



Hermit Crab

Coenobita compressus

Adult Size	Between 0.5-4 inches in length	Life Span	Potentially 6-15 years
Male/Female Differences	Sexing is almost impossible without removing the crab from their shell (which would injure them.) Females have two pores located on their inner legs, just in front of the abdomen.		
Compatibility	Despite their name, hermit crabs generally get along with one another as long as there are enough shells for them to hide in. Since they often outgrow their shells, there are often competitions for any available shells.		
Origin	Most hermit crabs come from the Caribbean, although a couple of species come from Indonesia.		
Climate	Hermit crabs enjoy a heated, tropical environment.		
Day Cycle	Hermit crabs are mostly active during night.		
Temperature	Hermit crabs enjoy a temperature between 75 - 85 degrees Fahrenheit. A warm place in the house during the summer can suffice, but they may need a heat pad during the winter months.		
Lighting	No overhead light is necessary for fear of drying out the habitat. Regular house lights are sufficient enough for them.		
Humidity	Humidity is key when it comes to the hermit crabs. It should stay between 70-80%.		
Habitat/Territory	If there is more than one crab in a tank, there should be sufficient space between them to prevent them from running into one another. Multiple shells, varying in color and size, should also be distributed around the tank in order for the crab to change shells.		
Substrate/Bedding	A mixture of ground coconut fiber and calcium sand makes an ideal substrate: the coconut hold moisture well and allows them to dig, while the sand helps them shed their exoskeleton and provides a source of calcium.		
Hiding Place/Den	A hiding shelter should be provided for the crab so that it has a place to sleep during the day. As mentioned before, scattered shells are also great to have. Hermit crabs are quite mobile and love to climb, so provide some branches for exercise.		

Cage Type	There are a lot of items to provide a hermit crab, so a larger cage is better. They also need a “race track”, a space clear of decorations the length of their cage. A 10 gallon tank is good for up to a couple of crabs.
Diet	Hermit crabs are omnivorous scavengers, meaning they eat both animal and plant matter. Hermit crabs pellets are formulated for their needs, and can be supplemented with fish foods, fresh and dried fruits, and hermit crab treats. Bloodworms and baby shrimp are great choices for these fellows.
Supplements	Crushed cuttlebone is a great supplement for it provides them with calcium. This helps to strengthen them especially during the stages when they start to molt. A well balanced diet, with a lot of variety, is key to good health.
Diet Precautions	Ensure any foods are free of pesticides and chemicals.
Feeding	Hermit crabs are omnivorous scavengers, eating anything washed up on the tide. Provide a lot of variety: proteins, such as fishmeal and shrimp pellets, and plant matter, fresh greens and fruits, should be provided. Prepared hermit diets can also be used to provide some variety.
Water Source	Hermit crabs live in a world of mixed salt and fresh water. Provide fresh de-chlorinated water with their sponge, lightly squeezing excess water out so it’s damp. Bathe them once or twice a week in an inch of salt water for 15 minutes - use 2 teaspoons per pint of water.
Grooming	Hermit crabs are molters, which means that they shed their outer skin every so often. They’ll move out of their shell, shed their skin, and bury themselves in the sandy substrate. This allows their new soft, vulnerable skin to harden. They then come out, looking for a new shell. Providing several shells of different size is important, as they need this protection. If you have two crabs together, and one wants the other’s shell, they’ll fight over it.
Oral and Foot Care	No oral or foot care needed. Keeping a clean environment is the only care they require, as old, dirty substrate can cause mold and bacteria to grow.
Proper Handling	Hermit crabs are docile animals and respond well to being handled. However if frightened, they may pinch the hand that holds it. In this case, submerge the hand in temperate and dechlorinated water to get the crab to release. They will only snap their claws if they feel threatened or if they are pinched too tightly. Care must be taken not to drop them.
Habitat Maintenance	A deep cleaning of the tank every one to two weeks is highly recommended. Uneaten food and any molten skin should be removed daily. Water should also be rinsed and changed and any detritus sifted daily. You can keep the substrate cleaner by not saturating it with water.
Health Concerns	Since the hermit crab molts, they become highly sensitive to their environment. They bodies are soft and sensitive to everything. If there are other crabs with it, the molten crab should be isolated from the others until it recovers. Give them a bath of de-chlorinated water salt water (2 teaspoons per pint water) for the crab to walk around in to rinse the shell from excrement and to freshen the primitive gill. This should be done every two to three days for about ten to twenty minutes.