PLAYING TOO ROUGH

A lot of people think that a ferret is NOT being rough with another ferret if there isn't pee, poop, or blood. They assume they are fine.  ***This is not a good rule of thumb***.

There are many times when one ferret is being too rough with another ferret, and it does not pee or poop.  It just takes it.  However, that ferret is under constant stress and is more likely to get stress-related bacterial infections, intestinal issues, or ulcers.  Best to start working with the rough ferret and teach him to calm down and it better is to separate the ferrets with supervised play times until all is well.

SIGNS OF FERRET AGGRESSION:

* Really fast “dooking” [like when they're happy, only faster and stronger]
* Scratching at the floor near where there is a ferret
* Using the shoulder to push into another ferret
* Grooming the other ferret's ears
* Males dragging their bellies across things to mark territory
* Males urinating in different places to mark territory
* Pinning down another ferret
* Scuffing and dragging the other ferret
* Chasing the other ferret without it acting like it’s trying to play
* The other ferret trying to hide in places like tubes to get away.

Be sure there is food and water available in more than one area for the ferrets, so there is no competition or aggression from wanting to eat or drink at the same time.  Also, be sure there are plenty of sleep areas for the ferrets, so the picked-on ferret can sleep away from the rougher ferret if it wants.  As a general rule of thumb, there should be at least three hammocks or cubes and two beds or blankets for them to choose from.

Be sure the aggressive ferret doesn’t have **adrenal disease.**  Aggression can be a symptom of adrenal disease because the testosterone and estrogen levels increase in the ferret.  Get treatment for adrenal disease as soon as possible to stop the aggression caused by that.

First thing is to be aware when you are around the ferret for actions that lead up to being too rough.  An alpha ferret shows dominance by making a fast “dooking” noise, which can be the sound of hunting; using the shoulder to push into the other ferret; going after the scruff (back of the neck of the other ferret), dragging the other ferret; shadowing the other ferret (following closely), cornering the ferret, grooming the other ferret's ears or neck, and more.

For the other ferret, if it is scared or doesn't like what's happening, it will hiss, hide, cower and more.  Sometimes it will be rough back, but typically it’s because it's forced to do so to protect itself.

When the ferret does get too rough, tell the ferret no *(but not yelling)* and put it in a different area**. Don't yell at, shake, or hit the ferret because this can cause aggressiveness.** If it happens again, tell it no and put it in a cage or pet carrier, but only for about 30 seconds. They usually get the picture very quickly when they get confined. If the roughness persists, confine to the cage or carrier again, this time for about a minute. Continue to confine to the cage or carrier for up to two minutes. If you confine it for more than a minute or two, the ferret doesn't remember why it is being confined and you lose the reason for putting it there. This is very important.

However, ferrets have different personalities.  It may be that the one ferret is just going to always be too much for the other ferret, or it has more energy and stamina.