

Gerbil Power Naps

A closer look at gerbil sleep behavior.

By Jessica Cordia

Photo Courtesy Adrienne Katzman

Unlike other rodents, gerbils aren't nocturnal and take naps throughout the day or night.

Gerbils are special animals because unlike most rodents, gerbils aren't nocturnal. In fact, they're not diurnal either! Instead of sleeping throughout the day or night, gerbils take short naps throughout the 24-hour day. "Their sleep habits make them good pets for families," said Libby Hanna, gerbil judge for the American Gerbil Society and gerbil breeder at Shawsheen River Gerbils in Bedford, Mass.

Your pet gerbil's sleep patterns adjust to the activity in the house. Gerbils are curious about human activity, so they adapt well to their owner's routine. Hanna said that gerbils are light sleepers, so they will always make time to play with you despite their sleep schedule. But don't worry about disturbing your pet gerbil. "They go to sleep when they need to rest regardless of what's going on," Hanna said.