

Ball python Care guide

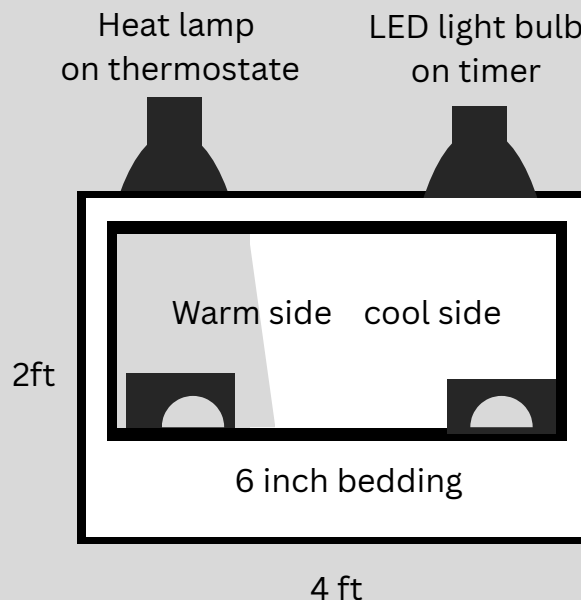
A Comprehensive Guide

Enclosure

For an adult ball python, I recommend at least a 4x2x2 enclosure, but bigger is always better when it is set up properly. Ball pythons are terrestrial but still benefit from opportunities to explore, climb, and hide. I recommend having:

A warm hide, A cool hide, Several other hiding spots, Branches, logs, and cork bark, Things to climb over and explore, Substrate deep enough to allow some digging, and a water bowl large enough for the snake to completely curl up inside.

The enclosure should be secure because ball pythons are strong and can be surprisingly good at finding escape routes.



Heating and Temperature

I recommend using a heat bulb that produces no visible light and connecting it to a thermostat to keep heat within safe range. Put the heat source on one side of the enclosure instead of heating the whole thing. This gives the snake a temperature gradient so it can regulate its own temperature by moving between the warm and cool areas.

Temperatures:

Basking area: 88–92°F

Warm side: 80–85°F

Cool side: 70–75°F

Always use a thermostat with your heat source. and keep it around 3-5 inches away from your heat source for more accurate temperature regulation.

Lighting

Use a separate LED light on a timer for the day/night cycle.

Around 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness is a good starting point.

Low-level UVB is recommended because it can provide additional benefits, even though ball pythons can survive without it when properly cared for.

Handling

Ball pythons are generally calm snakes, but they can become defensive when frightened or stressed. A nervous ball python may Curl into a tight ball, Hide its head, Hiss, Strike, Attempt to escape This is defensive behavior and doesn't mean the snake is naturally aggressive. Handle calmly and support the snake's body. After feeding, leave the snake alone for about 48-72 hours to allow it to digest its meal and reduce the chance of regurgitation.

Quick Setup

Enclosure: 4x2x2 minimum for many adults, bigger recommended
Heat: Lightless heat source
Thermostat: Yes
Basking: 88-92°F
Warm: 80-85°F
Cool: 75-80°F
Night: ~70-75°F
Humidity: 50-60%, higher during shedding
Lighting: LED on timer
UVB: Recommended
Water: Large enough to curl up in
Substrate: Humidity-retaining and appropriate for burrowing
Food: Appropriately sized mice or rats
Cohabitation: No

Temperature regulation: Give the snake a gradient and let it choose where it needs to be

for more information contact us at:
ScaleWiseEducation@gmail.com

Feeding

Ball pythons naturally eat small mammals, with rodents making up the majority of their diet in captivity.
Change prey choices to:
Mice, Rats, Other appropriately sized feeder rodents

Prey size: Choose prey that is appropriately sized for the snake's body. A prey item should generally be around the same width as the snake at its largest point, rather than being excessively oversized.

Feeding schedule:

- Hatchlings/juveniles: every 5-7 days
- Growing snakes: every 7-14 days
- Adults: every 10-21 days

Adjust the schedule based on the snake's body condition and growth rather than blindly following a calendar.
Never feed wild-caught prey because of the risk of parasites, disease, pesticides, and other contaminants.

Humidity

Ball pythons require higher humidity than many desert and arid snakes. Aim for around 50-60% humidity, with humidity allowed to rise somewhat higher during shedding. A properly humid enclosure helps support healthy shedding and respiratory health. The enclosure should not be constantly soaked or have wet substrate throughout the entire enclosure. A humid hide can also be provided when needed, a good way to keep track of the humidity in the tank is with a Govee Thermostat and Hydrometer.

Substrate
Ball pythons do well with substrates that can hold some humidity without staying constantly wet.
Good options include:

- Coconut fiber
- Coconut husk
- Cypress mulch
- Soil-based mixes
- Other appropriate humidity-retaining substrates

Give the snake enough substrate to burrow slightly and allow it to move through and rearrange its environment.
I personally use a mix of coco husk, sphagnum moss and coco fiber. the specific mixture of each part can vary depending on the humidity of your home.