



Everything Pets
1506 Altamont Ave
Rotterdam, NY 12303
518-355-2488
EverythingPetsandSupplies.com

Aquarium Maintenance Overview

As with any living thing that people keep as a pet, there is a certain amount of maintenance involved with an aquarium. The amount of time required is really minimal, but it is important that you properly maintain your tank. The problem is that fish are fairly tough customers, and they can put up with a lack of maintenance in their glass home for a pretty long time – but if you don't do maintenance, sooner or later things will go wrong.

The “chores” for keeping a fish tank are:

- **Water Changes** – this is the single most important maintenance task to be done. Each week you need to remove about 25% of the water from the tank and replace it with new water, at roughly the same temperature as the tank water, and treated to remove chlorine and chloramines. For this purpose you can purchase a gravel cleaner/siphon. This will allow you to drain water from the tank with the head of the gravel cleaner, stirring up the top layer of the gravel and removing decaying matter. **DOING WATER CHANGES IS REALLY IMPORTANT.** If you don't do regular water changes the fish in the tank will get by, but not be happy. However, any new fish you add to a tank that has not had regular water changes done on it will be stressed, and may die.
- **Filter Cleaning** – the filter(s) on the tank need(s) to be cleaned periodically – we say periodically because they don't necessarily need to be cleaned every week. With any filters that are on the outside of the tank you can tell that they need to be cleaned when the water flow slows down. Inside filters, either sponges, box filters, or power ones, should be cleaned on a regular schedule – probably every two weeks or so. **WHEN YOU CLEAN THE FILTER, MAKE SURE YOU KEEP ½ OF THE FILTER MEDIUM, ONLY RINSING IT A BIT.** The reason for this is that the filter medium – be it cartridges, floss, carbon, or whatever – is where many of the “good” bacteria that are the Nitrogen Cycle live. Cleaning a filter and/or disposing of medium reduces the bacteria population, and you want to make sure at least half of the bacteria are still alive and well in the filter. That way, when the cleaned filter is reassembled the bacteria just have to split once and they are back up to their normal complement. If you completely clean the filter, and/or throw away all of



Everything Pets
1506 Altamont Ave
Rotterdam, NY 12303
518-355-2488
EverythingPetsandSupplies.com

the media, the bacteria colony has to pretty much start over, and you can get problems with ammonia and nitrite even in an established tank. The bottom line is that cleaning the filter(s) you want to get rid of most of the dirt etc., but you don't want everything to be sterile.

- **Water Changes** – we mention this again, because it is really important. If you don't do a weekly water change, please at least do one every other week. And if you haven't done a water change in a long time, don't do one massive one – the shock to the fish in the tank will be too much. Do a couple of 25% changes every other day or so.
- **Algae Control** – no matter what you do, your aquarium will have some algae growing in it. Algae are everywhere, and in fact they are part of a thriving aquarium community. Algae grow on all surfaces in the aquarium, and when you do your water changes once a week it is a good idea to clean the inside of the front glass from algae. This can be done with any of the simple algae cleaners we have available. DO NOT use something from your kitchen – whatever you use must not have ever had soap on it. We recommend that you should only clean the front glass of the tank, leaving the sides and back to grow algae. This is good for the fish, since it gives them something to pick on between feedings, and unless it bothers you in terms of viewing the tank, a good algae growth on the sides and back of the tank is beneficial.
- **Water Changes** – by the way, did we mention how important it is to do regular water changes – 25% each week.

Maintenance Record – it's a good idea, especially if you are just starting out in the hobby, to keep a record or log book of maintenance and water conditions. This will help you to remember to do the regular maintenance tasks, and noting the water conditions each time will come in handy if any problems develop in the tank.