

How Ferrets Alleviate Depression

One man discovers that ferrets make great therapy animals and alleviate his depression.

By Joseph Longcore

Posted: February 1, 2009, 5 a.m. EST

Courtesy of Joseph Longcore

Joseph Longcore believes that ferrets are the perfect therapy animal.

Therapy animals have been around for a while. I'm sure most people have seen therapy animals in nursing homes and other places. It's an established fact that the presence of pets can improve a person's mood and overall health.

So what about a therapy animal to treat depression? Such an animal would have to be about as spastically silly as you can get, right? Silly, but soft and fuzzy too — and being cute wouldn't hurt either.

I believe the perfect therapy animal for treating depression is a ferret.

Ferrets became a part of my life in 2003. When I moved that year, one of my neighbors had a ferret. Ferrets are known to steal, and Loki was no exception. He stole my heart right out from under my nose.

I soon found myself at the pet store looking at ferrets. I left the store that day with a ferret of my own.

I picked her for three reasons: 1) She was litter-trained; 2) She instantly climbed into my friend's pocket as if to say, "I'm ready to go home whenever you are;" 3) She had been purchased previously and returned.

I knew she was the ferret for me when the store associate explained that someone had bought her, only to return her stating that the other ferrets they had wouldn't accept her.

It's amazing how an animal that weighs all of about 2 pounds can bring so much happiness, so much laughter, so much love and so much energy!

Ferrets are too smart for their own good.
Ferrets are more curious than a cat could ever hope to be.
Ferrets act like a 2-year-old child for life.

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I grew up in a home that always had pets. Between my three brothers and myself, one of us was always coming home with some creature in distress, lost or stray, saying, "Mom can I keep it?" This question must have been asked at least 10,000 times.

My pets have included cats and dogs, turtles and a baby robin (that I released back into the wild after it fledged). I even came home one time with a baby garter snake that Mom let me keep — the very same snake that escaped its cage never to be seen again.

But ferrets are the best pets I have ever known. They make me laugh every day. What a great anti-depressant! I couldn't imagine life without them. Thank God for ferrets!

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