

10 Steps For Fun, Safe Outdoor Walks With Ferrets

You can enjoy a walk outside with your ferrets as long as you take safety precautions.

By Bob Church

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Get your ferret used to walking indoors wearing a leash and harness before you take your ferret outside for a walk.

The days are getting longer and the weather is getting warmer. It is time to think about bringing springtime and your ferrets together. An introduction to the great outdoors is not only enriching for your ferrets, but also just the thing for burning off the winter fat and expending some of that pent-up springtime energy. I'm mostly speaking for myself, but it can't hurt the ferrets either!

Taking your ferret outside is not a dangerous thing to do — as long as you take a few precautions.

1. First, make sure your ferret is up-to-date with its vaccinations. Nothing would be worse than taking a ferret outside only for it to come down with canine distemper or rabies.

2. Also, keep your ferret on a leash and harness. This prevents it from escaping down a gutter or animal burrow, and also gives you the opportunity to snatch it back in a hurry if an aggressive dog gets too close.

If your ferret is not already trained to a harness, now is the time to get started. Just put one on your ferret and let it get used to wearing the harness indoors before going outside. Your ferret may flop on the floor or attempt to remove the harness. I take that time to give the ferret treats and physical play to get its mind off being in the harness. It will likely take several attempts before your ferret gets used to wearing a harness, so start early. I have not found an easy way to get a ferret used to a leash; I just use it, and the ferret and I work out the problems as we walk along.

3. I recommend the first outdoor excursions to be around the home. This allows the ferret to get used to the outdoor environment while still in a secure area. If your ferret is older and not used to going outside, it may react with some fear and not want to move. That's OK; just pull up a chair and wait. It may take a few attempts, but most ferrets eventually start to explore rather than implore you to take them back inside. Patience is very important, so don't rush your ferret.

4. Some ferrets may never decide the outdoors is a fun place to explore. With these ferrets, go with the flow. Don't stress your ferret by forcing it outside. Instead, bring some of the outdoors in to them. Grass clippings, leaves and other outdoor objects can be placed in a box for your ferret to climb through.

5. Most ferrets taken outdoors will start exploring the moment their cute, little paws touch the ground. The problem with these ferrets is not getting them to look around, but rather trying to keep the leash from tripping you, or getting your ferret tangled in a bush.

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