Hide and stealth – DnD 5E rules

Summary

1) You cannot hide from a creature that can see you. This means that the area has to be heavily obscured or darkness. Even if in darkness if creature has darkvision (which allows them to see in darkness as dim light then you cannot hide)

2) This also means that there must be some solid cover that can move behind if the character trying to hide (full cover). Small creatures normally can get full cover behind ¾ cover for medium creatures.

3) Some races and classes like Ranger, Lightfoot halfling and Wood elf are allowed to hide under less restricted conditions:
Ranger – if appropriately camouflaged
Lightfoot Halfling can hide as they were fully covered behind a creature larger than themselves.
Wood elf – can also hide in lightly obscured /dim light surroundings if in natural phenomena

4) In combat, most creatures stay alert for signs of danger all around, so if you come out of hiding and approach a creature, it usually sees you.
However, under certain circumstances, the Dungeon Master might allow you to stay hidden as you approach a creature that is distracted, allowing you to gain advantage on an attack before you are seen. (This is a DM ruling and is the EXEPTION given the situation - not the basic rule)

   If making an extremely difficult or unlikely stealth attempt – there is nothing in the rules that prevent the DM to instead assign a difficulty class (for example very hard or nearly impossible) to the check roll (and also disadvantage/advantage to see if the act succeeds instead of the opposed check or passive check perception check.

5) Even if not mentioned in the rules it can indirectly be derived that stealthing towards or past a guard only can be attempted if starting from a hidden status and then the stealth check Active or passive or DC check) is done to see if he notices you. So you cannot stealth from a starting position in plain sight. It also goes from the conclusion under point 4 that in combat, most creatures stay alert for signs of danger all around, so if you come out of hiding and approach a creature, it usually sees you = (i.e. you cannot stealth)

Basic rules

Stealth. Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check when you attempt to conceal yourself from enemies, slink past guards, slip away without being noticed, or sneak up on someone without being seen or heard. PHB s. 177

If the opponent is not aware of you or looking this would be versus his Passive perception score (+/- 5 if opponent is at advantage or disadvantage) or an contested check (opposed check) if actively on guard or alert.

HIDING

When you try to hide, make a Dexterity (Stealth) check. Until you are discovered, or you stop hiding, *that check's total is* contested by the Wisdom (Perception) check of any creature that actively searches *for signs of your presence.* You can't hide from a creature that can see you and if you make noise (such as shouting a warning or knocking over a vase), you give away your position. An invisible creature can't be seen, so it can always try to hide. Signs of its passage might still be noticed, however, and it still has to stay quiet. In combat, most creatures stay alert for signs of danger all around, so if you come out of hiding and approach a creature, it usually sees you.
However, under certain circumstances, the Dungeon Master might allow you to stay hidden as you approach a creature that is distracted, allowing you to gain advantage on an attack before you are seen. (This is a DM ruling and is the EXEPTION given the situation - not the basic rule)

Passive Perception. When you hide, there's a chance someone will notice you even if they aren't searching. To determine whether such a creature notices you, the DM compares your Dexterity (Stealth) check with that creature's passive Wisdom (Perception) score, which equals 10 + the creature's Wisdom modifier, as well as any other bonuses or penalties. If the creature has advantage, add 5. For disadvantage, subtract 5. For example, if a 1st level character (with a proficiency bonus of +2) has a Wisdom of 15 (a +2 modifier) and proficiency in Perception, he or she has a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 14. If the person in the situation is at advantage the total would be 19. PHB s. 175

What Can You See?

One of the main factors in determining whether you can find a hidden creature or object is how well you can see in an area, which might be lightly or heavily obscured, as explained in chapter 8. PHB s. 177

HIDE

When you take the Hide action, you make a Dexterity (Stealth) check to attempt to hide, following the rules in chapter 7 for hiding. If you succeed, you gain certain benefits, as described in the "Unseen Attackers and Targets" section later in this chapter. PHB s. 192

UNSEEN ATTACKERS AND TARGETS

Combatants often try to escape their foes' notice by hiding, casting the invisibility spell, or lurking in darkness. When you attack a target that you can't see, you have disadvantage on the attack roll. This is true whether you're guessing the target's location are you're targeting a creature you can hear but not see. If the target isn't in the location you targeted, you automatically miss, but the DM typically just says that the attack missed, not whether you guessed the target's location correctly. *When a creature can't see you, you*

have advantage on attack rolls against it. If you are hidden-both unseen and unheard when you make an attack, you give away your location when the attack hits or misses. PHB s. 194-195

Items and feats that slightly alters the basic rules

Wood elf - Mask ofthe Wild.
You can attempt to hide ==even when you are only lightly obscured by foliage, heavy rain, falling snow, mist, and other natural phenomena==. PHB s.24

Lightfoot hafling - Naturally Stealthy.
You can attempt to hide even ==when you are obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than you==. PHB s. 28

Ranger Lvl 10 class feat - Hide in plain sight
Starting at 10th level, you can spend 1 minute creating camouflage for yourself. Vou must have access to fresh mud, dirt. plants. soot. and other naturally occurring materials with which to create your camouflage. Once you are camouflaged in this way, you can try to hide by pressing yourself up against a solid surface, such as a tree or wall, that is at least as tall and wide as you are. Vou gain a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks as long as you remain there without moving or taking actions. Once you move or take an action or a reaction, you must camouflage yourself again to gain this benefit. PHB s.92¨

Thief level 9 – class feat supreme sneak
Starting at 9th level, you have advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check if you move <u>no more</u> than half your speed on the same turn.

BOOTS OF ELVENKIND
Wondrous item, uncommon While you wear these boots, your steps make no sound, regardless of the surface you are moving across. You also have ==advantage on Dexterity (Stealth)== checks that rely ==on moving silently==.

CLOAK OF ELVENKIND
Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement) While you wear this cloak with its hood up, ==Wisdom (Perception) checks made to see you have disadvantage. and you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to <u>hide,</u>== as the cloak's color shifts to camouflage you. Pulling the hood up or down requires an action.

VISION AND LIGHT

The most fundamental tasks of adventuring-noticing danger, finding hidden objects, hitting an enemy in combat, and targeting a spell, to name just a few rely heavily on a character's ability to see. Darkness and other effects that obscure vision can prove a significant hindrance.

A given area might be lightly or heavily obscured.

In a lightly obscured area, such as dim light, patchy fog, or moderate foliage, creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

A heavily obscured area-such as darkness, opaque fog, or dense foliage-blocks vision entirely. A creature in a heavily obscured area effectively suffers from the blinded condition (see appendix A).

The presence or absence of light in an environment creates three categories of illumination: bright light, dim Light, and darkness.

Bright Light lets most creatures see normally. Even gloomy days provide bright light, as do torches, lanterns, fires, and other sources of illumination within a specific radius.

Dim light, also called shadows, creates a lightly obscured area. An area of dim light is usually a boundary between a source of bright Light, such as a torch, and surrounding darkness. The soft light of twilight and dawn also counts as dim light. A particularly brilliant full moon might bathe the land in dim light.

Darkness creates a heavily obscured area. Characters face darkness outdoors at night (even most moonlit nights). within the confines of an unlit dungeon or a subterranean vault, or in an area of magical darkness.