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## **Q: I just purchased a new fish tank, should I do anything before setting it up?**

A: Hand wash the tank or bowl with warm water to remove any debris that may have settled on the tank during shipping. Inspect and test the tank or bowl for damage that can occur during transportation and handling. During testing, place the tank in a sink or other area that cannot be damaged by water. Be sure the sink or testing area is flat and level. Fill the tank and let stand for at least an hour before setting up your tank.

## **Q: What size tank do I need for a betta fish?**

A: A betta fish tank should be a one gallon or larger to support your pet nicely. There are a number of things to look at besides the size of the tank, you have to consider how many plants and decorations you are adding to it, how often you are performing partial water changes and the number of daily feedings. Betta fish have certain needs such as a constant room temperature between 71 and 84 degrees that does not regularly have large fluctuations. Keep the aquarium water clean and water parameters healthy, by faithfully performing a 25% water change every 2 to 3 weeks and not overfeeding. When feeding it is best to feed your pet small amounts of pelleted food a couple times a day, emphasizing again small amounts. Pet owners sometimes tend to overfeed and unfortunately to the detriment of their pet. Often people think just because they have a large tank they are not required to perform necessary monthly maintenance, so untrue. Monitor your water chemistry weekly, check the temperature of the tank, perform scheduled maintenance, do not overfeed and observe your fish daily. Be responsible and you will have many years of enjoyment with your pet.

## **Q: Should I rinse my gravel before adding it to the aquarium?**

A: Yes, you should remove the gravel from the bag and place it in a clean bucket. Run water over the gravel several times to remove any dust or debris that may be on it. Stir the gravel gently with your hand and while holding the gravel in place, empty the water from the bucket. A household colander or spaghetti strainer can be used also.

## **Q: Where should I set up my aquarium?**

A: Pick a location away from direct sunlight, heat, or air conditioning. Direct sunlight can cause unwanted algae growth that can cover your rocks and decorations. Placement of the aquarium away from heating and air conditioning vents is also important, because it is easier to maintain proper aquarium temperature when the surrounding air temperature is relatively stable. Place your new aquarium where you will be able to see and appreciate the beauty of it.

Places to avoid

- Near direct sources of sunlight (e.g. windows), unwanted algae growth may occur.
- Close to direct sources of heat or air conditioning (e.g. radiator, forced air vents).



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- Around sources of noise (e.g. stereo speakers, TV).
- Drafty areas.
- Do not place aquarium on any good surface that can be damaged by water.
- Where water can come in contact with other electrical appliances.

### **Q: How long after setting up the aquarium should I wait before adding fish?**

A: Allow the aquarium's water to stabilize to room temperature before adding fish. You will reduce the stress on the new fish by doing so. Usually one to two days will be sufficient to enable the aquarium to achieve room temperature. Also have your aquarium store test your water to be sure the water is safe to add fish. In fact, most aquarium specialty dealers will test your water as a service to ensure a balanced environment before adding fish. It is our strongest recommendation that you follow their advice; their expertise will provide you with invaluable information and assistance along the way.

### **Q: What kind of fish can I have?**

A: Begin by talking to your pet store people about which fish are best suited for your aquarium, which fish are compatible with each other, and how many would be appropriate for your aquarium. Inform them that you have just set up a new aquarium so they can recommend hardy fish. Select fish that are healthy and active. Be sure that the fish are eating and acting normally. Check for ragged fins that can be caused by bacteria and white spots caused by parasites. Always choose healthy looking fish. Avoid difficult species or those with special feeding requirements until you have gained enough experience and confidence. Some good choices for first fish include zebra danios, white clouds, swordtails, platies, mollies and guppies. If possible, purchase tank raised fish because they are more likely to adapt quickly to the aquarium and their new surroundings. They will also be less stressed and more apt to be eating than non-captive raised fish. Bring your fish home directly from the store; you do not want them to be in the bag any longer than necessary.

### **Q: How many fish can I have?**

A: General recommendation is one inch of fish per gallon of aquarium. Add only a few recommended fish at first, gradually introducing more over the next 4-6 weeks. One to two fish in the beginning that are each approximately 2 inches long is a good guide to follow. Remember to choose only fish that are active and healthy. Take special care not to overcrowd your aquarium. Fewer, healthier fish are better than an overcrowded, stressed population.

### **Q: What is the best way to add new fish to my aquarium?**

A: Follow the procedure below, step-by-step.



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1. Open the bag containing your new fish and float it on the aquarium's water surface, taking care that the bag does not collapse.
2. Use a small cup and slowly add a little aquarium water every two minutes to the bag containing your new fish. Continue this process for 10 minutes, allowing the bag to fill with water.
3. Next, take the bag with fish to the sink and pour the water with fish into a fish net, discarding the water, do not add the water from the bag to your new aquarium to prevent possibly transferring harmful parasites or bacteria from the stores water.
4. Gently submerge the net with your new fish into the aquarium and allow the fish to swim out into the fish tank.
5. It is recommended to keep your aquarium light off for twenty-four hours, as a dark aquarium is less stressful to your fish. Be sure to provide hiding places, this also helps alleviate stress.

**Q: How often should I feed my fish?**

A: Feed your fish twice a day. A few pellets or flakes per fish is sufficient, do not overfeed as it can affect the health of your fish and aquarium. The fish should eat all the food in one minute or less. Overfeeding your aquarium is one of the most common mistakes made in aquarium ownership and is the major causes of fish loss. Overfeeding results in the accumulation of waste due to uneaten, leftover fish food plus increased amounts of waste produced by the fish eating more than they need. It is easy to feed extra since your fish always appears hungry and seems happy to see you especially when it is feeding time. Keep in mind that your fish will always become excited when they see you coming towards the tank with food. Do not be fooled by their ability to look hungry, as this is typically only a conditioned feeding response when you approach the tank.

**Q: How often should I check my aquarium?**

A: You should check your aquarium daily whenever you are feeding your fish. Check your equipment such as filter and heater to make sure they are functioning properly.

- Check water temperature to confirm it is within the acceptable range, depending on the type of fish you have.
- Check your fish and water. Consult the aquarium store if your fish appears listless or weak, if you see white spots (ick) on your fish or notice a change in their normal behavior; listlessness, heavy breathing, erratic swimming, loss of appetite, or if water appears cloudy. Be sure to take a sample of your aquarium water. Water that appears cloudy or smells bad is indicative of poor water quality. A 25% water change and a new filter cartridge is recommended to correct these conditions.

**Q: Why is there excessive bubbles on water surface?**

A: Bubbles are caused on water due to surface tension. The natural properties of the water or rather the impurities in the water will increase surface tension. The impurities in



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water come about due to overfeeding, improper filter maintenance and irregular water changes.

Recommendation: Perform a 25% partial water change by siphoning water from the gravel with a gravel vacuum cleaner. Refill with fresh water that has been treated with a water conditioner. Tank maintenance and correct feeding of your fish are very essential to maintaining a healthy environment in the tank. Also, have your aquarium water checked by the local pet shop and treat the water depending on what the testing indicates.

### **Q: Why is my aquarium's water turning green?**

A: Unwanted algae results from overfeeding or too much light. Reduce the amount of fish food you are feeding your fish, overfeeding means more waste and unwanted algae may result. Also, reduce the amount of light your tank is getting. If you have your lights on eight hours per day lower the length of time down to six or less. If the tank is getting direct sunlight from a window put up a blackout curtain to minimize the amount of light getting to your aquarium. If possible move your aquarium to another location away from direct window light.

To rid your aquarium of algae perform a partial water change using a gravel siphon that allows you to get down into the gravel. Perform a 20%-25% water change every two weeks to lower the level of fish waste that algae utilizes a fuel source. Lastly, try adding some live aquarium plants. Live aquarium plants can help "lock up" nutrients in your aquarium that algae need as a fuel source in order to thrive and grow.

### **Q: Why is my aquarium's water foamy?**

A: If your aquarium is newly set-up, it may be from the tap water conditioner you used. Some water conditioners contain aloe or a thickening agent that can cause foam to form at the aquarium's surface. Wait a couple days and the foam will disappear. If your aquarium has been set up a couple weeks it is time for you to do a partial water change.

### **Q: How often should I clean my aquarium?**

A: Ideally, you should change 20% - 25% of the aquarium's water every 3 to 4 weeks, depending on the number of fish and amount of daily feedings, by performing a partial water change using a gravel vacuum siphon. A gravel vacuum will enable you to remove fish waste and other detritus that have accumulated in the gravel. Be sure to use a tap water conditioner when refilling the tank to remove chlorine, chloramines and ammonia from your tap water that can be harmful to your fish. It is recommended to fill an unused bucket with freshwater the night before performing a water change to allow the water to get to room temperature.



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**Q: My LED light is not working and I have changed the batteries. What should I do?**

A: First, make sure you installed the batteries in the LED light in the proper directions. Positive to positive and negative to negative. Then press the blue button to the ON position. If it still does not work, contact our Customer Service Department at 800.545.1344.

**Q: What affects battery life in my LED light?**

A: There are three main things that affect battery life in the LED light unit. The first is the quality of the battery. Be sure you are using a high quality alkaline battery. The second has to do with the features on your LED light. If you turn your LED light on and off manually using the on/off button on top of the light, you can expect to see longer battery life. Use of the timer mode will shorten battery life slightly. If the LED light is left on for long periods, you will see shorter battery life. Lastly temperature plays an important role in the life of batteries. Batteries exposed to prolonged heat will have diminished battery life.

**Q: What is the programmable timer?**

A: Taking simplicity even a step further, the LED light unit will turn off all by itself. Set the timer by selecting 2H or 4H with the selector. Beginning at the actual desired time by pressing the blue on/off button (as an example 7:00pm). The LED will cycle on the same time of day going forward.

**Q: How should I clean the outside of my aquarium?**

A: Use a soft micro fiber cloth with warm water only—NEVER USE CHEMICALS TO CLEAN THE TANK since soap and detergent can damage the plastic. Avoid using any used rags or sponges that have been used for cleaning and can contain harmful chemicals; these can be scratch and damage your tank.

**Q: How often should I do a water change?**

A: Perform a 25% water change every 3 to 4 weeks (more frequently if necessary, depending on the number of fish and amount of daily feedings) use a gravel vacuum siphon to thoroughly remove any uneaten food and waste buildup. At the same time, replace your filter cartridge every 2 to 3 weeks. Filter pads can be rinsed once or twice before changing and as carbon gets older, it becomes less efficient in removing discolorations and odors.

**Q: Heater or No Heater for Your Fish?**

A: One of the most important considerations in maintaining a healthy aquarium and stable environment is your aquarium's water temperature. A steady water temperature is necessary so your fish are not stressed and susceptible to disease. If you find the aquarium's water temperature is fluctuating daily by more than a couple of degrees you should consider adding an aquarium heater and thermometer.



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Fish cannot regulate their body temperature; they have to rely on the temperature of the water in their tank. So what water temperature is best for your pet? The safe temperature zone should always be determined by the type of fish you have. Goldfish do better in cooler water while cichlids and most other tropical fish require higher temperatures. Freshwater tropical aquariums should be kept at approximately 74 °F to 80 °F for optimal fish health while goldfish tend to do better when their aquarium water temperature is between 65°F and 72°F. Although tropical fish can survive in water ranging from 65°F to 84°F, most tropical fish do best when kept in temperatures around the 74 °F to 80 °F mark.

There are a number of easy to use, inexpensive aquarium thermometers to choose from that will help you monitor the water temperature of your fish tank or bowl. Choose one that best suits your aquarium shape and size, such as a Digital Thermometer (stick on), Stainless Steel Thermometer (hang-on tank); Plastic Thermometer (suction cup) or Floating Glass Thermometer (includes suction cup also), all will enable you to monitor water temperature.

Which size heater should you use? For desktop aquariums 5 watts per gallon is recommended, so a 3-gallon aquarium will require a 15-watt heater in order to keep the tank at a steady temperature. Go with a reputable aquarium heater manufacturer that has been in the heater business for decades. You do not want to purchase a low cost, inferior heater that can malfunction, harming your fish.

### Tropical Fish

Tropical fish are most healthy in the range of 74 °F to 80°F. Some tropical fish may need to be kept cooler while some may need a warmer temperature. Check with your local aquarium store or online for the temperature requirements that best suit your fish.

### Betta Fish

If you own a Betta fish, you might be wondering if you need an aquarium heater. The answer is yes, Bettas are tropical fish that prefer warm water ideally between 74 °F to 80°F.

### Coldwater Fish

There are several different species of fish that qualify as coldwater fish and tend to do better in colder water temperatures. Danios, Barbs, and White Clouds are popular coldwater fish; also, goldfish are included in this category. A water temperature between 65°F and 72°F provides an optimum environment for these fish.

If your ambient room temperature remains constant and does not fluctuate, there is a good chance that you may not need to add an aquarium heater. Use an aquarium thermometer to monitor tank temperature. If you see that the water temperature is bouncing up and down then add a small heater to keep the temperature steady at the same, constant temperature.



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### **Q: How does a power filter work?**

A: Power filters are used to keep your aquarium's water crystal-clear and fish healthy, cleaning and purifying the aquarium's water, effectively removing organic pollutants including colors, odors, heavy metals, and toxic gases. Power filters function by drawing water through a filter cartridge, all-the-while removing fish waste and other debris, returning cleansed water back to the aquarium and your fish.

### **Q: Why does my aquarium water have a bad odor?**

A: The first thing to do is test your water for ammonia and nitrite levels with an aquarium test kit. A smell usually is a sign of excess waste usually from overcrowding or excess feedings and uneaten fish food. First if you have too many fish and your tank is overcrowded, go ahead and remove some of your fish and place them in a different fish tank (be sure to acclimate them to the new aquarium). Then perform a 25% partial water change with a gravel vacuum, gently cleaning the gravel on the bottom of the tank. If the issue is due to over-feeding, please cut back on the amount of food you are feeding per feeding.

### **Q: How can I tell if my fish is sick?**

A: If your fish shows signs of being sick, it is best to remove him from the aquarium and quarantine him by itself in another smaller fish tank. Treat the sick fish in the quarantine tank rather than medicating the main aquarium and potentially harming beneficial bacteria living there. Your sick fish should be treated with the appropriate medication to cure the infection, check with your pet store for medication recommendations. Signs of possible illness:

1. Cloudy eyes,
2. Open skin sores with reddening edges
3. Sunken body or stomach
4. Rapid or labored breathing
5. Refusal of food
6. Paleness or discoloration of the skin
7. Fins clamped against body
8. Ragged and/or frayed fins
9. Excessive hiding
10. Erratic or disoriented swimming
11. White spots on skin or fins
12. Scratching against decorations or gravel
13. Red streaks in fins with discolorations around edges of fins

### **Q: How to Care for Your Plastic Fish Tank**

A: To keep your aquarium looking spotless and your fish healthy it is recommended to siphon out 25% of the aquarium's water with a gravel vacuum every 2 to 3 weeks depending on the number of fish you have and amount of daily feedings also replace your filter cartridge.



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- In some cases, you may have stubborn algae growing all over the tank and want to remove it. As your fish tank is constructed of impact-resistant plastic, the algae cannot be scraped or scrubbed off as damage to the tank may occur. Do not use soap, detergents or glass cleaners as they can leave residues and damage the tank.
- Do not use a sponge or scrubber as it can scratch the plastic.
- Do not place in dishwasher or extreme hot water, damage to the tank may occur.

### **Q: How does a power filter work?**

A: Power filters are used to keep your aquarium looking crystal-clear and healthy, cleaning and purifying the aquarium's water, effectively removing organic pollutants including colors, odors, heavy metals, and toxic gases. Power filters function by drawing water through the filter cartridge, all-the-while removing fish waste and other debris, returning cleansed water back to the aquarium and your fish.

### **Q: How often should I replace the filter cartridge in the power filter?**

A: Replace the filter cartridge every 3 to 4 weeks, depending on the number of fish and amount of daily feedings, or when heavily soiled. Another good indicator is when there is a visible decrease in water flow from the power filter.

### **Q: Why are my fish hiding behind the power filter?**

A: Fish typically like to find places to hide and rest periodically and sometimes will hide behind the filter. Power filters hang on the fish tank and are designed to draw water into the filter to purify the water before returning it back to the aquarium. We recommend placing tall plastic plants around the filter and adding an ornament such as a cave to give your pets a place to rest and hide if needed.

### **Q: How do I get rid of the cloudiness or white build-up on the tank?**

#### **A. Vinegar and Water Solution – 1 Part Water to 1 Part White Vinegar Ratio**

White Vinegar and water is a quick and efficient solution to remove cloudiness caused by hard water build up. It can also be used to clean the filter, plastic plants, decorations, and heater.

Preparation for Cleaning Tank.

1. You will need to move your fish to another container, preferably a 5-gallon bucket that has never been used with soap or detergents.
2. Unplug your filter, light, and heater (if used). Remove existing water from the fish tank and fill the other container with enough water to where your fish will be comfortable while you are cleaning the fish tank.
3. Net your fish out of the fish tank and place them in the other container. Be sure to use an air bubbler or power filter to keep sufficient water movement.
4. Using the gravel vacuum, siphon out all of the water from the tank, emptying it completely.
5. Remove  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the gravel and place in a different container or bucket that has never been used with soap or detergents. After transferring the gravel, place the



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container to the side for now, this gravel will be used to seed your tank with beneficial bacteria when setting up the fish tank again.

6. You can leave the remaining gravel in the fish tank the remaining half of the aquarium gravel and plastic plants while you are performing the cleaning process.
7. Fill a spray bottle with  $\frac{1}{2}$  white vinegar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  water and shake. Take the spray bottle and spray the inside of the aquarium and decorations. Allow the solution to remain for 30 minutes.
8. Refill the fish tank with new water and add a tap water conditioner to remove chlorine and other chemicals.
9. Next, completely siphon the water out again with the gravel vacuum.
10. Place the gravel back into the tank that you had removed earlier, spreading evenly across the bottom of the tank.
11. Refill the fish tank with new water, leaving the water level approximately 3 inches from the top of the tank. Add a tap water conditioner to remove chlorine and other chemicals that can be harmful to your fish.
12. From the other container holding your fish, fill a small plastic bag with water and gently net your fish, placing them in the plastic bag. You may need multiple plastic bags depending on the number of fish you have.
13. Acclimate your fish for 10 minutes, using the same procedure you followed initially when adding them.
14. Next top off your fish tank with the remaining water from the other container that held your fish during cleaning.
15. The fish tank is now ready for use.
16. Place filter and heater (if used) back on tank and turn on. If adding heater, wait 15 minutes before plugging in so it can acclimate to water temperature.
17. Release fish, pouring bag with water gently into tank.

## **Q: How do I remove tough algae on my fish tank?**

### **A: Bleach Solution – 9 Part Water to 1 Part Bleach Ratio.**

Preparation for Cleaning Tank.

1. To remove tough, difficult algae you can use bleach and water to give a dirty tank a good cleaning. Only use regular household bleach, do not use a bleach mixed with other detergents. The recommended solution is usually nine parts water to one part bleach.
2. You will need to move your fish to another container, preferably a 5-gallon bucket that has never been used with soap or detergents.
3. Unplug your filter, light, and heater (if used). Take existing water from the fish tank and fill the other container with enough water where your fish will be comfortable while you are cleaning the fish tank.
4. Net your fish out of the fish tank and place them in the other container. Be sure to use an air bubbler or power filter to keep sufficient water movement.
5. Using the gravel vacuum, siphon out all of the water from the tank, emptying it completely.



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6. Remove ½ of the gravel and place in a different container or bucket that has never been used with soap or detergents. After transferring the gravel, place the container to the side for now, this gravel will be used to seed your tank with beneficial bacteria when setting up the fish tank again.
7. You can leave the remaining gravel in the fish tank the remaining half of the aquarium gravel and plastic plants while you are performing the cleaning process.
8. In a spray bottle, mix a solution of 9 parts water to 1 part bleach, a 9-1 water/bleach ratio. Be careful not to splash bleach onto surrounding areas, as bleach can be very corrosive.
9. Spray water/bleach solution on areas with algae and grime accumulation. Allow the solution to remain on these spots for 2 hours.
10. Completely fill tank with new tap water.
11. Again using the gravel vacuum, siphon the water out entirely, pressing the vacuum into the gravel repeatedly.
12. Add the gravel back to the tank you had placed in a container earlier, spreading evenly across the bottom of the tank.
13. Refill the fish tank with tap water, leaving the water level 3 inches from the top of the tank; use a tap water conditioner to remove chemicals that can be harmful to your fish. Be sure the water temperature is as close to what you usually keep your fish.
14. From the other container holding your fish, fill a small plastic bag with the same water and gently net your fish, placing them in the plastic bag. You may need multiple plastic bags depending on the number of fish you have.
15. Place filter and heater back on tank and plug into electrical outlet. If adding heater, wait 15 minutes before plugging in so it can acclimate to tank's water temperature.
16. Float the plastic bag with water and fish on tank's surface for 10 minutes, following the same procedure when you first introduced them.
17. Release fish, pouring bag with water gently into tank.

### **It is About Successful Fishkeeping**

People of all ages enjoy looking at aquariums, watching beautiful fish glide gracefully through the water. Aside from the belief that an aquarium is attractive, many also feel that owning an aquarium can be relaxing, rewarding and a great conversation piece all at the same time.

