

VIDEO: BABY ELEPHANTS ABUSED AT GERMAN ZOO

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PETA Exposes Violent 'Training' Behind the Scenes at Hanover Zoo

Hanover, Germany – A [new PETA video](#) offers a glimpse behind the scenes at Germany's Hanover Adventure Zoo, where employees were caught using whips, bullhooks – weapons resembling a fireplace poker with a sharp metal hook on one end – and even, in one instance, a fist to force elephants to perform circus-style tricks to entertain visitors. In response, PETA Germany has filed a complaint with local law enforcement and is calling for an end to the facility's elephant exhibit and breeding programme.

Elephant expert Carol Buckley, who evaluated the footage, explains that the sole purpose of this systematic abuse – whereby the trainers inflict pain on adult and baby elephants for even the slightest perceived infraction – is to teach them tricks and that it can lead to long-lasting trauma.

"No zoo can provide elephants with the open space, freedom, and companionship these highly intelligent living beings need in order to thrive", says PETA Director Elisa Allen. "If zoos were serious about protecting endangered species, they would ask the public to donate to programmes that protect animals in their native habitats, rather than turning them into living exhibits."

PETA – whose motto reads, in part, that "animals are not ours to use for entertainment" – notes that elephants are highly social animals who thrive in matriarchal herds, protecting each other, caring for their young, and travelling many miles a day. In zoos, they're confined to small enclosures, causing them to develop arthritis and other foot problems – which can be fatal – and to suffer from psychological distress. Many captive elephants exhibit signs of zoochosis, including repeatedly swaying back and forth. Their life expectancy is half that of elephants in the wild.

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