



## GUINEA PIG CARE GUIDE: EXERCISE AND SOCIAL NEEDS

### EXERCISE

**Floor Time:** Floor time and exercise is important for a guinea pig. Time outside the cage should be spent running around and exploring. **One hour of free range play time in a guinea pig safe environment every day is recommended.**

**Do not use a wheel or exercise ball with your guinea pig.** These items can cause injury to their back, feet, or toes.

**Guinea Pig Proofing:** When having outside playtime, secure the area so your guinea pigs can't escape the room. Always hide or cover all cords and outlets, and put away anything that you do not want chewed on, including house plants. Make sure your pets cannot get into small spaces that you cannot reach, such as under the fridge or in the couch cushions. Use an exercise pen whenever possible. If you have other pets, secure them in another room or crate.

Guinea pigs tend to be most active at dawn and dusk, spending time with them during these times may be the most rewarding.

### SOCIAL NEEDS

**Bonded Buddies:** Guinea pigs are very social and enjoy living with other guinea pigs. It is recommended to keep a minimum of two guinea pigs at a time. Guinea pigs should be kept only with other guinea pigs of the same sex.



### KEY COMPONENTS OF TRAINING

- Trust
- Positive reinforcement
- Consistency
- Repetition
- Patience

#### Teaching Your Guinea Pig to Trust You

Every time you approach your guinea pig's cage, bring a small treat. They will learn to associate you with pleasant things and will look forward to your visits. Do not feed treats through cage bars as this encourages your pet to nip fingers.

Call your guinea pig by name, they will soon learn it and respond to it. Talking to your guinea pig will get them used to your voice, and they may start to talk back!

If possible, keep your guinea pig somewhere you spend a lot of time. Just seeing and being near you helps them get used to you and your voice, scent, and movements.

When approaching your guinea pig, announce yourself by placing your hand at least five inches from its eyes so they can see you. Because of their eye placement, guinea pigs are unable to see directly in front of their nose.

