

## Basic Care Sheet - Diamond Python – Indoors



### Introduction

This care sheet is intended for beginners and will cover the basic cage setup, lighting, heating and feeding. For further information, in depth advice and tips it is strongly recommended that you join your local Herpetological Society, where you can meet others with similar interests in a relaxed atmosphere.

### Cage setup

Diamond Pythons being mainly arboreal will require a cage with some height to allow for climbing branches. A cabinet type enclosure with sliding glass doors is probably the most suitable as it allows easy access for feeding and cleaning. Remember these snakes can grow to over 2.4m in length so a large enclosure will be required eventually. A setup 1.8m high x 1.5m long x 0.6m wide would suit one or two adults. For juveniles a much smaller enclosure of similar design would suit. Substrate (floor covering) could be as basic as newspaper or for a more natural look you could use leaf litter and washed river sand. Good ventilation should also be provided by use of pegboard or similar material on part of the back or side wall. A hide box of suitable size should be situated high in the warm area of the cage. A dish of fresh water must be provided at all times.

### Lighting

General lighting requirements can be met by a standard fluorescent tube fitting, either a single or double fitting of suitable size for the enclosure. Some benefit may be gained by using a UVB emitting tube in one side of the fitting. A 12-hour day/night cycle is fine and you can alter this for the winter months if you like. A simple plug in timer makes this job easy.

### Heating

Diamond Pythons are unusual in that they can be found basking in the sun for hours at a time in both summer and winter, so an appropriate heat source is a must. For a large cage a 120w spotlight is suitable for smaller cages a standard reflector globe of suitable wattage is fine. The light should be positioned so that at least 34 deg. C is registered on the basking spot directly below the light. The light should be positioned towards one end of the cage so that a temperature gradient is created across the cage. If the cool end of the enclosure is 24 Deg. C during the day the light wattage is correct, if not then alter the light wattage or thermostat setting accordingly. A reliable thermostat is a must to maintain correct heating. Nighttime temperatures should be allowed to fall to your room temperature provided that a lower wattage

heat source is provided at one end during winter months. A blue or red light globe would do, provided that there is no white light emitted from around the neck. If the room is heated or air-conditioned you will not need night heating. Small snakes can easily burn themselves on heating devices so a screen of small wire mesh can be placed around the lighting/heating devices.

## Feeding

Juveniles can be fed pinky or fuzzy mice graduating to adult mice and rats as they grow. Feeding should take place every seven days, for juveniles and every seven to fourteen days for adults depending on the size of the food items. You should be able to see a reasonable bulge in the snakes belly after feeding.

## Cleaning

All droppings should be removed immediately and the enclosure cleaned every week or two. A very weak solution of bleach and water can be used and allowed to dry before returning the animal.

## Sickness

Until you gain experience, any sign of illness or strange behavior should be discussed with a competent Vet or someone in your society.

## Info

Care of Australian Reptiles in Captivity by John Weigel is an excellent and inexpensive book, which will help all those interested.  
Animal acquisitions setup needs and food are available through monthly meetings of local Societies at greatly reduced prices!!

The Australian Herpetological Society PO Box R79 Royal Exchange Sydney NSW 2000.

For meeting details of Sydney Societies please phone the contact number given to you by National Parks and Wildlife Service.