



A BETTER LIFE FOR EXOTIC PETS

LEOPARD GECKO CARE GUIDE

Native to: Typically found in South Afghanistan, Pakistan, NW India & Iran.

Habitat: Rocky, dry grassland and semi-desert regions.

Behaviour: Crepuscular/Cathemeral & usually sticking to shaded areas, tunnels and burrows.

Social: Solitary.

Size: Range between 7-10 inches, including tail.

Lifespan: Anywhere up to 15-20 years.



THE LEOPARD GECKO

Eublepharis macularius

Eyes Closed:

These geckos have eyelids, meaning they can blink and close their eyes when they sleep.

Shedding Skin:

Every so often, leos will shed their skin. They will go a paler colour and eventually eat the old skin layer

Cloaca-what?

Leos have a single, multi-purpose orifice. Not only do they poo & wee from here, but they also reproduce from here too.

Non-Stick Feet:

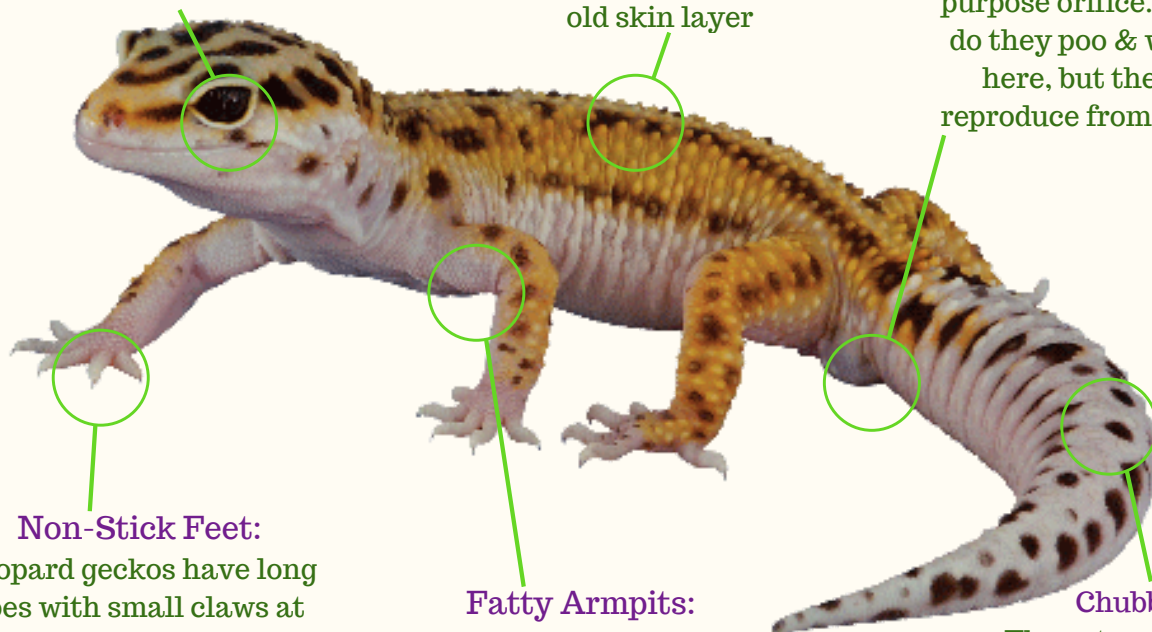
Leopard geckos have long toes with small claws at the end. They do not "stick" like other geckos.

Fatty Armpits:

Leos have small fat stores behind their front legs, that often looks like lumps in their armpits.

Chubby Tails:

They store most of their fat in their tail. They can also drop their tail when spooked, but it does grow back.



DIETS

Leopard geckos in the wild eat a diet consisting entirely of insects.

Insects should be offered daily when the gecko is young, decreasing to 2-3 times a week when mature. It is important to feed a variety of insects to promote different hunting techniques and provide the variety of nutrition each insect contains.

Insects should be no larger than the geckos head.

We feed our leos every Mon, Wed & Fri. with a different feeder insect every week.

STAPLE FEEDER INSECTS



Crickets

A good staple, can be noisy and may bite. Contain good all round nutrition.



Dubias

Harder to find in shops but, they are high in protein and easy to breed.



Hopper

A common feeder insect, these are good all-round nutrition and fun for them to hunt.



Morio Worm

These are fatty insects, and should be offered less often, can give a nasty bite.



Meal Worm

These are also high in fat, but small. Can be left in a worm proof bowl in the tank.

GUT-LOADING

To ensure the live feeders contain the right nutrients, they should be fed an appropriate diet of fruit, vegetables and meal prior to offering them to your gecko.

Our insects are fed on fresh fruit and vegetables, and leftover crested gecko paste.

SUPPLEMENTS

Calcium:

They will require additional calcium to promote bone growth and development.

We ensure that insects are dusted in calcium powder just before feeding. This is done three times a week with youngsters and once a week for mature leopard geckos.

Nutrobal:

Nutrobal is a multi-vitamin powder, which includes vitamin d3. This is vital to promote calcium absorption.

We dust feeder insects with Nutrobal twice a week for youngsters, and once a week for adult leopard geckos.

WATER

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times in the enclosure. Provide a shallow dish, around the size of the gecko's body and clean regularly.

ENCLOSURE EQUIPMENT



Vivarium Brands:

Repti-Life, Viperia, VivExotic and Pro Viv are our recommended brands for the vivarium.



Heat Bulb Holder:

Any ceramic heat bulb holder will be suitable. Arcadia is a good brand, but most brands can't go wrong with this piece of kit. The protective cage is much the same, just ensure it can easily be opened to change the bulb.



Dimming Thermostat:

Arguably the most important piece of equipment, this controls the power to the heat bulb to maintain a steady temperature. Habistat or Microclimate are recommended brands.

UVB:

The Arcadia ShadeDweller (7% Pro T5) unit, is what we recommend.



Heat Bulb:

The Arcadia halogen heat bulb is our recommended basking spot lamp. A normal white spot lamp would also be okay. Wattage depends on your enclosure size.

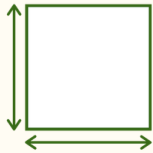


Digital Thermometer x2:

Allows you to check the temperature is correct in basking spot and cool side.

Buying items second hand can be a great way to save money, however you will not get any warranty when doing so, so use caution. For vivariums or décor, ensure the items are thoroughly disinfected before use. We don't recommend second hand items that are made of wood or other porous materials.

ENCLOSURE SET-UP



Space:

Leos like lots of space!
A vivarium with a minimum of 3x1.5x1.5ft is necessary.



Lighting:

They require low levels of UVB. The Arcadia Shadedweller is designed for them.



Temperature:

A basking spot of 32-34°C and cool area of 23°C is necessary, with a drop to 16°C at night.



Humidity:

The ideal humidity is between 30-40%. A humid hide should be provided using moss.



Substrate:

To better replicate their natural environment a deep layer of mixed sand and soil or similar arid substrates will suit a leo best. Avoid fine sands and definitely no calcium-sand!



Décor:

Leopard geckos are a burrowing species and would benefit from lots of clutter and rock formations to replicate this natural behaviour. Ensure there is a shallow water bowl.

EXAMPLE



The example above is using recommended heating/lighting and uses live plants. Fake plants work just as well and require much less maintenance.

MAINTENANCE

Spot clean daily, removing any faeces/urates.

Fully change substrate when needed - this should be done approximately once every couple of months.

Clean decor items when soiled - fully disinfect monthly.

Change water regularly - fully disinfect the bowl weekly.

Replace the UVB bulb as per manufacturer guidelines.

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS

The below are a look at some common health problems you may see. It is still, ALWAYS recommended to seek veterinary assistance for anything out of the ordinary.

Dropped Tail



When very stressed or startled, leopard geckos will drop their tail as a defence mechanism. This is a natural process, so don't worry, the tail will eventually grow back, but may look a little different.

It is recommended to transfer the gecko to paper towel substrate, to keep the wound clean, and avoid leaving biting insects in the enclosure. The wound should heal on its own with no extra attention.

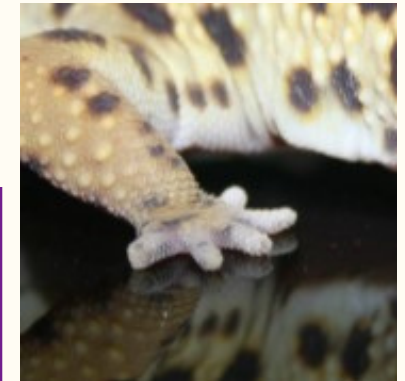


Stuck Shed



During shedding, sometimes skin can get stuck around the toes. It's important to remove this skin, else it will restrict blood flow and eventually cause the ends of their toes to die and fall off.

Once you notice the stuck shed, place the gecko in a shallow tub of luke-warm water (about 2cm deep) to allow the skin to soften. Rub the toes with a cotton bud until the skin is off - don't pull it!



Metabolic Bone Disease

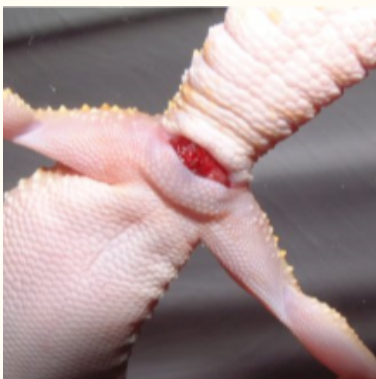


MBD is a condition where the gecko has not had enough calcium and vitamin D3 to promote healthy bone growth. Limbs will appear deformed and the gecko will struggle to walk.

It is recommended to seek a vet's opinion if you start to notice these signs. They may prescribe liquid calcium. If the disease is too severe and interferes with quality of life, euthanasia may be suggested.



Prolapse



A prolapse occurs at the vent, and is noticeable as a pink protrusion from the vent. This could be an indicator of further problems, such as impaction, egg-binding or parasites.

In the event of a prolapse, veterinary advice should be sought immediately. If you are unable to see a vet straight away, keep the gecko in a cool, shallow tub of sugar-solution until you can.

