally destroyed the sofa corner. I tried sprays; "No, No" and put them in the cage; and a burrow house beside the sofa, but they still want the sofa.

This has been going on for at least six months, so I'm sure they have toys and who knows what else in the sofa. I have talked to the pet store over and over, but this is still a problem. Even my sofa and loveseat in my living room has chicken wire on the bottom and every once in a while I catch them inside the sofa. I'm afraid if this keeps up my husband will make me get rid of the ferrets. Any suggestions?

**A:** This is a tough one. Ferrets are naturally burrowing animals and will find a nice, safe, dark place in which to play, sleep or cache their possessions. Sofas are the perfect spot for a ferret. When I had this problem a long time ago, I took the legs off my sofa so they couldn't get under it. Like your chicken wire solution, this is great for the ferrets that enter from underneath, but not so great for those that enter from on top. I actually had a pregnant ferret that kept trying to nest in the sofa arm to have her babies, yikes!

The only advice and suggestions I can give you are management ideas, not really solutions. First, provide some kind of burrowing materials in their cage and in the rooms in which they play. You mentioned you already had a burrow box, but not what was in it. Plastic storage bins with old clothes in them and a hole to get in are a great nesting box idea. If you have a few of these in the living room and redirect the ferret to the box when she attempts to burrow in the sofa she may decide the nest boxes are better. Try putting a few toys or treats in the box to encourage your ferrets to explore. You can also offer them a sand box to dig and burrow in, which allows an appropriate outlet of this natural behavior. Make sure you use clean play sand and check it often for feces and bugs. Keep the sand damp to help them make tunnels.

Finally, human vigilance is vital. Keep your eye on them and when they go to the sofa, redirect them to either the nest box or a fun and interactive game with you.