

Lighting

Lighting is a whole separate topic but the basics are important.

Good bright lighting assists us to see and enjoy our fish. The downside is that too much light assists algae to grow on your tank glass.

LED lighting is becoming very popular due to reduced electricity costs and lighter and more compact fittings. A range of clip-on and full sized aquarium LED lights are available for comparable costs to traditional fluorescent lights.



Lights for plants

Fluval Aqualife and Plant LED lights are an excellent choice for the serious planted tank enthusiast. The Fluval LED light fixtures carry LED's which cover the full spectrum of light required by most aquarium plants to grow successfully. Each Fluval LED light fixture also has a blue moonlight function. Ask the staff at Absolutely Fish and Pets for a demonstration of these lights. © W Reid 2012



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Water parameters

Keeping stable water conditions will help you to keep a healthy aquarium...

- Ammonia: 0 parts per million
- Nitrites: 0 parts per million
- Nitrates: < 20 parts per million

pH

- African Cichlids 7.5 - 8.5
- American Cichlids 6.0 - 7.5
- Angel fish 6.0 - 7.0
- Catfish 6.0 - 7.0
- Tetras 4.0 - 7.0
- Discus 6.0 - 6.5
- Goldfish 7.0 - 8.0
- Guppies 7.0 - 8.5
- Siamese Fighting Fish 6.0 - 7.5

Daily schedule

- Feed fish and check fish health and appearance.

Weekly schedule

- Gravel vac & do 15 - 20% water change
- rinse sponges & filter media in old tank water
- Clean tank glass

Monthly schedule

- Change carbon, zeolite, and other consumable filter media
- clean out canister filters

Yearly schedule

- Check heaters & other electrical items and have them tested if necessary.

Fresh Water Aquarium Care



Basic things to know about your freshwater aquarium to help you keep happy fish!



Water Quality

Tap water can contain chlorines and chloramines. These chemicals assist in sterilising water for human consumption, however they are lethal to fish. Ensure that all tap water used in your aquarium has had chlorines and chloramines removed. At Absolutely Fish and Pets we recommend Aqua One's Ammonia and Chlorine remover.



Filters and Filtration

Fish wastes and uneaten foods break down in your tank to produce ammonia. Your filter media hosts a range of bacteria that breaks down ammonia and nitrites so that they are less harmful to your fish.



If you are not sure of the best filter for your tank - please talk to staff at Absolutely Fish and Pets. As a general rule - the filter with the most filter media (sponges, ceramic rings, etc) will be better than those with less filter media.

DO NOT wash your filter sponges and other media with tap water - the chlorine in tap water will kill the bacteria cultures and cause your tank to cycle again. This can result in ammonia spikes and death to fish has occurred. Always wash your filter media with water taken out of your fish tank.

Water to suit your fish

Just as we humans like living in different climates - our fish come from different water conditions and temperatures.

Some fish prefer soft acidic waters (eg: Discus), others prefer harder alkaline waters (eg: African cichlids) while others can live comfortably without a heater (eg: Goldfish).

Absolutely Fish and Pets staff can help you with choosing fish for particular water conditions.



Water Temperature

Most tropical fish require water temperatures at around 26°C. Large temperature swings between day and night time can bring on some fish illnesses.

A thermostatically controlled heater will turn on only when the water gets too cool and will then stay off when the water is at the right temperature. Even small tanks can be heated.

Water Testing

Please ensure you test the water in your aquarium to ensure pH and other parameters are suitable / safe for your fish. Absolutely Fish and Pets has test kits available or we can test your aquarium water for you.



Maintenance

There are many choices available today for freshwater aquaria beginners and enthusiasts.

Smaller tanks come in kits which include lights and filters with the tanks. Completely customisable options exist as well - just ask the staff at Absolutely Fish and Pets.

Cleaning

Algae can accumulate on tank glass. Fish waste and uneaten foods can build up in the gravel at the bottom of your tank.

While some fish are great at cleaning algae off glass and eating some foods your other fish miss - no fish will clean your tank for you.

Using a gravel vac is the easiest way to remove wastes from the gravel in your tank - this also helps reduce the production of ammonia and cut down on the chance of fish becoming ill.



Water Changes

To remove chemical wastes in your tank you need to complete a water change each week.

A water change is simply taking about 20% of the water out of your tank and replacing it with fresh dechlorinated water. This dilutes the build-up of nitrates in your aquarium.

Using a gravel vac siphons water while you clean the bottom of your tank.