



## The Basics of Turtle Care

Turtles typically live between 20-30 years, some having even longer lifespans. Before getting a pet turtle, think thoroughly about whether you are ready to take good care of the animal. Chinese stripe-necked turtles and red ear sliders are common pet turtles. They can grow to 20-30 cm, so make sure you have enough space for them. This article is a Chinese stripe-necked turtle care guide;

please refer to the information below and the websites listed at the end for more reference.

### Basic Supplies

- Tank. Get a tank that is at least 8 times larger than your turtle. There should be areas of 30% land and 70% water. You can add rocks and logs to provide a resting place. Make sure the water depth is higher than top of your turtle's shell, so it can flip itself upright within the water if it accidentally turns itself upside down. Chinese stripe-necked turtles are good at climbing. Use a tank cover and make sure the tank is tall enough so that the turtle can't climb out.
- Sunlight and UV lamps. As ectotherms, turtles should be exposed to sunlight at least 20-30 minutes a day. You need to place the tank where your turtle has access to sunlight. If the tank is directly under the sun, be sure to leave a shaded area for it to escape the heat. Ultraviolet light is necessary for proper calcium absorption. Without enough UVB light, turtles may have soft shell syndrome. Use UV lamps as an alternative when sunlight is not available.
- Land area and hiding places. You can prepare artificial mountains, caves and other items for your turtle to climb and hide in. After setting up the land area, make sure your turtle is able to climb onto it, and you can also add plants ; but be sure to wash the additives daily. Also, be careful that your turtle can not escape from the tank from the land areas.
- Water. Use a water filtration system for your turtle's tank to keep the water clean. Change the water out completely every 3-5 days. Filters should be changed periodically. If you use tap water, you should let the water aerate overnight before use.
- Heat control system. Adult turtles can be kept in environments between 19-27 degrees Celsius. Young turtles or sick turtles should be kept in an environment that is between 26-28 degrees Celsius. In the winter if the water falls below 15 degrees Celsius, you should use a water heating rod to raise the

temperature of the water. If the weather is hot, make sure to keep the water below 32 degrees and place the tank in a shaded area.

## **Diet**

Turtles are typically the most active during mornings and evenings, so those are good times to feed your turtle. Most turtles are omnivores. Turtle pellets are a staple of turtle's diet, and you can sometimes provide raw/cooked lean meat or livers, fish, shrimps, insects, vegetables and so on. Check the water quality after giving your turtle fresh foods. Young turtles should be fed every day and adult turtles should be fed at least 3-4 times a week. However, depending on your turtle, you can also feed the turtle every day. During winters and cold weather, a turtle's appetite may decrease, so you can lower the amount of food given. Though, if you keep the water temperature right, it can prevent indigestion and your turtle may continue to eat normally.

## **Cleaning**

Uneaten food and feces can foul the tank water, so regular water changes are a must. If you use tap water, leave it overnight before use. When changing the water, take your turtle out first, pour the dirty water out and then clean tank thoroughly, including the added land areas, caves, and plants. Clean or replace the filter. You can also use a toothbrush to softly clean your turtle's shell.

## **Health**

A healthy turtle has strong muscles, produces well-formed feces, shows a good appetite and appears active. A turtle's skin, eyes and shell are more vulnerable to diseases. If you see any ulcers, color changes or swellings, changes in appetite or activity level, take your turtle to the vet as soon as possible. Since most health problems of turtles are usually caused by dirty water and improper care, you must be aware of your turtle's living environment. Finally, wash your hands after touching a turtle to avoid infectious diseases.

## References

[Taiwan Amphibian & Reptile Association](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/tara.in.taiwan/>

[Turtle Family Pet Reptile Forum](#)

<http://www.turtle-family.com/Discuz50/index.php>



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Pet Era

<http://www.herpera.com/PetEra.htm>

All Turtles

<https://www.allturtles.com>

Information above is for reference only, please consult with veterinarian for professional advice if needed.