



Taming Your Guinea Pig

Overview

It is important to understand that guinea pigs are prey animals and will always be jumpy, even after years of loving care. Their natural survival instincts ensure that they are always on alert for predators, and yes, that includes you, your kids and especially your dog.

Sadly, hypersensitive guinea pigs are dangerous, because they can seriously injure themselves in their frantic attempts to escape you. They're not really that fun either. Let's be honest... guinea pigs that are more relaxed and more interactive get better care.

But beware, earning your guinea pig's trust takes a lot of time and dedication. For your guinea pig's safety and happiness, and so you can enjoy your piggys for many years come, let's begin!

Step 1 – Begin The Taming Process

- About 5-8 times a day walk up to your guinea pig's habitat just to say hello.
- Talk to them as you approach their space. Let them know you're coming.
- Offer them a treat like a piece of cilantro, a blueberry or other favorite food.
- If they take it, great! If they don't, wait a few minutes then leave with the treat.
Do not give it to them!
- Eventually, they will build up enough courage to take the treat from your hand. Most likely they will run off with it, but that's fine. You simply want your guinea pig to start to associate you with yummy food.

Step 2 – Handle Your Guinea Pigs. Often!

- Take one of your guinea pigs out of their habitat. Make sure to catch him quickly as "chasing" around the habitat causes panic and stress.
- Immediately pull him close, with all four feet touching you. This helps the piggys feel more secure. Never let his feet "dangle" in the air.
- Place him on your lap, preferably in a Cuddle E Cup, as this little bed offers your guinea pig added comfort and security.
- For about 10 minutes, stroke him gently while talking softly. If he "head butts" your hand, give him a minute to rest, then continue petting him.
- Offer him a favorite treat while he sits on your lap. Show him some consideration and don't pet him while he's eating.
- Repeat 3 or 4 times every day to help your guinea pigs become more comfortable with handling and to help earn their trust.



Step 3– Ramp-Up The Taming

By now you are picking up your guinea pig three times a day and he's happily eating food from your hand. Try stepping it up a notch to get your guinea pig to accept human contact in an unfamiliar area.

- Place your guinea pig in on the floor in playpen or other safe, enclosed environment.
- Ensure there is nothing to hide under and that there is no food in the enclosure.
- Place your hand at the opposite end of the enclosure and hold out a treat.
- Softly call your guinea pig and say their name and "treat".
- Persist until your guinea pig comes to you and takes the treat out of your hand.
- Repeat until your guinea pig appears less scared and timid.
- Reach down and pick up your guinea pig and continue hand feeding treats on your lap.

Follow Up

After you have completed these steps, you should continue picking up your guinea pig a few times a day, for about 10-15 minutes at a time. You can feed them during this handling, but you don't have to as they are accustomed to you and should accept handling without food.

The more time you spend with your guinea pig, the more accustomed to you he will be. Keep hand feeding, talking, hugging, and playing with your guinea pigs, and they will grow more social every day, and may be even tame.