**Ouchmouse House Bonding and Handling Caresheet:**

Hedgehogs are a defensive species! Therefore we need to gain their trust.

A good breeder will have handled the hoglets from 14 days old to leaving every day to desensitise it to human contact.

The best start to bonding is good health, an unhealthy hoglet is likely to be grumpy and therefore unsociable and standoffish.

Your hedgehog needs to be handled every day for at least half an hour but the more the better.

Keep your hedgehog right way up until you have a bond, turning them on their backs puts them in a vulnerable position and makes them uneasy.

Investing in a bonding bag is a great way to get your hedgehog used to you. Carry them around whilst your doing your housework, watching a film etc…

Giving treats whilst handling is a great way to associate you with happiness.

When petting your hedgehog be slow, (their eyesight is rubbish and they jump easily), be firm but gentle and have confidence.

To pick up your hedgehog scoop it with both hands from underneath, (that bit isn't Spikey).

You may have better luck bonding with your hedgehog if you do it at a time they are naturally awake so early morning or in the evening. It also might help to have a routine.

Most hedgehogs need to blow off steam before having a cuddle so make them a nice safe free roam area to run around in first.

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