

HERMIT CRABS

(Decapod Crustaceans)

Land Hermit Crabs are a popular choice of pet today - not only are they easy to care for, but they are also very clean and very friendly (once they get to know you)!

Hermit Crabs typically choose to nap throughout the day and spend their nights playing. The warmer their environment, the more active they will be.

LIFE SPAN

How long do hermit crabs live for?

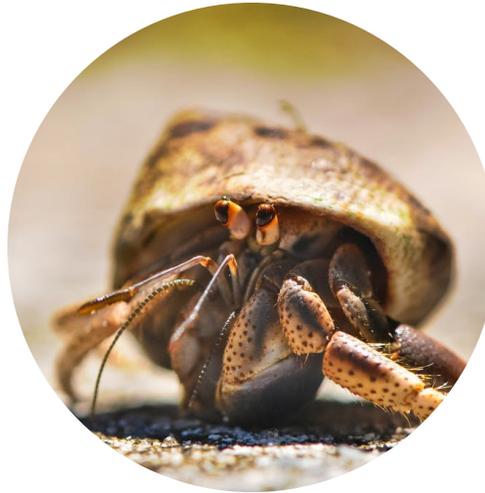
If you take good care of your hermit crab, he can live for many years - 10 years and beyond!

Hermit Crabs will not breed in captivity so you won't need to worry about any new additions.

HOUSE

The best & easiest way to create a home for your Hermit Crab is to use an aquarium.

Your crab's home will need to be lined with a suitable substrate - clean gravel, pebbles or sand are ideal, but will need to be kept dry to keep your new friend happy. Hermit crabs love to climb! It's important that their house has a secure lid (with plenty of air holes) to prevent their escape. You can add driftwood creations, clean coral, mangrove roots or rocks to your crab's home, which will provide an attractive environment and entertainment for your hermit crab. You can buy hermit crabs online in Australia, and even buy a [habitat kit](#) to help you get started.



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TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Hermit crabs prefer a warmer temperature, ideally at 30°C. You should keep a thermometer in your crab's house and make sure the temperature never dips below 21°C. In cooler temperatures, you will need to provide a heater for your hermit crab. Humidity is also important for hermit crabs - they require their lungs to be kept moist in order to exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen. Allowing the environment to become too dry will suffocate your hermit crab. Always keeping fresh water in your crab's bowl will ensure there is an adequate level of humidity for proper breathing.

FOOD

Hermit Crabs have a keen sense of smell and love a variation in their diet. This can include fresh fruit, vegetables, cereal and [fish flakes](#) or [pellets](#).

Because hermit crabs are most active at night, this is the best time to feed them. Any leftovers or uneaten food must be removed and cleaned up every day.



Some hermit crabs don't mind being handled

WATER

Your hermit crab will need at least two bowls of water - one with clean, de-chlorinated water for drinking, and one with saltwater, which your crab will use for bathing. Chlorine found in tap water can be harmful to your crab, and tap water should be dechlorinated. Alternatively, bottled water can be safely used.

Crabs may drink from both water bowls, and some species even store water in their shells, mixing different water types by diluting ratios of salt and freshwater.

Each bowl should be large enough for your crab to submerge himself if desired. Be cautious that your water bowls are shallow enough that your hermit crabs can climb out safely without risk of drowning. For smaller hermit crabs, a sea sponge can be used as a safety ladder to climb in and out of the bowls.

HANDLING

While some hermit crabs like being handled, others will not. If your hermit crab doesn't mind being handled, you can take them out of their home and allow them to explore other environments.

You should never allow your hermit crabs to be put on to carpet. Fibres in carpets often retain chemical residue from cleaning, even after being dried, and these chemicals can pick the particles of this residue up while they are walking, which can be harmful to their health. Tiles and linoleum should be safe surfaces, as these are wiped down after cleaning.

MOULTING

Your hermit crabs will moult once or twice per year. Moulting is when your hermit crab sheds his outer skeleton and grows a new one. You should never touch the old exoskeleton - your hermit crab will eat it to gain extra nutrients!

While your crab is moulting, you should leave him alone for 20-30 days. This is an important time for your hermit crab, when he will grow his new skin. After a successful moult, your hermit crab will emerge bigger than before - and be in search of a new, bigger shell!

LOSING LIMBS

Hermit crabs are designed to lose their limbs to survive an attack, and lost limbs are often a result of another hermit crab trying to pull them out of their shell. Typically, these lost limbs will grow back when they moult.

SHELLS

You should keep a variety of extra shells in your hermit crab's home - these will need to be a little bigger than the shells they currently live in. Hermit crabs like to change their shells and will need a new, bigger shell after each moult. You can add some lively colour and decoration to your hermit crabs with designer or [painted shells](#). Alternatively, if you prefer a natural look, spare [natural shells](#) are also an option.

