

Learn about guinea pigs - Beat Boredom, chapter 1

Boredom is a major issue with any pet, although it can be easily avoided with a little planning and some help from a caring pet owner. Look at the pictures below! The guinea pigs have a double story hut. They can walk up the ramp and into the other hut. You should always make sure that the ramp is solid so when the guinea pigs walk on it, it doesn't fall down. Rotate the huts, put them in different spots so that the guinea pigs have a challenge to find their way around. This keeps them occupied for awhile and also stops boredom.

Guinea pigs love the company of other guinea pigs. It is best to keep females together for company, rather than two or more males. Remember that males tend to fight and they can injure themselves and each other quite easily.



Never stick your hand between fighting guinea pigs as they more than likely will bite your hand. Even though they don't mean to do this deliberately, your hand is an unwanted object and in their opinion deserves to be bitten. Try to separate fighting guinea pigs with a piece of wood, a bucket or any other object. Once you have successfully separated the males you can then pick them up and put them in their individual cages.

You can keep one male and several females together but you will probably find you'll have a few more guinea pigs in a few months time, unless of course you're actually going to breed your guinea pigs.

If you have one guinea pig you should give it lots to do, for example, change the hutch around every two to three days, get it out of the cage and play with it every day. Put fun things in the cage. You can use old pipes as tunnels, try and find a hollow log big enough for your guinea pig to fit through, make double story huts, make up and down ramps with pieces of wood making sure they are strong enough to hold your guinea pig's weight.



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There is not single guinea pig that does not like a clean cage that is different every time. They will run around looking and going in the new tunnels and huts that have been put up. Your guinea pig will have fun too running and finding new things in its cage and it will not get as bored. Think about it... if you were a guinea pig, what would you like to do in a cage no bigger than a metre or two?

When you get a new guinea pig you should make it feel as welcome as possible by making a comfortable, warm and fun cage for it. Give it lots of attention and play with it on a daily basis.



The picture above shows a hut made from scrap wood. The lid opens so you can see what is inside. This hut has a small doorway for the guinea pig to enter in or out and is mainly used to sleep in or to find a secluded spot for a few minutes. You can put hay or straw on top of this hut and a ramp going up to it. This will make a double story hut for your guinea pig, but you might find it inconvenient if you wanted to lift the lid.

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This is another wooden hut made from scrap wood; it has three rooms down the bottom and a ramp going up to the top floor, which is covered by a lid that opens so it makes cleaning easier. The guinea pigs love this hut because it has five rooms and most guinea pigs like to have their own space but still like to live together, a bit like most people. Guinea pigs like to have fun, small and large, comfy huts in their cage; you could also try to get bark from a dead tree and make a natural bark hut but make sure it's strong.



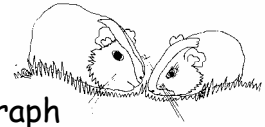
If you don't have time to build a wooden hut, find a cardboard box to put in your guinea pig's cage. You can also put hay or straw on top of the cardboard hut and make it a double story. The wood on the side of the hut, as shown in the picture below, stops the cardboard hut from tipping over. You will probably find that some guinea pigs will chew the cardboard hut, if you are concerned about this, simply remove the cardboard and replace with a wooden hut.

The gorgeous, little, female guinea pig on the photo below had plenty of hay that was put in her hut only one hour before this picture was taken but she thought it was rather tasty and ate it all. So if your guinea pig likes eating the hay you may like to put a bit more hay in the cage so it has something to snuggle in.



A good supply of hay and healthy nibbles helps beat boredom and keeps your pet in excellent health. There are many ways to stop boredom with toys and activities but the best cure for boredom is love and attention. So if you want to be a responsible pet owner... love and attention is number one on any pet's priority list.





Circle the spelling or grammatical errors in each paragraph

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Answer Key

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When you get a **new** guinea pig you should make it feel as welcome as possible by making a comfortable, warm and fun cage for it. Give it lots of **attention** and play with it on a **daily** basis. (3 errors)

Outcomes:

English – reading, writing, spelling, grammar

Science – general knowledge about guinea pigs, looking after pets

Health – personal health and safety awareness when dealing with animals

The following outcomes could be achieved by completing the entire guinea pig theme; *beat boredom, breeding, caring for guinea pigs, diseases and disorders, feeding guinea pigs healthy foods, feeding guinea pigs unhealthy foods, general knowledge, holding guinea pigs, housing guinea pigs, males and females, photos, taming guinea pigs.*

English

- reading
- writing
- alphabetical order
- develop further research skills

Science

- learn about guinea pigs in captivity
- breeding, males and females
- familiarize oneself with diseases that affect guinea pigs
- breeding
- feeding habits
- biological data

Mathematics

- problem solving
- learn about data

Health

- personal hygiene when handling animals
- guinea pig health related issues

Technology

- design, cage and feeding utensils
- research using the Internet
- basic computer knowledge
- Use of camera (or digital camera)

Art

- design and layout
- creative playtime planning for pets
- drawing

Cross curricula based learning
