

Leopard gecko care guide

Disclaimer:

This care guide is based on our personal opinions, scientific literature and experiences rescuing, rehabilitating and keeping leopard geckos. It is vital to do external research and read multiple guides and articles to formulate your own opinion. We believe in researching about leopard geckos in the wild and trying to recreate their natural environment safely with welfare at the front of our minds.

Leopard gecko facts:

Origins: Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Climate: Arid, rocky grasslands.

Lifespan: 15-20 years

Activity: Crepuscular

Tank mates: None; they are solitary



Husbandry

Enclosure:

We recommend using wooden vivariums for leopard geckos as they can hold heat better and provide more security than a glass tank. They require an absolute minimum vivarium size of 3ft in length, but the bigger the better so feel free to go bigger!

Heating:

We recommend using a deep heat projector, ceramic heat emitter or a basking bulb connected to a dimming thermostat. The thermostat will help regulate the temperature. Avoid coloured heat bulbs, these can damage your gecko's eyes. You will need a thermometer to monitor the temperatures too. Leopard geckos require a basking spot of around 33c (92f). The ambient temperature should be around 28c (85f), and the cold side should be around 23c (75f).



Lighting:

Although leopard geckos do not require a UVB bulb to live, it greatly benefits them and increases their quality of life. We recommend a 7% linear UVB tube that goes across the length of the enclosure. Their lights should be on for 12 hours of the day. Plugging the lighting systems into a timer plug c he lights turn on and off!



Food:

Leopard geckos are insectivores. We recommend feeding silkworms, locusts, dubia roaches and crickets as part of their main diet. They can have mealworms as a treat. We suggest avoiding wax worms as they are incredibly fatty. Leopard geckos can become addicted to wax worms and will refuse to eat anything else. Baby leopard geckos should be fed daily, whilst adults should be fed three times a week.

We recommend using tongs to feed your gecko; this way, you reduce the risk of them ingesting substrate, you know exactly how much they have eaten, and your gecko will not be bitten by any of the free-roaming bugs. Tong feeding is also an excellent way to bond with your animal.

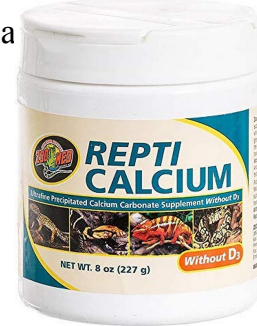
It is crucial that you gut-load your feeder insects. This is where you feed your feeder insects vegetables- dark leafy greens such as kale or rocket is the best. A healthy insect creates a healthy leopard gecko.

Supplements:

You will need 3 supplements: calcium, calcium with d3 and a multivitamin. Leopard geckos require vitamin D3 to break down and utilise the calcium in their bodies. Multivitamins are very important for leopard geckos; without it they can become deficient in necessary vitamins. It is important to find a multivitamin that contains active, preformed vitamin A, instead of Beta Carotene.

Calcium should be given twice weekly, and Calcium with vitamin D3 and multivitamins should be given once a week. You can dust your feeder insects with these powders. You may also provide a small bowl of calcium in your enclosure as leopard geckos have the amazing ability to know when they are

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Substrate:

We recommend using Arcadia arid earth mix, or a mixture of 70% organic top soil and 30% child play sand. These will allow the gecko to perform natural behaviours and dig. Absolutely avoid 100% sand and calcium sand. These can cause impaction if eaten and are not found in their natural habitat. Avoid reptile carpet as this harbours bacteria, and they can get their nails stuck in it and ripped out.

**Decorations:**

Leopard geckos require lots of hiding places. We recommend at least 3, one on the hot end, one in the middle and one on the cold end. These geckos are terrestrial but will climb if given the opportunity. Bridges and cork branches allow them to climb. They need a water bowl and a small bowl with calcium in it. They know if they need more calcium and will lick it. Leopard geckos love belly heat; we recommend putting a piece of slate near your heat bulb to warm it up for them to lay on. You can also add some fake plants for aesthetics and for them to explore.



Shedding:

Leopard geckos mainly shed in the night, and they eat it, so you may never see them shed. When they go into shed, their colours will become duller; this is an indicator to raise the humidity in their enclosure slightly to help them shed. This can be achieved by lightly misting their enclosure, or providing them with a humid hide. It is important to check them over once they have shed to ensure they got it all off. Their main problem areas are their toes. Shed stuck on toes can stop the blood from circulating and lead to their toes falling off. If you see stuck shed, give them a shallow, lukewarm bath and gently remove it for them.

**Common health issues:****MBD (Metabolic Bone Disease):**

They get this when they are not given the correct supplements or lighting. This is similar to rickets in humans and causes their bones to become soft. This causes arthritic-like pain in their joints. This cannot be reversed, so it is vital to provide them with the correct supplements.



URI, (Upper Respiratory Infection):

This can be caused by too much humidity and the enclosure being too cold. Symptoms include, nasal and oral discharge, wheezing, anorexia and lethargy. Antibiotics and improved husbandry can treat this.

Parasites:

This can come from unsanitary enclosures and a lowered immune system. Reptiles have a natural worm count in their gut; however, a lowered immune system can cause them to get out of control. Symptoms include, increased/decreased appetite, runny stools, lethargy and weight loss.

Stick tail disease (Crypto):

Cryptosporidium is a parasite that unfortunately has no cure. It is extremely contagious and can live on surfaces for over 8 months. It can survive most disinfectants and even boiling water. Symptoms include, decrease/increase appetite, runny/ undigested stools, lethargy, weight loss, foul smelling waste, and causes leopard geckos tails to become stick-like thin.

Hypovitaminosis A

This illness is a vitamin A deficiency that is completely avoidable with correct care. Vitamin A supports immune health, ocular health and much more! This is why it is so important to give your gecko the appropriate multivitamin supplement, one that contains preformed vitamin A and to gut-load your feeder insects. Symptoms include, stuck shed and gunky eyes, anorexia, cysts forming, prolapse, issues shedding, mouth rot and sores.

If you suspect your animal has any of these health conditions, take them to your local exotic vet.

Shopping list:

3ft or 4ft vivarium
heat lamp fixture
basking bulb
dimming thermostat

thermometer

7% t5 UVB system

Calcium

Calcium with D3

Reptile multivitamin

variety of feeder insects

Water bowl

Calcium bowl

Minimum of 3 hides

Substrate

extra decorations/ enrichment

Questions to ask yourself before getting a leopard gecko:

1. Do you have time to look after and handle one?
2. Think about where you will be in 20 years time, can you still dedicate 20 years to a leopard gecko?
3. Who can look after them if you go on holiday?
4. Can you afford vet bills if something goes wrong?
5. Have you done extensive research and feel ready to own a leopard gecko?