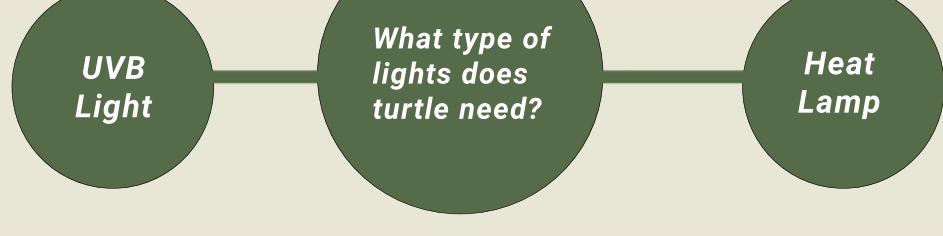


Foolproof Lighting Guide For Turtle Keepers



Why is lighting important for turtles?

Lighting is one of the most important and basic of a turtle tank. Like feeding and basking, lighting is also an essential requirement for a healthy turtle.



It provides the essential UVB ray for the turtles also essential for producing vitamin D3 which promotes healthy shell and bone growth in turtles. UVB light encourages activity, feeding, mood as well as breeding.



Turtles are cold-blooded animals, so they can't generate their own heat. They need to depend on other sources for maintaining body temperature. The heat lamp helps to do this. It also helps to fight germs.

Why turtles need UVB?

Vitamin D3 is responsible for healthy shell and bone growth. So, in the absence of UVB light, the turtle may suffer from metabolic bone diseases and other shell issues. This disease can cause death to turtles.

Why turtles need heat?

Without proper lighting, most aquatic turtles will get sick in a very short time. Like all living animals, turtles also maintain a circadian rhythm. Which means, they need day and night in a 24-hour cycle just like us.



Things to consider when getting a UVB light

- Do your own research before getting a UVB light for your turtle.
- Most full spectrum lights have a negligible amount of UVB
- Replace the UVB bulb every six months.
- Experts recommend getting a 2.5, 3 or 5 percent UVB lamp
- Desert UVBs are not ideal for aquatic turtles.
- UVB rays can't go through plastic or glass.
- LEDs and fluorescents lights are safer as they rarely break or heat up.

You need to place the UVB at the right distance, so the turtle can get the proper amount of UVB. For 2.5 percent UVB lamp, this distance is about 12 inches. If the UVB is 5 percent, place it at least 18 inches away from the basking light.

Different types of UVB lights:

There are basically two types of UVB lights in the market right now: The Linear or tubular light and the Compact UVB light. Most turtle owners these days often go for the compact UVB lights.



Heat lamps

Heat lamps, also known as the daylight lamps, are also essential for a turtle's healthy growth. Heat lamps produce light and heat at the same time. Incandescent lamps are a popular choice for heat lamps. There are also halogen heat lamps. Some of these lights come with reflectors to increase the concentration of the heat.

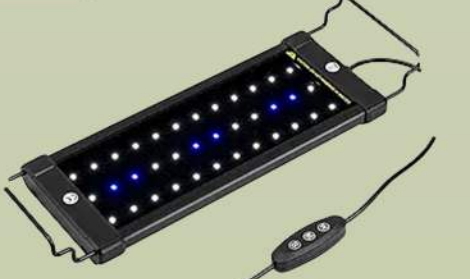


The heat lamp should be directed to the basking area at a perfect distance. Set up the lamp in such a way that the temperature of the basking area is at least 10-12 degrees warmer than the temperature of the water.

The warmest part of the basking area should have a temperature between 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. You can increase the range to about 95 degrees Fahrenheit if the turtle is sick.

A viewing light:

I wouldn't recommend getting a light for viewing unless you have a very big habitat. These viewing lights do not have any special purposes like UVB, heat etc. They are just for viewing the turtle tank. In other words, the viewing lights are for us, not for the turtles.



I like daylight lamps for viewing purposes. They are better than soft white or warm white lights. Plants also prefer the daylight lamps more. Daylight lamps are available in many shapes. I like the LEDs as they are very cheap and practically last forever.

Circadian Rhythm

Throughout the 24-hour cycle, they focus their energy on different things at different times. Not only the behaviors, their biochemistry also change throughout the 24 hours, thus maintaining a specific circadian rhythm.

It's extremely important that we maintain a day-night cycle in our turtle tank, much like in the wild. The day-night cycle is crucial for the healthy growth of every turtle.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Far Should Basking Light Be From Turtle?

The ideal distance chart between the basking light from the turtle is,

Bulb Power	Distance From Turtle/ Basking Dock
50 watt	5 – 7 inches
75 watt	7 – 9 inches
100 watt	10 -12 inches
150 watt	More than 12 inches

What Watt UVB Bulb For Turtles?

UVB bulbs are available in different powers. For aquatic turtles, UVB lamps with 50 – 100 watts are suitable to maintain a 90 – 100F temperature in the area. If you have a larger space, go for UVB bulbs with up to 150 watts.

What is the preferred turtle heat lamp wattage?

There is no preferred wattage of heat lamp for turtles. What we need is the preferred temperature. Make sure that the basking area is at least 10 degrees warmer than the water. An ideal temperature range of the basking area should be between 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. So, set the heat lamp in such a way that it can create such temperature range in the basking area.

Do turtles need heat lamp all the time?

No, you'll need to turn ON the heat lamp during the day-cycle only. So, if you are aiming for a 10-hour day cycle, then keep the heat lamp turned ON for 10 hours along with the UVB bulb.

Is it safe to leave the heat lamp ON all day?

No, it is not safe and recommended at all to leave the heat lamp ON for all day. The temperature can get really high and it can burn your turtles. Also, keeping the heat lamp ON all day may result in irritation on your turtle's eyes.