

TORTOISE



HEALTH CHECKLIST

It's important to check your tortoise daily for any signs of injury or illness and to seek advice from an exotic veterinarian if needed.

Your Tortoise

Name:

Age:

Sex:

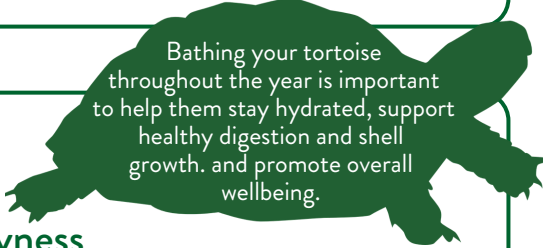
Species:

Microchip number:

Basic needs checklist

Many common health issues in tortoises can be avoided by meeting their basic care needs correctly:

- ☐ Plenty of space to move and explore, with enrichment and areas for digging and burrowing
- ☐ Warm basking area and cooler areas
- ☐ UVB lighting or access to natural sunlight
- ☐ Species-appropriate diet and fresh water



Bathing your tortoise throughout the year is important to help them stay hydrated, support healthy digestion and shell growth, and promote overall wellbeing.

What to check

- **Eyes:** bright and clear; no discharge, swelling or dryness
- **Mouth and beak:** pink, clean mouth; no beak overgrowth
- **Nose and breathing:** clean, dry nose; no bubbling, discharge or wheezing
- **Shell:** no cracks, soft spots, scars, discolouration or uneven growth (pyramiding)
- **Skin and limbs:** no wounds, sores, swelling, ticks or mites
- **Tail and vent:** clean and free from poo, urates or sores
- **Faeces and urates:** firm, greenish-brown poo; urates not overly dry or chalky
- **Appetite:** eating well and interested in food
- **Activity:** active, alert, moving and basking normally
- **Claws:** not overgrown, trim if needed
- **Weight:** no sudden weight loss or gain

Weekly

Weekly

HEALTH DIARY

Use the table below to record any observations you make after completing the health check.

[illegible]

TORTOISE



HIBERNATION CHECKLIST

Hibernation in captivity should consist of a wind down period, hibernation, followed by warming them up. This hibernation guide is for healthy adult Mediterranean and Horsfield species only.

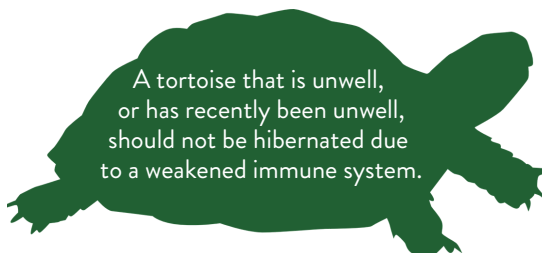
Pre-hibernation checks

- ☐ Collect poo sample to check for parasites
- ☐ Visit an exotic vet for a general health check
- ☐ Weigh your tortoise and measure the length of their shell to check overall body condition

Weight (g):

Length (cm):

Calculate Jackson's ratio:



Jackson's ratio

**Used only for Mediterranean tortoises, for Horsfield tortoises the McIntyre's ratio can be used instead.*

$(\text{weight in g} \times 100) \div (\text{carapace length in cm})^3$

Scale

< 0.16	Your tortoise is underweight and is not safe to hibernate.
0.19-0.21	Safe weight to hibernate (0.21 ideal weight)
> 0.21	Your tortoise is overweight and is not safe to hibernate

Wind-down period (3-4 weeks before hibernation)

Week 1

- ☐ Stop feeding, but keep lighting and heating the same
- ☐ Bathe in lukewarm water every 2-3 days

Bathing 1

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 2

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 3

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Week 2

- ☐ Prepare the fridge conditions by setting the temperature to 4–6°C and the humidity to 50–70%

Week 3

- ☐ Start reducing lighting and heating
- ☐ Check the fridge temperature and humidity daily to ensure they remain within safe limits
- ☐ Bathe in lukewarm water every 2-3 days

Bathing 1

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 2

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 3

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Week 4

- ☐ Temperature in their living environment should be maintained at around 10°C
- ☐ Bathe in lukewarm water every 2-3 days

Bathing 1

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 2

Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathing 3

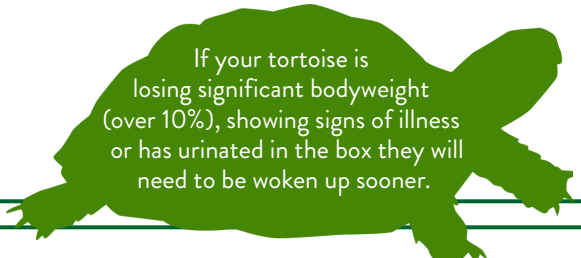
Did your tortoise poo?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Hibernation period (12 – 16 weeks)

**Hibernation length depends on the tortoise's species, age, size, health and temperature conditions.*

- ☐ Check fridge temperature and humidity daily
- ☐ Open fridge door to encourage air flow daily
- ☐ Do a health check every 1-2 weeks
- ☐ Weigh your tortoise weekly



If your tortoise is losing significant bodyweight (over 10%), showing signs of illness or has urinated in the box they will need to be woken up sooner.

Warming- up period

Day 1

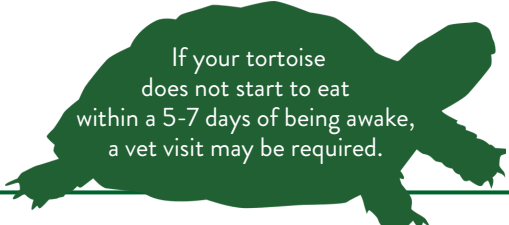
- ☐ Switch off the fridge or leave the door open to gradually increase the temperature over a few hours

Day 2

- ☐ Every two hours turn up their heat source in their enclosure until it reaches the normal basking temperature. Only then can the food be offered.
- ☐ Bathe in lukewarm water

Day 3

- ☐ Bathe and offer food again



If your tortoise does not start to eat within a 5-7 days of being awake, a vet visit may be required.

HIBERNATION DAILY DAIRY



Use the table below to record any observations you make during your tortoise's hibernation.

Week 1

Weight:

Date	Temperature 4–6 °C	Humidity 50–70%	Open fridge door	Health check observations

Week 2

Weight:

Date	Temperature 4–6 °C	Humidity 50–70%	Open fridge door	Health check observations

HIBERNATION DAILY DAIRY

Week

Weight:

Date	Temperature 4-6°C	Humidity 50-70%	Open fridge door	Health check observations

Week

Weight:

If your tortoise
does not start to eat
within a 5-7 days of being awake,
a vet visit may be required.

Date	Temperature 4-6°C	Humidity 50-70%	Open fridge door	Health check observations

TORTOISE DAILY CHECKS

Date:

Morning checks

Temperature (°C):
Humidity (%):

Did your tortoise eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Did your tortoise poo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Heat lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Other observations: _____

Afternoon checks

Temperature (°C):
Humidity (%):

Change water ☐
I fed my tortoise: _____

Heat lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Date:

Morning checks

Temperature (°C):
Humidity (%):

Did your tortoise eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Did your tortoise poo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Heat lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Other observations: _____

Afternoon checks

Temperature (°C):
Humidity (%):

Change water ☐
I fed my tortoise: _____

Heat lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Date:

Morning checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Did your tortoise eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did your tortoise poo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Heath/D3 lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Afternoon checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Change water ☐

I fed my tortoise: _____

Heath lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Other observations: _____

Date:

Morning checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Did your tortoise eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did your tortoise poo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Heath/D3 lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Afternoon checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Change water ☐

I fed my tortoise: _____

Heath lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Other observations: _____

Date:

Morning checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Did your tortoise eat? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did your tortoise poo? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Heath/D3 lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Afternoon checks

Temperature (°C):

Humidity (%):

Change water ☐

I fed my tortoise: _____

Heath lamp? ☐ On ☐ Off

Other observations: _____