

Do Bearded Dragons Like to be Held?

All living creatures have nerve endings on their skin that react to the sense of touch. For bearded dragons, the critical sensory nerves are above their heads. However, the reaction for each animal is different, depending on the sensations such as pain, pressure, hot, cold. Hence, most people may ask, like other pets, do bearded dragons like to be held?

Yes, as the owner, hold your bearded dragon on your lap or arm. Some may react at the first trial, so apply a slow approach to relax and calm them. Their favorite pat or scratch spot while being held is chin, head, or cheeks.

Although they are unsocial, as pets, they enjoy relating with their owners. To learn further, read on how to hold a bearded dragon.

Characters of a Bearded Dragon

Most pets will react when you pet them. However, there is the standard and unusual body language of stressed or excited tames. Among reptiles, bearded dragons are outstanding with excellent manageable traits.

Hence, the reason the [Pogona vitticeps](#) type is a popular pet in central and eastern Australia. Further, it is now a preferred pet in the US. The bearded dragon got its name because of the extended pouch at the throat with thorny scales.

Here are some of their unique behaviors;

- They are friendly.
- Dragons like being held and cuddled.
- They are gentle.
- Beardies are curious.
- They show stress through hissing or biting.
- These pets are more tolerant of owners handling them than other giant lizards.

How Do You Approach a Bearded Dragon?

There are various occasions when you need to come into contact with your bearded dragon. For instance:

- When visiting the vet.
- During their habitat cleaning.
- When cuddling or petting it.
- During bath time.

First, you need to give your pet an adjustment period before you can start holding it. For example, a baby-bearded dragon will require about two to three weeks of adjusting.

So, approach your beardie slowly with care while observing its body language for signs of stress. Here is a step by step approach;

1. Wash Hands

Remember to wash your hands well before and after handling your bearded dragon. This process helps to reduce or minimize the risk of passing an illness or germs.

2. Wear Gloves

Gloves are an extra protective measure. Besides removing dirt and germs on your hands, it is okay to wear comfortable and waterproof gloves. Most reptiles have rough skin, and beardies aren't an exception. Hence, wear gloves to arrest any injuries on your hands and fingers.

3. Slow Approach

Use slow motions when approaching a bearded dragon. Ensure it is calm and not showing signs of stress. Besides that, there are certain times not suitable to move near a dragon. For instance, when it is eating. Also, do not move close while wiggling your fingers as it may confuse them with a worm.

Another warning is not to reach a beardie above its head or eyes. Since its senses are above the head, your wrong move will automatically trigger its attack instincts.

4. Gentle Cuddle or Pet

Once you are close to the beardie, give it a gentle pat or cuddle. These touches will make it comfortable and relaxed. Hence, your pet will become familiar with your hand and touch. Bearded dragons love to feel your pat or scratch on their chin, cheek, or head. So, go ahead and enjoy that bonding with your pet but do not prolong the stay.

These pets love being held and wouldn't resist if handled well. Try not to activate their stress or threat instincts. Now, you are ready to hold your dragon. The following part guides you on how to do it right.

Holding a Bearded Dragon Pet

1. If possible, place your palm underneath it and lift it off the floor. Allow its front part and arms to rest on your thumb and forefinger. As you feel its belly warmth, let its body lie in your palm without squeezing it.

Ensure the tail and legs (back end) have safe and adequate support for a comfortable lift. This support prevents any or severe injuries to the back during a fall.

2. Most adult dragons can measure two feet long, so you can hold it where you feel comfortable, depending on their size. For example, place it on your lap, chest, or arm for easy petting. Older types are more relaxed, unlike the younger ones that act fast. Hence, you may need to practice the unrestricted holding technique.
3. Avoid injuring your hands and pet them along with the scales line since they point in one direction. As you cuddle and rub it, watch its reaction while reading its body language. Its level of comfort will determine its retort. However, if it signals signs of distress, put it back slowly and gently the same way you picked it up.
4. If it is relaxed during petting, continue until it's uneasy. There is a [limit to the time](#) beardies are held to prevent provocation and restlessness.
5. Safely return your dragon to its resting enclosure when done. However, stay alert for any stress signals to avoid prolonging its exposure in an unfriendly environment.

6. Lastly, wash your hands to arrest any bacteria or dirt. It is essential to maintain cleanliness every time before and after handling your pet. Besides that, dragons are reptiles and carry Salmonella bacteria, which can make you ill.

How Long Should You Hold Your Bearded Dragon?

- For new pet bearded dragons, you can begin with a shorter period, like 15 minutes per day.
- Increase its stay outside gradually each day.
- Extend the timing once it accepts you and is familiar with its environment.
- The room temperature should be acceptable to its body.
- It will depend on the particular animal, as some prefer the long petting, while others do not tolerate it.
- Note that some dragons love petting several times a day, while others do not.

Common Body Languages of Stressed or Excited Bearded Dragon

Dragons can communicate via various signs and moves. Like other animals, they connect using their body. Here are a few of their gestures:

Semi wide mouth

This posture helps to cool it off or control body temperature. Like other animals and reptiles, this trend is a common habit. Hence, there's no cause for alarm.

Lifted or curled tail

Unless it is breeding or hunting time, the raised tail may signify alertness or liveliness. Besides that, it may lift its tail in response to a warm environment or during a warm bath.

Move head up and down

The head bobbing is a sign of power for the male gender. This movement means it is creating a social hierarchy among others.

Jerky bobs

This move happens when a male woos a female dragon or exiting brumation when they detect a female's scent.

Black beard

This beard tint shows authority, nervousness, or threat by its surroundings or an attacker. Also, the change happens during breeding time, when the male pokes its throat out.

Wave

It moves one arm sideways in slow motion to reveal submission.

Yawn

The move can happen every time, either in the morning or from a nap. The opening of a wide mouth by a male dragon means scaring an attacker or show of authority.

Tongue licking

Some beardies love to explore their environment; hence, they lick around using their tongue. They have a [Jacobson's organ](#) that powers the tongue to taste and smell.

Unusual Body Languages

Hissing

When you approach your dragon, and it hisses, that's a defensive technique warning. Moreover, its beard will turn black or puff up because of stress. However, this move is typical in dragons not used to handlers.

Glass surfing

Most beardies will scratch the glass when in discomfort. For example, if they are too hot or their cage is too small. Another reason can be a reaction to a new roommate or unfamiliar decorations.

End Note

Do you plan to start petting your beardedie? Well, it is not too late; however, before and after you cuddle it, read its body language. These cold-blooded reptiles are friendly, calm, and easy to handle, either caged at home or in their typical habitat.

Just remember to approach from the front, not overhead. Allow adequate body support with your specific body parts, and don't squeeze their tummy or body.