



Leopard Gecko Care Sheet

About Leopard Geckos:

Leopard Geckos originate from the arid regions of the middle east to India. They can have very docile personalities, which makes them pets. Adults can get up to 10 inches in length. There are several color morphs. With appropriate care leopard geckos can live up to 15-20 years.

Housing

Cage sizes will vary with age and should be at least three times the length of snout to tail

- Babies: at least 10 gallons
- Adults: 20-40 gallons

Leopard Geckos have been housed in groups without issues, usually all female groups, but they can be territorial so if you do decide to house them together, monitor them closely to ensure no fighting for resources or behaviorally is happening. Of course, the more space they have the better chances of cohabitating with other geckos.

A variety of substrates can be used with these guys. Depending on the set up you are trying to achieve you can use things like:

- Newspaper, artificial turf like reptile carpet, flat stones or no floor covering are best, especially for beginners.
- Sand, bark, or mulch should be avoided in most cases. While these substrates can provide opportunities for digging, burrowing, and other natural behaviors they should be avoided by inexperienced reptile keepers due to the problems they can cause like excessive ingestion, impaction, and obstruction.
- A flat rock under the basking light will warm evenly and provide a good basking spot.

For loose substrates like sand and soil we recommend feeding outside of the enclosure to prevent any ingestion that can lead to impactions

These little guys are nocturnal and require a few different hides throughout the enclosure. We recommend minimally one on the warm side, one on the cool side and one humid hide, but the more places the better.

Lighting and temperature are very important for the health and well-being of leopard geckos. UV lighting is important for the absorption of calcium and helps prevent things like Metabolic Bone Disease. Heat is important for proper digestion. We recommend using UV strips over bulbs to help cover more space in the cage rather than concentrating over one location. UV also cannot penetrate through glass or plastic effectively, so just keeping them by a window isn't super beneficial. UV lights lose their potency within about 6 months of use, and it is recommended to change them out. Since these guys are nocturnal, UV lighting is a controversial subject throughout the reptile community. We recommend a lower wattage UV strip especially when it comes to your lighter colored morphed which can develop health problems with too strong of light. If supplemented with the proper calcium powders and vitamins they can do well without additional UV lighting.

UV lights we recommend:

- Lamp placed over mesh tops: Zoo Med ReptiSun T5 HO 5.0, 12"
- Lamp installed into cage: Arcadia ShadeDweller Kit, 12"

Same issues pop up with heating. Nocturnal animals usually don't require as high temperatures as say a bearded dragon would, but they still do come from the arid/deserts of the middle east, and it does get hot during the day. We recommend having a basking spot over the warm hide, so one it heats the hide and two it creates a warm spot that the gecko can lay on once lights are off. Appropriate temperatures are:

- Basking surface temperature: 94-97°F (34-36°C)
- Warm hide temperature: 90-92°F (32-33°C)
- Cool zone temperature: 70-77°F (21-25°C)

Leopards can tolerate temperatures dropping into the 60's but it isn't recommended for that to be a constant drop. If it does get colder than the recommended temperatures, especially at night, then adding supplemental heat such as a ceramic heat emitter will help. For basking light though you should use a bright white light to help replicate the sun.

Once again leopard geckos come from arid environments, so a humidity range of 30-40% is adequate. Humidity can play an important role in shedding. Too little can contribute to shed not coming off successfully, which can lead to blood loss to toes, limbs and tail; causing necrosis of those body parts eventually leading to amputation. On the other side of the spectrum, too much humidity can cause issues such as respiratory infection or fungal growth. Adding a humid hide is beneficial for these guys, adding a hide that is filled with sphagnum moss and sprayed down regularly will help full especially with those shedding periods.

Enrichment for reptiles is a little different from your average cats and dogs. The biggest way to add enrichment to their lives is by décor. In the wild they are running around logs and rocks, so adding things that they can climb over and under will improve their quality of life. Always make sure décor is secure and won't move to prevent accidentally harming your pet. Some owners will provide bioactive setups (cages with living plants and beneficial cleaning insects), which is a great way to increase enrichment, but you just want to make sure that the plants are reptile safe is ingested.

Diet

Leopard geckos are insectivores, meaning they eat only insects. Insects given should be no wider than the width between the gecko's eyes. As juveniles, you should be offering daily to every other day insects. As adults, you can feed insects twice a week. Variety is key for any happy and healthy reptile so offering different "prey" items is always beneficial, below is a list of insects:

Staple Insects: Black soldier fly larvae, Crickets, Dubia roaches, Discoid roaches, red runner roaches, Super worms

Occasional insects: Butter worms, Waxworms, Hornworms (Captive only; wild are toxic!), Silkworms

Gut-loading insects is highly recommended throughout the reptile community. This adds high nutrition to the insects that your lizard will benefit from. Gut-loading is simple, feed the insects such as crickets roaches; nutrient rich veggies within a 24-hour period before feeding to your gecko.

Water should be available at all times for any animal. Most pet parents won't notice their lizard drinking and that may be because leopard geckos and most other reptiles like moving water. To them stagnant water is dirty water and is "unsafe" to drink. Adding things like a dripper may help with that or soaking your lizard will help too. Soaking is beneficial for hydration, shedding and even to help pass stool. Soaking a leopard gecko in lukewarm water no deeper than half the depth of the lizard 1-2 times a week will help in all those aspects or you can do a sauna, adding a paper towel soaked in warm water in a closed container (with some breathing holes) for 10-15 minutes mostly during shedding periods.

Supplements should be added for optimal nutrition and development. Calcium powder is very important for bone health. Metabolic bone disease is common with any reptile and an issue we see often. We recommend dusting insects and sprinkling supplements. Repashy's calcium plus should be on insects once to twice a month and then Repashy's Calcium low D should be added about the same frequency, that's if calcium is always always available in a dish. They can do well with even adding a small dish with powders in their cage, you will just need to change it every couple of days to make sure its staying clean.