



## Starting a New Tank

### Benefits of your new fish tank

- 🐟 Creates a sense of harmony and relaxation resulting in lower stress levels
- 🐟 Brings families and couples together through a common experience
- 🐟 Can help improve clarity of thought
- 🐟 Inspires a calmness similar to a meditation
- 🐟 Linked to improvements in concentration in both children and adults
- 🐟 Can improve a child's level of confidence and self esteem through a sense of responsibility and accomplishment
- 🐟 Teaches children about nature, science and the environment
- 🐟 Is an easy pet to own which creates a lot of joy and fun



### Your aquarium

- 🐟 When choosing your aquarium, you must make sure it is the right size for the type of fish you want. If you would love a couple of large Angels and Clown Loaches, then a 30litre tank would not be appropriate.
- 🐟 For easy aquarium maintenance invest in a filter that is suitable to your tank's capacity. Don't just look for power; a good filter has plenty of filter material. We highly recommend the AquaClear range of hang filters or the Sera canister filters. A sump is suitable for larger tanks.
- 🐟 We recommend 1 inch of fish (2.5cm) measured from mouth to tailfin per 5 litres of water.
- 🐟 Ensure you have a stand or cabinet that can take the weight 1 litre of water = 1kg and ensure that the surface is sealed so that water cannot damage.
- 🐟 Surface area is important. The more surface area, the more oxygen exchange which results in easier fishkeeping. Long thin tanks often have high death rates.
- 🐟 Choose adequate lighting. It will help you view your fish and add to the sustainability of your plants.
- 🐟 Position in an area of the house that you can enjoy it the most. If you place it in an area such as a stairwell or hallway, not only will the fish stress from the constant passing activity but you will be unable to sit and enjoy your aquarium. Avoid placing the tank near windows, heating and cooling units. Too much sun or fluctuating temperatures can cause problems.







### Setting Up

**Important: Tap water is not good for fish, you must prepare it! This applies to new tanks or old tanks that have new water in them.**

- 🐟 Place a piece of foam where you are going to put the tank. This will balance the tank and prevent cracking. It is not necessary for small tanks or all-in-one units.
- 🐟 Put the tank on the foam.
- 🐟 Fill the tank with water.
- 🐟 **Prepare your water** with a good quality water conditioner that removes chlorine and chloramines, heavy metals and replaces the fish's slime coat (their protective coating that helps protect them from disease and infection). We like Seachem's Prime, Sera's Aqutan. For smaller tanks, that can produce toxic spikes overnight, use Aquasonic's Chloromon. Standing the water for a couple of days, boiling the water, using filtered water or using tank water will not counteract all the problems that can occur, make sure you condition all water.
- 🐟 **Add a biological builder** to promote the growth of bacteria in your tank. This will help speed up the toxic chemical cycle that all new tanks experience as bacteria develops. A cycle usually takes around a month but with the use of a good bacteria you can bring this down to 7 days. It is important to remember that biological builders will not prevent a cycle and to be patient before adding fish.
- 🐟 **Rinse your gravel** thoroughly and place it gently on the bottom of the tank.

-  **Add your heater.** The aim of using a heater is to keep the aquarium at a consistent temperature. Just like us, fish get sick if the temperature moves to opposite extremes. Even goldfish benefit from a consistent temp. Set the heater to the temperature you want, 18 degrees for goldfish, 23 degrees for marine and 27 degrees for freshwater tropical. The heater will only come on when the temperature drops lower than where you have set it; this is indicated by a light. Place the heater in the tank (use the suction cups). Leave the heater for 10 minutes before plugging in. Heaters are fragile, do not bump or knock them, don't leave them on when the water level is low, don't take out of the tank whilst hot. Don't leave on the floor or anywhere it can become damaged.
-  **Add your thermometer.** The ambient temperature will effect the tank, check the reading on your thermometer and adjust if needed.
-  **The importance of a Filter.** If you want a clean tank with healthy fish who will live a long time, a filter is an absolute requirement. At the very minimum, please supply the water with a source of oxygen produced by breaking the water surface area. Without filtration, the life expectancy of the fish is dramatically reduced. Goldfish can live up to 25 years; in a tank without filtration they are lucky to survive 3 months. Make sure you set up the filter as per the recommendations. Ensure you rinse your filter material before you put it into the tank.
-  **Installing your light.** A light is an excellent addition to any tank. You can use a single or double reflector depending on your needs. Doubles can hold a blue light (for a subtle evening effect) or a pink light which can help your plants to prosper. Just pop your light on top of the tank and plug it in. Don't run it for more than 12 hours and make your life easy by putting it on a timer which cost around \$5.00. Have your light come on 12 hours before you go to bed to maximise your viewing time. Change your tubes every 6 to 12 months as they colour shift and can cause algae growth.
-  **Adding plants to your tank.** You can add plants at any time. Fresh plants help maintain your water quality by adding oxygen and consuming waste. Fish eat plants, so you are contributing to their health by providing a diverse range of nutrients. You can put as many plants in a tank as you wish to create a fantastic visual effect. Plant fertilisation and maintaining your carbonate hardness (as our staff) can help keep plants alive longer. This is a good time to add any décor that appeals to you. A background is also an excellent idea.
-  **Adding fish to the tank.** YOU MUST TEST pH, nitrite, nitrate and ammonia before adding fish. If you have used a biological builder, as recommended, you should be able to add fish within 24 to 48 hours but your tank may still cycle so test your water again within a week. Bring a cup of water to us for testing. The main concerns are high Ammonia and Nitrites of which you want zero amounts in your before adding fish. Your pH needs to be 7.0 to 7.5 for goldfish or a community tank.
-  **Testing your water for optimum conditions.** Sera is our preferred brand due to the level of accuracy and ease of use. Test both your pH and Ammonia after every water change for the first 3 months of your tank. After 3 months your tank should be stable (as long as you follow our maintenance suggestions) and you can choose to test pH only.
 

**Always test with an accurate pH tester.** If your pH drops to 6.5 it can then rapidly drop much lower (often overnight) and kill your fish. Using pH up and down powder on a regular basis can be problematic. It is much safer to use a liquid or buffer. Only adjust by 1 point each day. Continuous pH problems can indicate that your KH is too low. Talk to our staff who can provide great advice about balancing your KH. **How many fish?** As mentioned, we recommend 1 inch (2.5cm) of fish per 5 litres of water (cold or freshwater) and 1 inch (2.5cm) of fish per 10 litres for a marine tank.

-  Do not feed your fish the first night you take them home.
-  Continue to add your biological builder for 10 days then only after every water change
-  Avoid overfeeding – as much as they can eat in 30 seconds, once a day – keep a plant in the tank so that they can munch on it
-  Stock your aquarium slowly – over a 3 month period – this will give the tank time to balance
-  If your tank is spiking, use Sera Toxivec as your water conditioner for a couple of weeks
-  Cleaning and Maintaining Your Tank - See our Maintenance Guide.