

STAYING COOL WHEN IT'S BRUTALLY HOT

What do animals do in the wild when they've had enough of summer temperatures? They look for a cool, shaded spot to rest out and stop energy sapping activities. But pets in cages or in the car have no chance of protecting themselves against overheating and the sometimes deadly consequences – they are dependent on their owner handling them in a responsible manner. Which means paying particular attention in summer, explain the vets from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo.

Dogs have virtually no perspiratory glands so they pant to cool themselves down. That's why they have an increased fluid requirement in summer. Make sure your four-legged friend has access to fresh water at all times. Go for your walks during the early morning hours or in the evening so as not to strain your dog's circulation unnecessarily. Don't shorten its coat too much with good intentions as it could get sunburned. On very hot days, a bit of cooling off is very welcome by bathing in water, for instance, or laying a wet cloth or t-shirt over it.

Animals in cages or runs such as **birds, hamsters, rabbits or guinea pigs** should never be exposed to direct sunlight – whether inside or out. Take care that those places which might be lying in shadow in the mornings don't become fully overheated at midday as the sun comes round. Particularly in window locations, this can quickly lead to a heat build-up which can be life-threatening for your pet. Make sure it can find a shaded corner somewhere in the cage at all times – at a push, you can cover a part of the bars with a thin cloth. However, avoid excessively stiff, overly generous coverings as the



air must still be able to circulate within the cage. Provide a hideout made from ceramic for small animals as a place they can retreat to. Plastic is not suitable as the heat can accumulate inside. Rabbits, hamsters, or guinea pigs will also be glad of a cooling tile in the cage on which they can lie down. Renew the litter more frequently in summer and make

sure you provide enough water – regardless of which species of cage animal it is. Draughts are taboo, even from a fan.

Cats like to feel the sun falling on their fur and, apart from that they aren't overly fussy about drinking more in the summer. You don't have much chance of influencing this. When cats get too warm, they'll search out a shaded spot by themselves – and they also like lying on cool floors. But make sure your velvet pawed friend can always find a shady nook on the balcony.

Watch out for animals in the car!

Again and again life threatening situations arise for animals which are left in the car. Even a few minutes can already be too much. Many pet owners underestimate this. Temperatures of 40, 60 or 80 degrees are quickly reached in car interiors. Then the animals suffer not only from the heat but also from a lack of fluid which can lead to heat stroke and cardio vascular failure. So avoid leaving your animal in the car! If you really have to, then make sure you've parked in a place which is in the shade for the whole time you're away. Provide air by fitting a window grill – just leaving the window a open a crack is not enough.



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