

HOW TO KEEP FISH ALIVE AS AN AMATEUR AQUARIST

If you are a beginner aquarist, raising fish can be a daunting task, especially if you have failed before. Keeping your fish alive can be quite a simple task, however, if you have taken the meticulous steps to build the right environment for them before buying them. By preparing the tank with a little process called cycling, which basically sets up a tiny ecosystem right in your home, your fish have a better chance of living long and healthy lives.

Equipment and Supplies

Before starting the cycling procedure, you should ensure that the aquarium is set up with proper equipment to maximize the survival rates of your pets.

You are required as a responsible fish owner to acquire the following supplies:

An adequately sized fish tank (ten to twenty-five gallon aquariums are what most beginners use)

A submersible heater fit for the size of the tank

Fish food

Gravel substrate

Aquarium test kit

Aquarium dechlorinator

Aquarium power filter

Aquarium thermometer

Aquarium stand

Note: This guide is meant for hobbyists that want to rear freshwater fish. There are many options for most of the items listed above; it is not necessary to empty your wallet for your aquatic friends. It is safe to assume that the cheapest selections are just as effective as the more expensive varieties if you are on a budget. Moreover, if you decide to raise fish that are not meant to be in a tropical setting, the heater is most likely not needed at all.

Setting up the Tank

Before you can begin cycling the water, you need to make sure the necessities and substrate are installed in the aquarium so you won't have to get your hands wet later on.

1. Place the aquarium stand at an area that wouldn't get in the way of any person walking by.
2. Carefully position the actual aquarium on top of the stand so that every corner of the tank is supported by the furniture below.
3. Remove areas encompassed by small linear indentations on top of the aquarium hood.
Lay the power filter on top of the hollow spot that fits your filter's size.
4. Take the thermometer and stick it onto the aquarium glass.

Note: The aquarium heater that you purchased has its internal temperature sensors, but it is still important to double-check how warm the water is with this secondary device.

5. Remove the aquarium heater from its packaging. Find the several suction cups included with the heater and attach them to it. Use suction to fasten the heater to the aquarium glass.

6. Line the tank with gravel. Before placing the gravel, it is always a good idea to give it a quick rinse to separate debris from the material. Drain the substrate as best as you can and plant it on the bottom of the aquarium.

Cycling the Tank

Now that the equipment is properly mounted in the fish tank, you can start the actual processing of cycling!

1. Fill a bucket with water and measure out how much dechlorinator you need to remove the chlorine from the container. Afterwards, gently pour the water into the aquarium and make sure to avoid stirring up the substrate as much as possible.

Note: Repeat step 1 until the aquarium is filled to the brim with dechlorinated and fresh water.

2. Now is the time to plug in the filter. You should hear a gurgle as water gets pulled up and out of the opening on top. It should quiet down after a few seconds.
3. Sprinkle some fish food into your aquarium and wait a week.
4. Test for nitrites and nitrates with your test kit. Thoroughly observe the amounts of these two byproducts of beneficial bacteria growing in your fish tank. Keep checking nitrite and nitrate levels every day until they are both virtually at zero. This process should take up to 6-8 weeks.
5. It is time to start bringing in new fish to the aquarium! Buying huge amounts of fish and introducing them into the tank at once is never a good idea; it might overload the system that you have been tenuously nurturing for the past few weeks. Instead, buy one to three

at a time and make sure to do water changes once a week to ensure proper balance in your aquatic ecosystem.