

## **Tutorial: How to Build a DIY (Do-it-Yourself) Turtle Basking Platform!**

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**Example image using Menard's Decking Tile, wire grating, and suction cups with zip ties.**

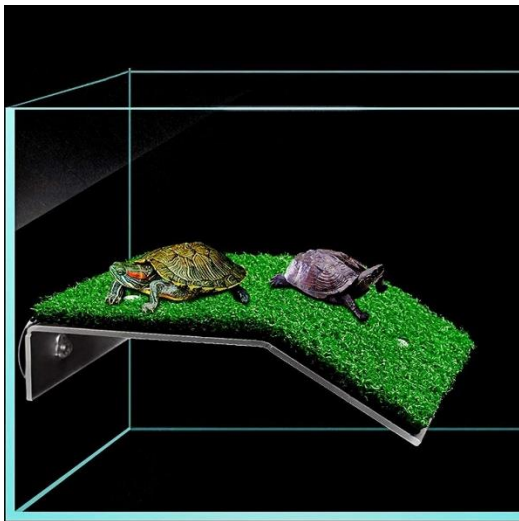
When it comes to the maintenance and proper care of many species of aquatic to semi-aquatic turtles in captivity or as pets, providing a proper and dry “basking area” out of the water is essential for maintaining these animal’s health and well-being. Indeed, basking is an important activity for these shelled reptiles throughout the day in order for them to properly and adequately thermoregulate, as well as providing them an opportunity to get out of the water to dry off, and potentially prevent bacterial, fungal, and other infections or health implications.

While there are some commercially available turtle basking docks or platforms that are out there, typically consisting of pieces of logs, bark, or driftwood attached to one side of the aquarium or enclosure with suction cups and a frame, and which can work well for many smaller turtles, many aquatic turtles, including map turtles, sliders, painted turtles, cooters, softshell turtles, and others will unfortunately outgrow these products (as well as most of what may be commercially available). This oftentimes leaves the need to design a DIY (or “Do-it-Yourself”) basking area to accommodate larger and/or heavier turtles. Nonetheless, DIY basking platform designs can also be made for one’s smaller turtles as well.



\*Commercially Available Example Image such as from Zilla, ZooMed, or ExoTerra.

Luckily, the design for such a basking platform or area need not necessarily be anything fancy or elaborate, and many different designs and concepts are out there, most of which are relatively quick and simple to build and construct, depending on one's needs and preferences, as well as which materials one might have available on hand to work with. This will be a short, educational DIY guide for not only individual pet owners, hobbyists, and enthusiasts looking to properly house and accommodate their larger turtles, but also a resource for any animal shelters, humane societies, and other rescue groups or organizations who may be frequently contacted regarding the surrender and placement of many aquatic turtle species.



\*Commercially available acrylic platform with AstroTurf material and suction cups is another commercially available design for many smaller turtles.

### **Materials Needed or Suggested:**

1- Piece of flat material large enough to accommodate your turtle(s), enabling them to easily and comfortably turn around and move about while on the platform. The material does not matter, and can simply be layered bricks, tile, or concrete reaching out of the water, or an 18" x 18" piece of plastic

decking tile from Home Depot or Menard's. A piece of plywood can also work well.

1- Piece of material which can be attached at a hinge or roughly 30 degree angle to act as a ramp for your turtle to more easily be able to enter or exit the platform. Just about any material will work as long as it is waterproof.

1. Electric drill with any size drill bit for drilling some holes.

1-2 (or more) packets of zip ties or wire for hanging or suspending the platform at least 1 to 3 inches out of the water. Wire or zip ties can be of any length, although longer and/or more than one packs may be recommended if one needs to cut or trim them to size, or to have more on hand rather than fewer. Zip ties can also be used to fasten the ramp to the basking platform at about a 30 degree angle.

1 (or more packs) of suction cups with hooks intended to tie or fasten the wire or zip ties to for hanging or suspending the basking platform. Suction cups able to hold up to 10 lbs. each on all four corners of the platform should be sufficient for holding the weight of many larger turtles, and can be attached along the upper margins of the enclosure.

1. Tape measure for measurements.

-Any freestanding or floating basking platforms or structures should be large, heavy, and sturdy enough to withstand the larger turtle climbing on them without becoming dislodged or toppling over.



\*Example Image.

**An Above Enclosure Basking Area** is another DIY design option one can easily build using nearly any material, from a plastic container with a hole cut out of one end, to using egg crate wiring, and which can be as simple or as elaborate as one desires:



\*Example Images 2 and 3.