

Can Hedgehogs Swim? + How To Keep Them Safe

At some point, as a pet owner, it's inevitable to project your definition of fun to your little buddy.

That's why those who have hedgehogs in their homes often wonder if their spiky friend can swim with the same level of enthusiasm as humans usually do.

Generally, most hedgehogs can swim remarkably. In fact, they are known as excellent swimmers within their natural environment. They have the extra advantage because their spines of quills contain air allowing them to be buoyant and swim without struggling too much.

But before you take your hedgehog for a swim, there are some crucial points you need to know.

For starters, swimming could be a premature or unsuitable activity for your hedgehog based on factors such as weight, size, age, and breed.

Also, as fun as having your hedgehog swim once in a while, it could also pose some danger, especially if you leave them in the pool or tub.

Nevertheless, if you're interested in how hedgehogs swim and tips on keeping it safe and fun for them, read on and learn the details in the next few lines.

Can Hedgehogs Float on Water?

Yes, hedgehogs can float on water if they have their spines intact.

Nonetheless, they can still float even if they undergo quilling which is the process of having their old spines changed with new ones.

However, they could be less buoyant and will have to rely on flexing their feet when they swim.

Can I Put My Hedgehog in Water?

Yes, you can put your hedgehog in the water, provided that you can supervise the swim.

Most hedgehogs enjoy being in the water, but without someone looking after them, it could compromise their safety.

Eventually, hedgehogs will get tired of swimming the same way humans do despite their buoyant nature.

If you're putting them on a small pool, you have to bear in mind that they may struggle with scrabbling the edges to get out.

So, leaving them in the pool for a long time will leave them constantly trying. As a result, they could grow exhausted, pass out, and drown.

How Well Do Hedgehogs Swim?

Hedgehogs are fantastic swimmers. In the wild, hedgehogs don't really have any basic need to swim.

They don't get food from the water and can't entirely escape predators like birds when they stay in ponds or lakes.

However, they enjoy swimming as a whole. Plus, they're anatomically fit for swimming, considering how much their quills help keep them afloat.

Nevertheless, not all hedgehogs have the same level of swimming skills. In addition, some breeds are better than others, such as the African pygmy, Indian long-eared, and European hedgehogs.

On the other hand, apart from breed, several factors can also make it more difficult for hedgehogs to swim, such as their size, weight, gender, and energy determined by the amount of sleep they get.

Is It Good for Hedgehogs to Swim?

Yes, letting your hedgehogs swim is generally a great idea considering the benefits that come with it. It's not just good for their physical health but their mental wellness as well.

1. Swimming is an excellent form of exercise for hedgehogs.

First, swimming allows your hedgehog to remain fit. It's a fun and great exercise that keeps them healthy.

One of the issues with hedgehogs in captivity is that they often miss out on their active routine in their natural habitat.

Hedgehogs, by nature, love to forage for hours. Likewise, they often run away from their predators. While the last one is not something they want to do all the time, it still allows them to be active.

On the other hand, when kept as pets, hedgehogs are overindulged by regular feeding time.

They don't need to scour for food, and they could just wait in their cage without so much as moving around. This could lead to health problems such as obesity. Not to mention, some of the foods they eat are rich in fat.

With that, taking your hedgegie for a swim once or twice a week can ensure that they burn off the accumulated calories.

2. Swimming stimulates the minds of hedgehogs.

Aside from the physical benefit, your hedgehog can also become more mentally active. While in their cages, hedgehogs are very much prone to boredom.

With the limited space and nothing much to do, it's highly possible that they resort to eating and sleeping all day.

Even if they have their toys around, they could eventually grow out of enjoying the playtime. This is never good news to your spiky friend as it could lead to depression and laziness.

However, if you let them swim now and then, they may find the activity fun, allowing them to focus on the skills required to stay on the water. This way, they remain focused and motivated to enjoy the swim.

What Should I Do When Taking My Hedgehog Swim For The First Time?

When letting your hedgehog swim for the first time, there are several things you should bear in mind.

First, always remember that their experience could go south or north depending on water temperature and pressure.

Therefore, you have to put them in the water as gently as you can. Of course, this goes without saying, but throwing your hedgegie in the water will leave nothing but a sour taste, and it's downright cruel.

You can start the swimming session with a shallow paddling pool. If you're doing it in a safe and enclosed area such as your backyard, you can let your hedgehog walk around first to exercise those legs.

Next, make sure the water is warm and pleasant to help your hedgehog's muscles adjust to swimming. It's generally discouraged to use cold water as it could interfere with the movement of the muscle and coordination of the nerves.

Then, as you gradually put your hedgehog in the water, take a quick look at their reaction. Hedgehogs with past trauma associated with swimming or being in the water tend to panic with evident fear.

If this is the case, you may want to postpone the swimming session altogether to prevent your hedgehog from getting too stressed out.

On the other hand, if you find your hedgehog queasy, arching, or shaking a bit, this is relatively normal, especially as the environment could be new to your little spiky. As they get more used to the water, these reactions slowly diminish.

Also, observe if their back feet are bending properly. You can massage their legs to stimulate proper blood flow, allowing them to swim correctly.

Ultimately, make sure to supervise your hedgehog's swimming sessions. In ponds and other natural water bodies, they tend to climb up the edges.

However, in a paddling pool, they might find it challenging to get out of the water on their own. So with that, you will have to assist your hedgehog.

Final Thoughts

If you're looking for a fun outside-the-cage activity for your hedgehog, you have got to consider swimming.

You can find out yourself how great of a swimmer these spiky ones are. Plus, they get tons of physical and mental health benefits from swimming.

However, when deciding to take your hedgehog for a swim, always be prepared to supervise closely all the time. As fun as swimming is for your hedgie, it can also be unsafe.

