

Ball Python Care Sheet



• Adult Size & Lifespan

- Length: 3–5 feet (females larger than males)
- Lifespan: 20–30+ years with proper care
- Temperament: Calm, shy, great beginner snake

• Enclosure

- Hatchlings: 20-40 gallon
- Adults: 40 gallon - 4'x2'x2' (bigger is better)
- Type: Front-opening PVC or glass terrarium, with tight lid (escape artists)
- Hides: At least 2 hides (warm side & cool side)
- Clutter: Fake plants, cork bark, branches = happy snake

• Substrate (Bedding)

- Good options:
 - Coconut husk, Cypress mulch, Paper towels (quarantine / easy cleaning)
- Avoid:
 - Pine or cedar (toxic), Sand, Gravel

• Water

- Fresh, clean water at all times
- Bowl should be large enough to soak in
- Change water daily or when dirty

• Cleaning

- Spot clean: As needed
- Deep clean: Monthly with disinfecting enclosure: Every 1–2 months
- Quarantine new snakes: 60–90 days

• Temperature

- Warm side: 88–92°F (31–33°C)
- Cool side: 76–80°F (24–27°C)
- Night: Can drop to ~75°F (24°C)
- Heat source:
 - Under-tank heat mat (with thermostat), OR radiant heat panel / ceramic heat emitter
- Thermostat: Mandatory (prevents burns & overheating)

• Lighting

- A day night cycle of 12hr on/off helps with natural rhythms
- UVB is optional

• Handling & Temperament

- Handle 2–3 times per week once settled
- Avoid handling for 48 hours after feeding
- Support the body fully
- Expect some nervous balling at first (normal!)

• Health & Common Issues

- Healthy signs:
 - Clear eyes (except during shed), Smooth sheds, Active at night, Good appetite
- Common issues:
 - Respiratory infections (wheezing, bubbles), Mites, Retained shed, Refusing food (common but monitor weight)
- Vet care: Find an experienced reptile vet for annual checkups or if health issues arise

• Humidity

- Ideal: 60–70%
- During shed: 70–80%
- Humidity tools:
 - Large water bowl, Misting, Humid hide (moss inside a hide)
- Signs humidity is too low: Bad sheds, stuck eye caps

• Feeding

- Diet: Frozen-thawed rats or mice
- Prey size: About as wide as the snake's thickest point
- Feeding schedule:
 - Hatchlings/Juveniles: every 5–10 days
 - Adults: every 10–14 days
- Tip: Thaw prey fully & warm before feeding
- Never feed live (risk of injury)

Ball Python Care Sheet



- Why a Ball Python might be right for you
 - Calm, generally docile temperament
 - Great beginner snake for first-time reptile keepers
 - Manageable size (typically 3–5 feet)
 - Long lifespan (20–30+ years)
 - Beautiful morphs with many color and pattern options
 - Usually tolerant of gentle handling
 - Fascinating behaviors and nocturnal activity

- Final Tips
 - Ball pythons love tight, cozy hides
 - They're nocturnal—don't worry if they hide all day
 - Going off food seasonally is common
 - Weigh your snake monthly to track health

Shopping List

	20-40 gallon for Juvenile or 4'x2'x2' for adult
	Radiant heat panel or deep heat projector
	Thermostat
	Digital thermometer/hygrometer
	Substrate (Cypress mulch, Coco husk)
	Decor (hides, decorations, Large water bowl)
	Feeding tongs
	Frozen thawed appropriate size food
	Low UVB strip light (optional)