

Keep Your Ferrets Cool At Home During Hot Temperatures

These seven tips can help your ferrets stay cool at home during hot temperatures.

By Faith Arnold

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Use these seven cooling strategies to keep your ferrets comfortable at home during hot weather.

#1. In summer, keep your ferrets in the room that stays the coolest — usually a room on the north to east side of the house, an interior room or even a large closet. Obviously, downstairs is cooler than upstairs. A dry, finished basement would be wonderful.

#2. If your ferrets stay in a cage when you aren't home, the cage has to be placed where no direct sunlight can fall on it. Watch the changing sun angles during the year. Around the summer solstice, the sun shines into north-facing windows. As the summer progresses, the direction is more from the south, and the sun penetrates farther into the house from its lower angle. If you don't pay attention, your ferrets might be completely in shade one month, and cooking in the hot sun the next.

#3. If your ferret's fur coat is out of sync with the seasons, which can happen because of artificial house lighting or ferrets being given melatonin, consider clipping its coat shorter. Even shortening just the belly fur will help a lot. There are numerous brands of small, quiet, battery-operated personal grooming clippers out there. They come with plastic guards for cutting hair at different lengths.

#4. Ferrets like to lie flat on a cool surface. Provide thermal mass they can lie on that takes a long time to heat up, like thick ceramic, brick, concrete, tile, stone or even a large block of metal. If it starts out cool in the morning, it can absorb a lot of excess body heat as the day progresses. You can keep it in the refrigerator overnight. Have insulation under and around the sides of the piece to slow down its heating from the room air.

#5. Porous material like brick can be wetted so it also cools by evaporation. Or provide a pile of dampened cloth for your ferret to lie on, but only if your ferret doesn't chew on cloth! Bricks or cloth can be placed in a shallow pan with some water to keep them damp. Change and launder cloths frequently so they don't grow mildew. You can also drape a damp cloth over your ferret's cage when you are home — in a dry climate re-wet it frequently. Also, some ferrets enjoy playing in a pan of shallow water. In average humidity, an open container of water will stay about 10 degrees cooler than the air temperature.

#6. As in the carrier example above, an ice bottle can be tied to the wall of your ferret's cage, or placed next to its bed or sleep sack. Tie all bottles in place if you have more than one ferret. Ferrets are very strong for their size, and could push a heavy ice bottle on top of a sleeping friend.

#7. Use a plastic box with a lid, about 8 inches high, with an access hole cut in the lid and a couple of small ventilation holes poked in each end. Place one or two soda bottles of ice in the box (tie in place) when you leave in the morning. If your ferret gets hot, it will enjoy hanging out in the cool box. You can also position the cool box inside of a slightly larger box, with an insulating layer between, like some crumpled newspaper, to keep it cool longer.

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