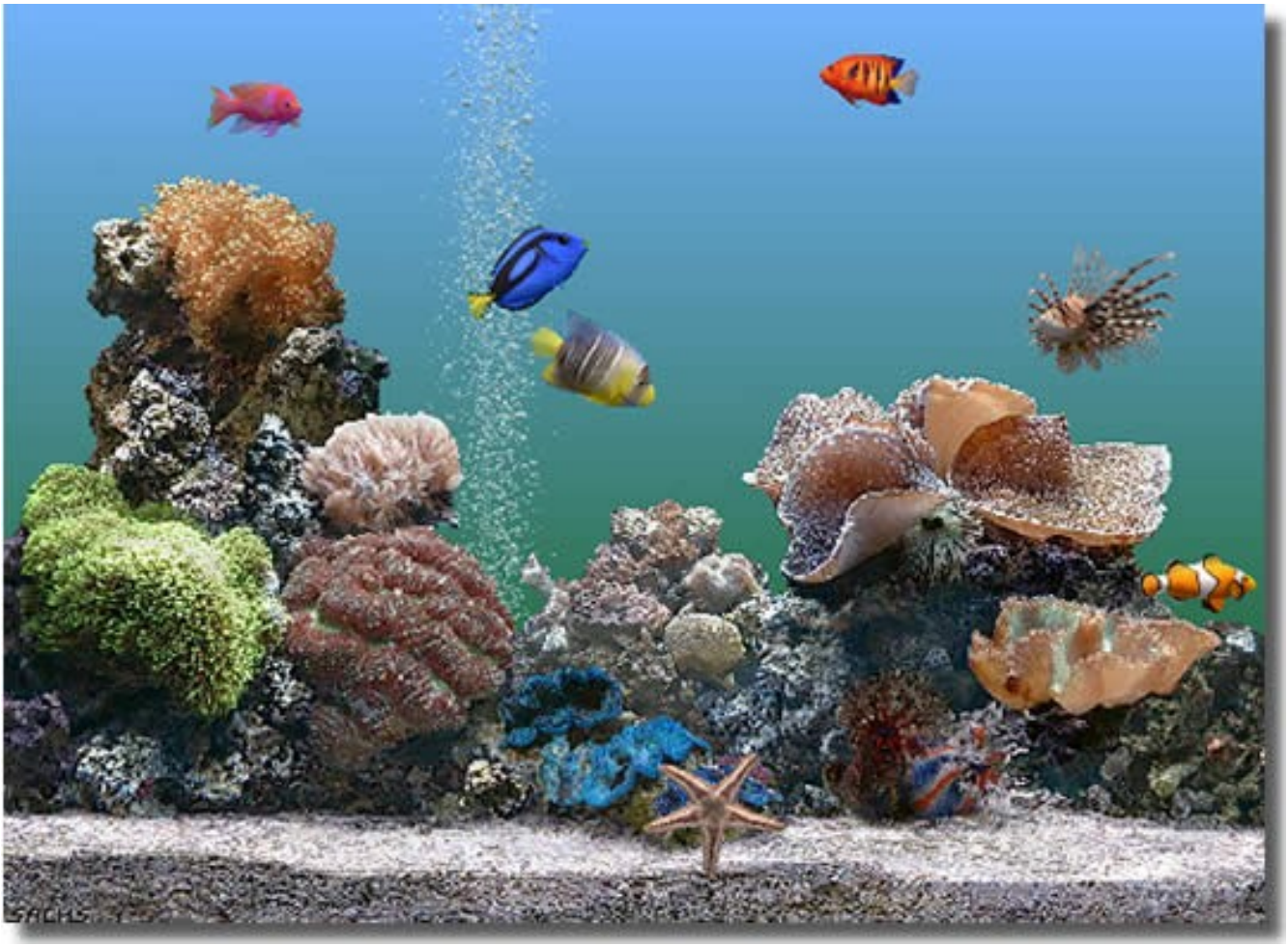

# A GUIDE TO YOUR OWN AQUARIUM

**********

Goto-Reports.Com


**********

**MASTER RESELL AND GIVEAWAY RIGHTS**

Congratulations, you now have full master resell and giveaway rights to this book! The only condition is that the content must NOT be changed in any way.

Feel free to resell, give away, or add as a bonus to an existing

package. In fact, you can do anything you like with this ebook!

Happy reselling:)

## DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES

The information presented herein represents the views of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update their opinions based on the new conditions.

This report is for informational purposes only and the author does not accept any responsibilities for any liabilities resulting from the use of this information.

While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided here, the author and his resellers and affiliates cannot assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional.

Proudly Published In Association With

Goto Reports.com

If you would like to have more of these FREE Reports,
feel free to visit our Report site

**All about Care for an Acrylic Aquarium Kit**

The practice of keeping aquariums came about in the late 1800's. They were fairly crude. Usually these ancient aquariums only had one side that was made of glass, with the other three sides being made of metal or wood. Most aquariums consisted of fish that were native to the region of its owner simply because of availability. Also most old school fish tanks contained only fresh water fish. The reason being that salt water would corrode the metal frame that held the aquarium together.

Aquariums drastically changed in the 1960's with the invention of silicone adhesive. Metal frames became obsolete and more people started to keep salt water fish and invertebrates. More recently glass tanks have become less frequently used due to the flexibility of acrylic. Literally flexibility! Acrylic aquariums are far more for forgiving than there glass counterparts. If a heavy object strikes a glass tank, it will almost certainly break. The flexibility of an acrylic tank will prevent this catastrophe from happening. In addition, acrylic offers more flexibility in design than glass. Acrylic aquariums have been made into everything from coffee tables to gum ball machines.

That being said, there is a short downfall to owning an acrylic aquarium. They do scratch more easily than glass. When cleaning your aquarium, be careful not to use paper towels, and harsh or abrasive chemicals, as they can scratch the acrylic surface of the aquarium. Always use a cleaner specifically labeled safe for acrylic. Use plastic or rubber scrubbers, rather than metal to clean the sides of an acrylic tank. Be careful not to accidentally pick up a piece of substrate or gravel while cleaning the inside of the tank. However, if you do happen to scratch an acrylic aquarium, all is not lost. The tank can be repaired, unlike glass. There are acrylic repair kits available at specialty pet stores, your local hardware store and of course online.

When purchasing an acrylic aquarium kit, there will be many different options to choose from, at many different price points. Aquarium kits can be **purchased** at places such as specialty aquatic pet stores, from huge retail chains, or again online. A fish lover can choose from small cylinder shaped tanks that can double as a coffee table lamp to wall huge wall sized aquariums. While, there are some basic things that will be included in most kits, such as, a filter, some substrate or coral and sometimes lighting, the kits themselves can vary greatly. It really doesn't matter where you buy your starter kit, but keep in mind that it is extremely important to buy your fish from a reputable dealer. Don't buy fish that are hovering near the surface, or that are located in a tank with other dead fish. Fish diseases are extremely communicable. Be weary of a fish dealer that refuses to catch a specific fish out of the tank for you. After all this is going to be your fish and you have a right to choose.

**Tips on Aquarium Care and Cleaning**

The proper care and cleaning of your aquarium is the most important, yet most overlooked aspect of owning an aquarium. By avoiding the care and maintenance of a fish tank, not only will it lose the visual appeal, but your fish will be unhealthy and unhappy. By following a daily, weekly and monthly care program, you will maintain a beautiful, clean and healthy aquarium.

Daily Cleaning Routine
To maintain a clean aquarium, there are some daily tasks that must be done. First and foremost, it's

important to check the temperature of the tank and make sure it stays consistent. For **tropical** freshwater fish, the temperature should average at around 77 degrees. Too much heat in your aquarium will promote the growth of algae. Always check for sick or dead fish daily. If you have a sick fish, it should be removed from the tank immediately or it may harm the other inhabitants of the aquarium. Lastly, check that the pump and filter are functioning properly.

Weekly Cleaning Routine
Weekly maintenance is necessary to keep the tank healthy. On a weekly basis, any waste should be removed from the surface of the gravel at the bottom of the tank. Using a siphon tube will accomplish this. If water is removed during this process, be sure to replace it and keep the water in the tank at the same level. Add chemicals and chlorine weekly so the balance within the tank remains the same. At this time, it is best to test the water for the ammonia and nitrate levels. Don't overlook testing the pH of the water as well. If you are raising live plants, tend to them each week. Trim them back if they are getting too big, and remove any dead or sick leaves. Re-anchor and new sprouts into your gravel. Also, check your tank for snails. You can remove snails by floating a piece of lettuce leaf in the tank. The snails will be attracted to the lettuce, and you can remove them using a net.

Monthly Cleaning Routine
Finally, some monthly steps will assure that your aquarium stays clean and healthy. A partial water change should be performed each month. Using a siphon hose, remove 20 to 25 percent of the water from the tank. Always make sure that your chemical balance is correct. High levels of chlorine and ammonia will cause death. Cleaning the filter should be a monthly task as well as changing the filter cartridge. Be sure not to clean the filter too thoroughly as it contains helpful bacteria that aids in stabilizing the chemical balance in the tank. During the monthly cleaning, scrape and remove all algae from the surface of the tank. If you find you are having a significant amount of algae, consider adding an algae eater to the tank. Should you already have one, be sure to keep an eye on the temperature of the tank and you may also want to limit the time in which a light is used. Any increased heat source will speed up the production of algae inside the aquarium. If your tank is located in direct sunlight and you are having an algae problem, it is best to relocate the tank.
By following a maintenance schedule, you will be sure to keep a clean, clear and healthy tank. Aquarium care is essential and must be performed regularly to ensure the long and happy life of your fish. Provide yourself with an aquarium to be proud of by keeping up with the care and cleaning.

**Aquarium Care for Freshwater Fish**

Freshwater fish are perhaps the easiest fish to care for in comparison to saltwater species because they are usually hardier fish. A basic aquarium set up will be required. You will need a tank, some rocks or substrate to line bottom of the tank. You will also need a filter, and some lighting. When choosing fish, it is imperative to make sure the fish are compatible. Not only do they need to be compatible for water temperature and P.H., but they also should have similar food requirements. Try to keep the fish relatively the same size. It has been said that if a fish is small enough to fit in another fishes mouth, that is usually where it ends up. So don't be discouraged if this happens. Even fish that have been housed together for several months have been known to disappear on occasion.

Freshwater fish should be fed twice daily. Feed only a small amount that can be consumed within the first two to five minutes. Over feeding is a common mistake among novice fish keepers. Any excess

food should be lifted with a net if possible, as it will become debris and quickly dirty the tank. Water should be kept regulated and tested weekly. Any discrepancies in P.H. and water temperature should be corrected immediacy in order to minimize stress caused to the fish.
Stress is significant because it causes illness in fish. It is important to monitor the activity and overall well being of the fish in an aquarium. The signs of stress will be fairly obvious. Slow moving or lethargic looking fish will require a stress coat that can be **purchased** at a local pet store. Try to avoid overcrowding the tank. This should help to reduce the amount of stress caused to the fish.

Change about a third of the water in the aquarium at a time, because this type of change will cause the least amount of disturbance to the fish and other inhabitants. This will need to be done every two to three weeks. Use either a bucket or a siphon to remove the water from the tank. Try to remove any loose or floating debris at this time. When adding the new water to the aquarium, be sure that it is within approximately two degrees of the tank water. The sides of the aquarium should be scrubbed regularly to remove an algae build up. Again be careful not to disturb the fish. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling the aquarium. Lastly, check the manufacturer's recommendation on filters and change them accordingly. Filters collect any fish waste or left over food. They can't function properly unless they are clean.

Introduce hardy fish to a new tank. These fish can withstand higher nitrite levels that are present in a new aquarium. Choose fish such as danios, barbs, gouramis, and live bearers. Don't add more than three to four small fish per week. Acclimation times vary per species, so check with your retailer before adding any other new fish.

**Caring for a Goldfish Aquarium**

Keeping Goldfish can be a fun and rewarding hobby. As with any new hobby, especially one that involves living creatures, always consider the maintenance that will be involved. If you care for your aquarium properly, you will be sure to have happy and healthy Goldfish for many years. Goldfish have a life expectancy of five to ten years. If you do a good job maintaining their fish tank, you should have fun, beautiful fish for a long time. Make sure to feed them correctly and keep their water fresh and clear.

When starting any new aquarium, you should get everything in place before buying the fish. If you are going to put gravel on the bottom, you may want to put only a thin layer. This will make it easier to keep clean, as Goldfish tend to be messy. Make sure that you rinse the gravel thoroughly before placing it in the bottom of the tank. If you have some decorations, you should add them now. Make sure that you rinse them well before putting them into the tank. Also be sure that the goldfish have plenty of room to swim, as they as active fish. Give them a place or two to hide, and that should do nicely.

Now that you have everything in place, you can add in the water. You will need to use a dechlorinator, as the chlorine in tap water is poisonous to fish. Once the fish tank is filled up, you can turn on the filter. Change it as often as recommended to keep your fish healthy. Goldfish live at room temperature, so you will not need a heater. They are quite comfortable in temperatures from 68 to 80 degrees. However, they should not be exposed to rapid temperature changes. You might want to let the filter run in the new goldfish tank for a day or so to filter out any chemicals or dyes that might have been left on the gravel and decorations that you just added. Waiting to buy new fish can be one of the hardest things about fish keeping!

You need to add fish gradually. Fish excrete ammonia. If you add too many fish at once to a new fish tank, the water will not be seasoned enough to dissipate it. As the water in your Goldfish tank ages, it builds up beneficial bacteria that turn harmful chemicals excreted by the fish into harmless ones. However, this will take some time. Start out with only one fish. The nitrogen cycle will not begin until you add the fish, so running an empty tank for several days will not help. Since your fish tank is brand new, you might want to consider making partial water changes of about 25 per cent of the total water volume every few days for the first week or so.

You can find Goldfish food at almost any pet shop. Make sure to purchase some when you buy your first fish. Feed only a small amount. Especially at first. Any uneaten food will sink to the bottom and rot. Keep this to a minimum. Watch your fish the first few times that you feed them. Feed only as much as they will eat in two to three minutes twice a day, or as recommended on the Goldfish food label. Be especially careful not to overfeed when the Goldfish tank is new. This will cause excess build up of toxic chemicals and can kill your fish quickly.

As the water in your fish tank cycles through the nitrogen cycle, you may notice that is becomes very cloudy. This is a normal process and should clear up in a few days. Do not add any new fish until the water is crystal clear again. Clear water will signify that the nitrogen cycle is working and that the toxic chemicals are being converted to good ones.
Remember that Goldfish will grow large and they need a big space. Don't overcrowd the tank if you want to keep healthy fish. If you follow this little guideline, you will be sure to have a healthy goldfish aquarium.

**Aquarium Care Guide- New Tanks**

When starting a new aquarium it is important to understand the nitrogen cycle. Many new aquarium owners jump into the hobby of fish keeping too quickly. Before purchasing fish, the aquarium must be cycled. This could take anywhere from twenty four hours to four weeks. In an established aquarium there are certain bacteria that help the breakdown of ammonia to nitrates, but they are not present in a new tank because they are generated from existing fish. If there are no existing fish, then there are no good bacteria.

The basic principle of the nitrogen cycle is this. Fish eat food and generate waste. That waste along with excess food and plant debris become ammonia in the aquarium. Ammonia is toxic to fish and needs to be broken down. That's why the nitrifying bacteria is important. This bacteria, turns the ammonia into nitrites which are more tolerable to fish than ammonia. Next, different nitrifying bacteria will turn the nitrites into nitrates, which are even less toxic to the fish and other aquarium life. The nitrates are collected and minimized by filters; however they will eventually accumulate in the tank. Regular water changes are required to remove the nitrates from the water.

It is important to set up and run an aquarium before any fish are introduced into the environment. Wash the tank and any substrate and decorations thoroughly with water. Don't use any soap. Fill the tank with de-chlorinated water and attach filters and lighting. Allow the tank to cycle until the water is no longer cloudy and sufficient P.H and water temperatures have been established.

Now it is time to purchase the fish! Buy hardy fish such as danios, barb, gouramis, and live bearers. They should be able to withstand the high nitrite levels and ammonia in the new aquarium. Only introduce about four fish at a time. Float the fish in the bag in the aquarium for about fifteen minutes before adding them to the tank. This will help the fish become acclimated to the water temperature in their new home. When adding the fish, be careful not to allow the water from the bag into the aquarium. It may be contaminated, or will at the very least, throw off the temperature and P.H. Allow the fish about two hours to become acclimated before feeding.

Only feed an amount that can be consumed in the first two to five minutes. Overfeeding is a common problem in an aquarium. It is important not to overfeed, because excess food will become debris adding to the ammonia levels. This is especially important in new aquariums that lack nitrifying bacteria. Test the water P.H. every day within the first month. Watch the tank for cloudiness; if the aquarium becomes cloudy, it may be necessary to add a clarifier. Monitor the fish for signs of stress or illness. A healthy fish will be swimming regularly. Lethargic fish will usually hover near the surface of the aquarium. After about a week change approximately ten percent of the water and begin regular maintenance.

**Different Types of Saltwater Aquariums**

Saltwater aquariums should generally contain fewer fish than fresh water tanks, because the species tend to grow bigger in size. Marine species may be bred in a captive environment, or caught in the wild. Captive bred species are easier to care for and usually hardier than caught species. It generates a great amount of stress for a fish to be captured in the wild and then introduced into an aquarium environment. It is often difficult for them to figure out how to eat. Whenever possible, purchase your fish from a retailer that deals only with breeders or from the breeders themselves. There are five different types of saltwater aquariums.

The first type of saltwater aquarium is the fish only aquarium. This is probably the easiest to care for of the five types, simply because you are only dealing with one type of species. Amongst the saltwater fish there are both tropical and coldwater types. They can't be kept together for obvious reasons. The water temperatures vary greatly. Tropical fish are usually brighter in color, and therefore more appealing to aquarium lovers than the fish available in the cold water variety. Most people are somewhat familiar with a few tropical fish such as the Clownfish or the Angel fish. However, few people have heard of such cold water varieties as, the Shanny or the Tompot Blenny.

The second type of saltwater aquarium is the invertebrate only aquarium. These types of aquariums usually consist of shrimp, prawn, hermit crabs and perhaps even starfish or sea cucumbers. The third type is the fish and invertebrate saltwater aquarium. These are more difficult to maintain than either of the two categories separately. Certain invertebrates feed on certain fish, and the reverse is also true. Therefore, it is important to research the species carefully to ensure that you do not put predator and prey together in the same aquarium. Diseases can also spread more rapidly and are more difficult to prevent and cure in aquariums containing both invertebrates and fish species.

The next type of saltwater aquarium is the coral reef aquarium. Reef aquariums can be tricky to maintain and must be thoroughly researched before attempted. The last category of saltwater aquariums is the specialty aquarium. An example of a specialty aquarium would be an aquarium full of sea

horses. Sea horses should not be kept with any other type of fish or marine life, because they are timid and slow eaters. Their food source could easily be taken away by other tank mates. Seahorses prefer to swim vertically rather than horizontally, and should be placed in a tall tank. An octopus and a shark or a ray are other examples of fish that require special needs and would fall into the category of specialty aquarium.

Regardless of which type of saltwater aquarium is chosen, research is highly recommended before purchasing any marine life. Make sure you are willing to make the commitment required to care for a saltwater aquarium.

**Aquarium Fish Care- All About Start Up**

Okay so you have decided that you want to own a fish tank. Great! All you need to do is go to the pet store and pick out a tank and the prettiest fish in the store, and you are ready to go right? Wrong! Starting up an aquarium is a process. It takes time and a lot of patience. If you are a beginner, it is recommended that you start out with some hardy freshwater fish, but don't buy the fish just yet. You need to set up the aquarium first. Most aquarium retailers will sell an aquarium in the form of a kit. This takes the guess work out of purchasing.

In order to get your tank ready, first rinse out the tank with clean tap water. Rinse the gravel and any substrate as well. If you are using an under gravel filter, place it in the bottom of the tank. Next cover the filter with approximately two to three inches of gravel. Fill the tank about a third of the way full with water that has been de-chlorinated. The next step is to add any plants or decorations to the tank. Check with your retailer on the specifics for adding live plants. Some live plants need to be anchored, while others can be left free floating. Next connect the air pump and filtration system, and fill the tank the rest of the way. Lastly put the lid on the tank and let it cycle for one to two days before adding any fish to the tank.

Watch the tank for cloudiness and check the temperature and P.H. of the water. If all is clear you may add a few hardy fish. It is important to choose fish that can withstand high levels of nitrites and ammonia, because these levels are always high in a new tank due to the nitrogen cycle. Debris in the tank from fish excretions help to generate the good bacteria that is needed in order for the fish to survive. Since there are currently no fish in the tank this will take some time. It usually takes about four to six weeks.

Once you have purchased your fish, let them float on the surface of the tank in the bag for about fifteen minutes. The purpose of this is to allow the fish to become acclimated to the water temperature in the aquarium. Carefully add the fish into the aquarium using a net and a bucket. Don't pour the water from the bag into the aquarium. The water from the bag could throw off your perfectly regulated water, as well as introduce new bacteria to the aquarium. Watch the fish carefully for signs of stress. Stress causes illness in fish. Monitor their activity levels. Inactive fish or fish hanging out near the surface of the aquarium indicates stress. There is a stress coat that can be used, if symptoms of stress do appear. Wait anywhere from a week to a month before introducing any new fish to the aquarium, allowing the existing fish to become acclimated to their new environment.

**Basic Aquarium Plant Care**

Most people who purchase an aquarium do so for it's visual appeal. People are known to spend more money on decorating their tanks than the fish and tank itself. It's a good idea when purchasing these decorative pieces that you consider buying pieces that are both gratifying to the eye, but also useful tools for the balance and maintenance of your tank.

Before resorting to plastic green pieces stuck into the gravel, consider using live plants. Aquatic plants are functional in many ways. Most importantly, the live plants will add oxygen to the water and will help to maintain the water chemistry. They also serve as a place where beneficial bacteria can colonize. This bacteria is essential to have and helps in breaking down waste products in the tank. Overall, the use of live plants aids keeping your aquarium clean and healthy while adding a perfect visual effect.

Once the decision to use live plants is made, you must familiarize yourself with how to grow and care for these plants. The key to growing healthy live plants is the balance between lighting and nutrients within the tank. It is best to use more lighting than what is included with standard hoods. The one bulb that comes with a hood is not enough to promote healthy plant growth. When adding extra lighting, be sure to compensate that with a nutrient supplement to stimulate plant growth and at the same time reduce the chance of algae build up. Algae eating fish will make a great addition. They will keep algae levels low and will not damage the live plants.

The decision to use live plants should be a primary one and steps need to be taken to prepare the tank for later use. It is suggested to add all your plants in the beginning and let them become established. By doing this, you will eliminate the chances algae utilizing the nutrients added and the extra lighting. Quick growing plants are recommended as well as some floating plants. Certain types of fish, such as a catfish, like to seek cover from direct light. The floating plants will provide this escape for the fish and will add a pleasing effect to the design and decoration of the aquarium.

Once your plants are established and growing well, add the fish of your choice and enjoy a beautiful tank. While keeping live plants in the tank, it is important to care for them as you would any other plant. Always remove decaying leaves as they tend to drain the nutrients out of the healthy parts of the plant. Dying roots will rot beneath the gravel. Be sure to remove any part of the plant that is dying or appears diseased. Many plants that are seeded into the gravel will reproduce. The new plant growth can be removed and planted in another part of the aquarium. If you are using a live plant that is primarily a stem plant, try to remove the lower leaves. These low leaves tend to not get the amount of light needed to remain healthy.

The use of live plants will definitely help in creating a masterpiece aquarium that is pleasing to the eye and is a happy and healthy environment for your fish. Always remember to clean your aquarium on a regular basis and inspect plants weekly for decay. Scheduled maintenance is the key to keeping a beautiful and healthy aquarium.

**How to Create and Care for a Coral Aquarium**

Many aquarium owners crave to someday own a saltwater tank displaying numerous kinds of coral. This may be achieved is fast easy steps if you use coral starter kits to grow your own coral. This is recommended over buying coral from a store. By growing your own, you ensure it is properly

acclimated to your tank. Setting up and caring for the coral aquarium, or reef aquarium is a task that requires a bit of knowledge before starting. There are some steps to take when setting up a new coral aquarium. The process may seem to take a long time, and because of this, many people opt to use fake coral instead. However, the time spent waiting will be well worth it when you are later able to display your own coral aquarium. If you follow some simple steps and have patience for about 12 weeks, you will be able to create and own your piece of underwater paradise.

To begin, the first thing to do is assemble your aquarium. Find a spot in the home that you wish to have it displayed. Follow through with the set up as you would a freshwater tank. When you are ready to add the water to the tank, follow these simple steps. First, pour the sand into the bottom of the tank. Add dechlorinated water to the tank. Next, add the salt and make sure it is mixed until the specific gravity measures 1.205. After the water and salt are added, arrange your live rock as desired and install the heater and the hood of the tank. After doing these things, you must then wait 4 weeks to move ahead.

After the four weeks has passed, you will then add your first living creatures to the tank. It is best to add fish later, and slowly as to make sure the salt balance in the tank is correct and remains that way. At this time, you can add a variety of snails or crabs if you wish to have them part of your tank. You will also need to install a protein skimmer. The tank should be functioning as if it were full of fish. Make sure the filters are working properly and the lighting is right. Remember not to leave the light on for more than 10 to 12 hours a day as it may promote algae growth. After adding some snails or crabs, wait another 2 weeks before proceeding.

Now at week 6, you will add your first pieces of coral. There are many types of coral used in saltwater coral aquariums. Some of the most common are Button Polyp, Yellow Polyp, Hairy Mushroom Coral and Bullseye Mushroom Coral. Make sure when adding your coral, it is attached to the live rock at the bottom of the tank. Wait another 2 weeks. Don't get frustrated... you're almost there! During the eighth week, you can add Aquacultured Coral such as Pumping Xenia, Starburst Polyps and Spaghetti Finger Leather Coral to name a few. Place these corals into the live rock as you did with the previous set of coral.

Now you have succeeded in creating your reef aquarium. During the course of the 10 to 12 week mark, you may begin adding your fish to your underwater world. It may seem a long drawn out process to get a coral aquarium up and running, but the time and hard work will pay off for years to come. Creating and caring for your coral aquarium will bring you much enjoyment and a wonderful sense of accomplishment for creating a spectacular coral aquarium.

**How to Care for Live Aquarium Plants**

Plants play an important role in aquarium life. They help to absorb nitrites that are toxic to the fish. In fact there are some plant only aquariums. There are many different varieties of aquatic plants. Tubers are a type of plant that needs to be anchored by the root to the bottom of the tank. They may be tied or simply buried underneath the substrate in the bottom of the aquarium. There are also floating plants. As their name suggests they simply float in the tank they do not need to be anchored and will not usually require fertilizer. The only regular care required is to make sure that water droplets are not regularly deposited on the leaves, as this will cause decay.

Water lettuce and Lily pads are examples of floating plants. Rooted plants, like tubers need to be anchored to the bottom of the tank. It is suggested that the roots be tied to pieces of rock or wood. These species usually grow to be fairly tall and will add length to an aquarium. When planting these, remember to allow plenty of room for growth. The roots will grow outwards and require additional space. Another type of aquatic plant is known as cuttings. These plants may be transplanted from other thriving plants, without have to root them. Cuttings should be planted individually. They will grow vertically and sprout shoots at the joints of the leaves. When these shoots grow to be a couple of inches, it is time to cut them and plant them individually.

Live plants may be kept in aquariums alone or with fish. The plants may even be used as a food source for some species of omnivorous fish. At the very least, they will provide shelter and a feeling of refuge for the fish. All plants require some form of light in order to thrive through photosynthesis. Check the specifics on the types of plants with your local retailer. Some plants will thrive on the waste put out by the fish in the aquarium, while others will require regular fertilization. Again check with your supplier for compatibility and feeding requirements. When purchasing plants, make sure that they are true aquatic plants. Live plants should be pruned weekly. Dead or broken leaves should be removed daily.

A live plant aquarium will require the same basic equipment needed for an aquarium containing fish. The basics are as follows. You will need a tank, some sort of filtration system, lighting and some basic cleaning tools. The plants are fairly easy to care for, but you do have to keep up with your regular maintenance. Synthetic plants may be a good alternative to live plants, if you are not willing to make the investment in live plants. Faux plants have come a long way in recent years. So much so, that your fish may not even notice the difference. Whether you choose live or synthetic plants, they will add interest and life to any aquarium.

**General Care for the Freshwater Aquarium**

Okay, so you have decided that you want to own an aquarium. It is a good idea to make out a wish list before purchasing any fish for the aquarium. Keeping an aquarium will require patience. Unfortunately, it is not realistic to go the pet store and just start picking out fish. Take a trip to the pet store in order to gather information and window shop to determine the types of fish you wish to keep in your aquarium. Carefully research these fish to ensure that they are compatible for water temperatures and P.H., as well as the food that they eat. Be careful not to put prey and predator together in the same tank. Keep in mind that freshwater fish are hardier than the marine variety, and will be less susceptible to water fluctuations.

One reason that freshwater fish are hardier than saltwater fish is the saltwater itself. Just like any living creature, a fish's body requires water in order to function properly. Water is absorbed through a fish's skin in the freshwater environment. Alternatively, a saltwater fish actually has to drink the salt water, because the body fluids are extracted through the skin by osmosis. The salt is then excreted in the form of highly concentrated urine. Freshwater fish are a good choice for an inexperienced aquarium owner because there is more wiggle room in the water specifications. Some freshwater fish have a variation of as much as ten degrees of acceptable water temperature. Conversely, most tropical fish will only allow about two degrees of variation in water temperature

It is not uncommon for the novice fish keeper to become easily discouraged. Water conditions are hard to regulate and unfortunately fish, even the freshwater variety, are not the hardiest of creatures. Sometimes they do not survive these fluctuations. It is important to be patient. An aquarium needs to run for a minimum of twenty four hours before adding any fish at all. You may want to allow the tank to run and filter with decorations and any plant life for a few days before introducing the fish. Be sure to clean the decorations and any substrate thoroughly before adding them to the aquarium. Live plants are highly recommended in new aquariums as they will help to generate the good bacteria necessary to reduce the amount of ammonia in the tank. It is a good idea to test the ammonia and nitrite levels before adding fish to the aquarium. Begin by adding only three to four small fish. A general rule is to wait another thirty days before adding additional fish, because that is the incubation period for most fish illnesses. In addition, test the nitrite and ammonia levels before adding these additional fish. The ammonia levels should return to zero. This also takes about a month.

There are a few basic tips that will keep fish healthy. Don't over feed the fish. Any excess food will become debris in the tank, and then turns into ammonia, which is toxic to fish. Change the water in the aquarium regularly. Replace approximately one third of the water in the tank every two to three weeks. This will minimize the disruption to the fish in the aquarium, eliminating the need to remove the fish from the tank. Lastly, don't forget to clean the filter. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, as some filters need to be replaced more frequently than others

**Coldwater Aquarium Set-up and Care**

As the hobby of having an aquarium becomes more and more popular, it should be noted that the easiest aquarium to care for and set up is a coldwater tank. As the name suggests, coldwater tanks require no heating set up. This cuts costs when setting up your first tank. It also makes the aquarium much easier to maintain in the long run. Keep in mind that only certain coldwater fish can survive in a tank without heat. Most common are goldfish and guppies, but there are a multitude available and you will be able to have an array of fish living in your coldwater tank.

The supplies you will need to set up your aquarium may seem lengthy, but it is actually a much shorter and cheaper list than that of a heated freshwater tank or a saltwater tank. Obviously the first thing you need is a tank. It's all about personal choice here as they come in many sizes and shapes. When you purchase the tank, a kit often comes with it and includes some of the other things you may need. Just to make sure, check that you have a filter and an air pump. These are the most important pieces to the whole set up. If you are buying your tank as a kit, make sure it is specified to be a coldwater set-up. You will notice that no heater will be included.

After the purchase of your tank, you can now consider how you wish to decorate it. Many types of gravel and sand are available in a lot of colors. You can add accent plants as well to make it appear more natural. Many people add little figures or signs to personalize their aquariums. It's all up to you in regards to décor. Be sure to buy a net, an algae scraper and conditioner for the water.

If you choose to have a tank with lighting, that is ok, just be aware of the problems it may cause. By adding light to the tank, you are also adding heat. Algae thrives on heat. Though a light won't harm your tank, it may add to algae growth. This is not uncommon and is easily cleaned. Your fish will enjoy having the light, so it is probably best to buy a hood that includes a light. Try to keep the tank out of direct sunlight when you choose it's position within your home. This will also add to algae growth.

Once you have your tank set up and the water is stabilized, you may add your fish. Be sure to only buy coldwater fish to add to this tank. If you are unsure of what types of fish are coldwater, ask for help at a pet store. They will offer you some extra tips on the types of fish you are purchasing as well. Once your fish are added, you will have a wonderful underwater scene to enjoy for years to come. It is important to clean and care for your tank on a routine basis. A complete cleaning of the tank should be done every 2 months, including a water change, scraping algae, rinsing the gravel of waste and changing filters.

You will find that as time passes, you will form a routing of caring for your coldwater aquarium. It is worth the effort to maintain the tank, as you will be rewarded with a wonderful addition to your home.

**Coral Reef Care Tanks Aquarium**

When shopping for fish, it might be tempting to pick the rare and fancy fish full of colors, and exotic looking shrimp or crustaceans. An aquarium full of marine life complete with a coral reef and aquatic plants is very appealing. After all, who wouldn't want to have an underwater paradise in their living room? It may, not however, be the best choice for a beginning hobbyist. Coral reef aquariums require much more care than fresh water tanks or saltwater fish only tanks. Freshwater fish are usually hardier than marine species and therefore a little more forgiving when it comes to water acclimation. It is recommended that only experienced fish keepers with a real commitment to the hobby attempt a coral reef aquarium. A tank containing coral reef life may require several months of cycling before getting the water just right. The water in a coral reef tank must be regulated for lighting, temperature and ph. Start with tap water and then add a sea salt mix to the water. This type of solution is available at most pet stores.

Salinity of the tank should be between 1.023 and 1.004. Ideal temperature for a marine aquarium is between 75 and 79 degrees Fahrenheit. It is also important to test the P.H. of the tank. Ideal P.H. is somewhere between 8.3 and 8.4. Test kits can be purchased online or at your local pet store. They same store will also carry any solutions necessary to adjust the P. H. There is not much wiggle room when it comes to these specific staring points. In order to avoid a costly mistake it is important to be patient, watch the tank closely, and make sure that you don't introduce any marine life until the tank is absolutely ready.

Once the aquarium is ready, start with anemones and clown fish. They are the hardiest of reef species, and who wouldn't love to have Nemo swimming around in their living room? Monitor the marine life closely. Check the activity levels of the fish, and watch for stress. Stress is the most common cause of sickness in fish. Remember that these creatures may have come directly from the ocean, and it may take a while for them to get acclimated to their new home. Another cause of stress in fish is overcrowding. Make sure there allow about ten gallons of water per one inch of fish. Account for the full grown size of the fish, not the size of fish when it is purchased.

The incubation period for most sickness in fish is about thirty days. So after about a month, if all is well with the tank and the fish seem to be adjusting well, then it is okay to introduce some new marine life. A mandarin fish or a dwarf angel fish might round out the collection nicely, and they are fairly compatible clown fish. Whenever adding new fish, choose the species carefully for compatibility. The

fish should be compatible with water specifics, but also make sure that their food source is compatible. Always remember to be patient when adding new fish. Give the existing tank members plenty of time to get adjusted before making additions to an aquarium. The best piece of advice is to do research. Make sure that all new purchases will be suitable tank mates for the existing creatures. With a little luck, and a lot of skill you will be on your way to having a reef aquarium that will impress any fishkeeper.

**Fifty five Gallon Fresh Water Aquarium**

A fifty five gallon freshwater aquarium is a good choice when purchasing a new tank, if nothing else, simply because of its size. These tanks are large enough to accommodative a variety of fish, but still small enough to keep in tight spaces in the home or office. Your local retailer can assist you with specifics in purchasing, but here are some suggestions for the basics. Purchase an acrylic tank, because they are lighter in weight and easier to care for than glass aquariums. Also the visibility is better in an acrylic tank. If you don't already have a stand or a suitable replacement, keep in mind that you will need to purchase one. You will need a heater for temperature control, and a thermometer for checking the water temperature. It will take approximately five bags of rock or other substrate to line the bottom of the tank. Choose a bright color to add some interest to the aquarium.

In addition, you will need to purchase a filter for the tank. Filters can be complicated. Do a lot a research to find out what type of filter is suggested for the fish that you choose. There are filters that go beneath the substrate in the bottom of the tank, as well as filters that attach to the side of the aquarium. They also vary greatly in price. It is not necessary to buy the most expensive filter when setting up a basic freshwater aquarium.

The aquarium will also need lighting. Again, based on personal preference you can keep it simple or get very technical. Most fish will respond nicely to a basic light that is simply turned on for a few hours each day. An aquarium should contain some form of plants for added interest. The plants serve a place for the fish to seek refuge and feel safe. There are many varieties of freshwater plants that would work nicely in a fifty five gallon aquarium. Just be sure to purchase an aquatic specific species. If you don't want the hassle of live plants, plastic is always an option. They have come along way with synthetic plants. In most cases the fish may not even notice the difference, unless of course they try to eat them.

Once your tank is established and you are ready to add fish, choose your fish carefully. Start with hardy fish, such as live bearers, gouramis, barbs, and danios. These fish are hardy enough to handle higher nitrate levels in the tank. Allow about thirty days for these fish to become acclimated to the tank, before adding any new fish. It usually takes about thirty days for the symptoms of ich or other fish illnesses to show up. It is important to make sure that all existing fish are healthy before adding any new species. The transportation of new fish itself is stressful enough, without having to add disease to the situation. When purchasing fish, it is important to remember that a fifty five gallon aquarium can handle about fifteen to twenty small fish total. This will allow plenty of growth room for the fish.

**Caring for your Freshwater Aquarium**

The most important factor of owning an aquarium is the proper cleaning of the tank. Many new owners are unsure of how to go about this. This information will help new freshwater aquarium owners keep a clean and healthy tank. These first two questions are the key to maintaining your aquarium allowing you to enjoy this beautiful addition to your home.

When should I clean my tank? You should clean your tank once every two months unless you can really tell it needs cleaned before then. Why should I clean my tank once every two months? Because your tank will start building up algae on the inside and your gravel will retain waste that could make your fish ill in the future.
The following steps are easy and quick and will provide your fish with a clean and happy aquarium.

Step 1 (prepare for cleaning)
You have to prepare for the steps to follow before removing your fish from your freshwater aquarium. There are some supplies you will need to clean the tank, so it's best to have them handy before starting. You will need some kind of container that your fish can be placed in until it's time for them to be put back in the tank. It doesn't have to be a large container, but make sure your fish do have enough room to swim freely. This container is dependant on how many fish are living in the tank. You will also need a fish net, a towel or paper towels to wipe up any spills that may occur, a water pitcher or a bucket for refilling the tank, food drainer, a clean sponge, and a clean rag. After you have these things gathered, you're now ready to begin cleaning your freshwater aquarium.

Step 2 (Removing your fish)
This may be the most important step in the cleaning process. It is time to remove the fish from the tank. The first thing to do is make sure that the container in which the fish are being placed has water that is about the same temperature at the tank, other wise your fish will go into shock. When the container of water is ready, use the net to catch each fish one-by-one and place them in the container. Once all the fish are collected, be sure to place the container in a safe place where it will not be spilled. It is common for fish to become stressed when they are moved, so the water temperature and reducing as much unneeded activity is very important.

Step 3 (Removing the fish tanks old water)
When all the fish are out of the tank, it is time to start emptying the water from the aquarium. Using the pitcher or small bucket, begin to remove the water. The water from the tank may be disposed in a sink or toilet. This can be a messy task, so be sure to clean up all spills to prevent any possible accidents. It is not necessary to remove all the water from the tank. Most freshwater aquarium owners remove approximately 3/4 of the water. The remaining original water will help acclimate the new water you will add later.
Step 3 (Removing and cleaning your tanks gravel)
Most of the waste that gathers in a tank settles into the gravel at the bottom. It is very important to clean the gravel when you clean your tank. At this time you will remove the gravel. You can use the fish net, a small scoop or even a dustpan to do this. Place the gravel in a container. Once you have removed all the gravel, transfer it into a strainer of some sort and run it under hot water. Be sure to mix it up while you are rinsing so that all the sediment and waste is removed. Once the gravel has been cleaned, place it aside. You will not be putting it back in the tank at this time.

Step 4 (Cleaning the tank)
Now it's time to clean the inside of the tank. This can be a tedious chore if there is a lot of build-up on the glass. Some freshwater aquariums have algae growth on the glass. The warmer the water is inside and the more the aquarium is exposed to natural sunlight, the more algae growth you will have. This can be cleaned off by using a scratch pad. Try to use the least abrasive pad you can to avoid scratching the class. Cleaning with hot water will aid in the removal of algae. Make sure to never use any type of cleaner or detergent when cleaning the tank. This will be fatal to the fish. After removing the algae, finish by wiping down the rest of the tank with a towel or soft rag. You may have to repeat this a few times. Try to rinse the rag or towel frequently to remove all the waste. If you have decorative pieces in the tank, be sure to wash them as well using hot water. After completing these steps, your tank should be clean of waste and build-ups.

Step 5 (Putting it all back together)
Now it's time to replace everything. Start by replacing the gravel into the tank, followed by refilling the water. Take notice of the temperature once again. Try to add water that is of the same temperature as the original water in the tank. Add your finishing touches with decorative pieces, then carefully move the fish back in. It may take a little while for the fish to adjust to the new water, but after having followed all these steps, you can be sure that your tank is clean and healthy.

You won't have to completely clean your tank for another 2 months. Always remember to change the filters if they are dirty. As an added tip, if you remove 20% of the water every month and replace it with clean water, this will cut down on the complete cleaning of the tank in the future. To maintain a healthy tank, it is important to clean it properly and keep up with the aquarium care. By doing this, you will ensure a long life for your fish and an enjoyable experience for observers.

**Aquarium Care for the Freshwater Guppy**

Guppies are perhaps the most popular type of freshwater fish to keep in an aquarium. Luckily, they are fairly easy to keep as well. Guppies are hardy fish that can adjust easily to minor fluctuations in water quality. However, don't allow these fluctuations to become common practice, as they do cause some stress to the fish. The water temperature in an aquarium for guppies should be kept between seventy two and eighty two degrees. The P.H. level should be kept between 7.0 and 8.2. As you can see these specifications are much more forgiving than those for certain tropical or marine fish. Guppies mature quickly and usually only grow to be about one and a half to two inches long. There small bodies and feathery fan like tails add a lot of interest to the tank. They are just fun to watch.

As with any type of aquarium, there are three basic components to caring for the fish. Diet is very important. Guppies should be fed very small amounts as often as three times a day. Guppies will eat just about anything, but their main diet should consist of frozen or flake foods. This should be especially regarded when there are baby guppies in the tank, because guppies will eat their young. The next most important feature to caring for any fish is appropriate water regulation. The specific temperatures are listed above, but it is also important to make frequent water changes. Usually every one to two weeks, depending on need. If the water starts to smell or become cloudy, this is a good indication that it is time to change the water. If water changes are made gradually, meaning change

approximately one third of the tank at a time, then there is little disruption made to the fish.

Last on the list for keeping fish healthy, is to keep them happy. Try to recreate their natural environment. It is recommended to keep a variety of plants in the aquarium for guppies to seek refuge. There should be about one to two inches of substrate in the bottom of the tank. Colored rock or dead crushed coral make a nice addition to the aquarium, and may help to make the fish feel more at home.

A few varieties of guppies are the Fantail, Flagtail, Spadetail, Deltatail and the Roundtail. The names of all of these different types of guppies focus on the tails because they are so remarkable and unique. The tail itself is usually about one third of the size of the whole fish. It is possible to mix guppies with other varieties of fish. However be careful when mixing because, guppies are targeted as easy prey due to those fancy tails. Guppies breed very quickly, usually about every three to four weeks. They will interbreed amongst themselves, so the aquarium could very quickly become filled with many different varieties of color. It is very feasible to have an attractive aquarium without having any other fish at all. If you don't want the species to interbreed, simply keep them in separate tanks.

**Home Aquariums: Why They Are Handy**

The practice of keeping fish in the home came about in the late 1800's. These fish were usually kept for short periods of time, and were used as a food source. Home aquariums were generally kept only in coastal towns where the fish were readily accessible. Today, however many things of changed. We wouldn't dream of dipping a net into an aquarium and frying up the family pet for dinner. That's what Red Lobster is for. Home aquariums are for our personal entertainment and enjoyment. Aquariums add life and color to any room. They soothe sick patients at doctor's offices, and entertain small children while their parents are shopping at Nordstrom.

When considering adopting a family pet, think fish. They are a good compromise when your children are eying that puppy in the window of the local pet store. Aquariums need little care in comparison to cats, dogs and even birds. When going out of town, it is acceptable to leave the fish alone for a week or even longer. Just have a neighbor feed them once or twice. There is no grooming or bathing needed for fish. While a home aquarium does require regular maintenance and cleaning, it is minor compared to the care required for larger pets. Aquariums are usually less costly, as well. Dogs and cats require regular visits to the veterinarian, vaccinations, flea and tick medications, etc. Last year the purchase of pet toys was a billion dollar industry. We don't have to worry about buying a tug rope or a stuffed friend for our fish.

An aquarium is less of a commitment than larger pets, and can still be a welcome addition to the family home. Aquariums are great learning tools for small children. Kids get excited if they are involved in process. They can learn responsibility by having to help with the chores associated with aquarium care. Teach the children how to feed the fish and how to clean the tank. Aquariums are very handy for helping kids develop language skills, as well. It's amazing how much conversation can take place between a two-year old and an aquarium. Let the kids name the fish. Have discussions and ask questions like, what color is that fish? What are the fish doing today? Count the fish. Just be careful with counting. If one of the fish has decided to eat some of its tank mates that could turn into a different type of learning experience altogether. This doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing; you just

have to be prepared for it. After all, kids do have to learn about the cycle of life and death somehow. It would certainly be a lot easier to cope with the death of goldfish as a child's first loss, rather than a human family member.

In these times of having five hundred plus cable channels and excessive video games, an aquarium can be a refreshing touch to a home. The next time you sit down for a family dinner, try looking at the aquarium instead of the television. You never know, it may just start an actual conversation.

**How to Care for Aquarium Catfish**

Catfish are common fish found in freshwater aquariums. Catfish are very unique and differ from other fish in regards to their health and care. The most distinguishing feature of a catfish is the prominent "barbells", which look like whiskers on a cat, hence giving these one of a kind fish their name. The other thing that set catfish apart from any other fish is the fact that they have no scales. They also possess a strong, hollow ray on their fins that a stinging protein can be emitted from if the fish is irritated or in danger.

The most common catfish found in aquariums are the armored catfish. This group is smaller in size than other types of catfish and make a great addition to an aquarium. When you are setting up your tank initially, it is best to decide then whether you are going to house catfish. Your decision will impact the type of gravel or sand you will use as well as the pH of the water within the tank. Armored catfish prefer soft bottom material because they forage for food within the substrate. Catfish feel more secure when they are hidden from the light, so be sure to have caves and hiding places for this type of fish.

Overall, the care of catfish does not vary from caring for your other fish. You should try to include a food that will settle on the bottom of the tank as these fish are bottom feeders. The water should have a temperature in the middle to upper seventies and the pH should be neutral. This is usually the same set up and water balance you will use to house other fish as well, so it should not be a major concern when you add your catfish.

Catfish are known to be somewhat goofy and comical, but this may depend on the species of catfish you have. Their behavior will vary, but as a whole, the catfish is an entertaining addition to an aquarium. There are group and schooling catfish that get along well with each other. There are also loners who always stay away from their neighbors. Catfishes are the ideal candidates for community tanks because they inhabit niches and shelters on the bottom not occupied by other aquarium inhabitants. They generally get along well with all types of fish. Only in combination with some larger Cichlids can there be a problem as the Cichlids tend to extend their territorial claim to the entire tank.

The one thing to consider before adding a catfish to your existing aquarium set-up is the size of the other fish. While catfish generally get along with most fish, they are a predator and will attack and feed on smaller fish. Catfish are also nocturnal, and should be fed later in the day or at night. You may have to adjust the feeding times depending on what your schedule is now and what other types of fish inhabit the tank. With the number of species of Armored catfish, you will be sure to have a colorful and amusing aquarium with the addition of these comical fish. As with all fish, be sure to keep the aquarium clean and healthy so as to ensure the health of the fish as well as your enjoyment for years to come.

**How to Care For Aquarium Fish**

An aquarium is perhaps the easiest type of pet to have. There are some basic steps to caring for fish once the tank is established. There are things that should be done daily to care for fish and some things that need only be done weekly or bi-weekly. Daily maintenance of an aquarium is fairly minimal. Look at the fish every day to make sure they appear to be overall healthy and happy. This may seem silly, but the main cause of sickness in fish is stress. So, a happy fish is a healthy fish. Check to see that all lights and filters on the aquarium are plugged in and functioning correctly. Feed the fish daily. Only feed what can be consumed in the first two to five minutes. Any excess food will become debris in the tank and lead to illness or attribute to excess nitrite levels. You should check the water ph and temp weekly. Any necessary adjustment should be made promptly. Check with your local pet store when purchasing fish to find out what levels are appropriate. They vary amongst fish species.

Filter cleaning is extremely important. Filters collect waste excreted by the fish and left in the tank in the form of excessive fool. The filters will eventually fill with debris and be unable to do their job unless they are cleaned. In addition to eliminating waste, filter sometimes act as an aeration device cycling oxygen through the tank. If the filters are clogged, circulation slows. This limits the amount of oxygen in the tank. If left untreated, this could be deadly for your fish. Change the filter on the aquarium every two to three weeks depending on need. You will know when it needs to be cleaned because the water will become cloudy or smelly. Some filters need to be replaced, while other simply need to be cleaned with water.

The proper way to change water in a tank is to do it gradually. First unplug any lights and equipment before cleaning the aquarium. Change approximately one third of the water in the aquarium every one to two weeks. Water from the tap should be treated accordingly before adding to the tank and adjusted within two degrees of the aquarium. Again, check with your local retailer when purchasing fish. Some treatments allow the tap water to be ready in as little as an hour, while others need to sit overnight before being added to the tank.

Clean the sides of the tank with a scrubber to remove any built up algae. Be careful not to disturb or scare the fish. Move rocks and decorations to loosen any debris. Try to collect this debris when removing the water, either with a bucket or a vacuum type of siphon. Prune any dead leaves from aquatic plants. Clean the outside of the tank with a squeegee and clean tap water. Clean the cover and lid. Lastly, plug the aquarium back in, and enjoy the freshly cleaned tank.

**Marine Aquarium Care- Invertebrates Only**

The care required for an invertebrate only tank is very similar to that of any other saltwater tank; however, the invertebrates are far less hardy than fish. It is recommended that you become skilled with a fish only tank before attempting an Invertebrate aquarium. Most Invertebrates require a specialized diet. Check with the supplier before purchasing and be sure that you are willing to make the

commitment to have food delivered if necessary. There are two different types of invertebrates, tropical and cold water. Make sure that the type you are buy is compatible with its other tank mates.

A few examples of tropical invertebrates are tubeworms, red hermit crabs, cleaner shrimp and the sea apple. All of this marine life is compatible in terms of water conditions. They require a water temperature between seventy five and seventy nine degrees Fahrenheit, a P.H. between 8.2 and 8.4 and a salinity content of 1.020-1.024. As you can see, there is very little wiggle room associated with these measurements. It is extremely important to check the levels daily, or the results could be costly. These invertebrates are not compatible, however, with their food source needs. Check with the supplier for compatibility before combining tropical invertebrates.

Unlike their tropical counter parts, cold water invertebrates are usually not sold in stores. They have to be collected from tide pools. It is important to make sure that these species are not on the endangered species list before removing them from their home. It is equally important to do research in order to verify that you are able to properly feed them and care for their very specific needs. Sea Anemones, prawns, shrimp, and starfishes are a few varieties that have been successfully maintained in an aquarium. They require a water temperature between fifty four and fifty nine degrees Fahrenheit, a P.H. between 8-8.4 and a salinity content of 1.024-1.025. Luckily they do eat the same food. They feed off of a diet of small pieces of raw fish, shrimp, squid and mussels.

When keeping cold water invertebrates such as the species mention above, it is a good idea to keep a separate tank full of shrimp, mussels, and scallops to be used as a food source, if you wish to use fresh rather than frozen foods. Be careful when keeping shrimp, as all of the invertebrates listed above feed on shrimp, including shrimp themselves. It is unlikely, however that a healthy live shrimp will be eaten whole by another shrimp or starfish. Invertebrates should be fed more frequently in smaller amounts than fish. Try to feed only an amount that can be consumed in the first thirty to sixty seconds.

When setting up an invertebrate tank remember to include live rock, because some invertebrates feed on the parasites that grow on the live rock. A substrate should also be included in this type of aquarium. It will provide a place for the crabs and shrimp to dig and bury themselves. A light should be included as well, if you intend to keep anemones.

**How to Care for and Clean a Saltwater Aquarium**

Most people are unaware or uninformed of how to properly clean and care for a saltwater tank. It's best to understand how to care for your saltwater tank before even buying one so as to avoid possible problems down the road. The first thing you should be aware of is that you will need to buy filtered water or buy a reverse osmosis kit. Otherwise you can use regular water, making sure it is at the correct temperature, and add in chemicals to remove chlorine and other unwanted chemicals. Maintenance is a necessity and you will need to clean your tank at least once a month. It is best to try to clean the tank as often as every two weeks however, don't over clean your tank or you will remove some of the beneficial bacteria. Most people think that removing this bacteria is a good thing, but it's the exact opposite for a saltwater tank. This bacteria is actually essential to maintain a healthy and balanced aquarium.

If you are just starting out with a new saltwater tank, you will need to let the tank sit for 30 days before adding anything to it. It is recommended that you buy some test strips to test out the water and make sure everything is balanced. Nobody wants to invest in a $60.00 fish and have it die because the water was not tested and the chemical balance was off. Once the tank is established and the chemical levels are stable, it will stay that way, and you shouldn't need to test it if you do frequent water changes. When cleaning the tank, you will need remove of stir the gravel to remove sediment that could possibly change the chemical make up of the tank. Use caution when cleaning an acrylic tank and be sure that the cleaning supplies being used will not harm the tank in any way.

The best thing to use to remove algae is phosphate drops. When added to the water on a regular basis, algae does not build up as quickly. Another way to avoid an algae problem is to invest in some hermit crabs and snails to keep your rocks and tank clean. Hermit crabs and snails are known to be the clean up crew, and can make a huge difference in your saltwater aquarium if you have enough of them. You will also need to buy a scraper or a scratch pad to clean the glass. A regular cleaning tool will not be strong enough to remove the algae from the glass.

It is very important to aim the filter head down into the water. Failure to do so will result in a build up of salt on the lid of the tank. Good lighting and a strong and efficient filter are a necessity. The tank should only be lit for about 6 hours a day. The more lighting, the more algae will form. You can buy a timer from the pet store to make sure the light is on at the exact time each day. Otherwise the lighting could range from day to day and algae will form. Try to position the saltwater aquarium away from direct sunlight as this will also add to the growth of algae.

The key to maintaining a healthy saltwater aquarium is to keep it clean and algae free. By remembering the ways to avoid algae, you will be able to keep a healthy aquarium for years to come.

**Aquarium Care Tips for Saltwater Fish**

In general saltwater fish are usually a little more difficult to maintain than their freshwater cousins. That being said, it is not necessary to be an expert in order to maintain a saltwater aquarium. Just as with freshwater fish, there are some saltwater species that are hardier than others. There are a few basic needs that if met will ensure that the fish are cared for properly.

The most important need that any creature has is the need for food. This is not different for fish. It is important to mimic the type of food that a fish would typically eat in the ocean. These foods can be purchased in flake, tablet, or frozen forms. In addition, there are vitamins that can be added to the foods to replace any nutrients that may have been lost in the freezing or drying processes. Just as we humans don't like to eat the same thing every day, neither do fish. Keep a variety of food handy because they will not eat the same food daily. Research the specific needs of the fish before you purchase them to make sure you are able to provide the food that they need. Be careful not to over feed the fish. This will cause a build up of debris in the tank. Only feed an amount that can be consumed in the first two to five minutes. Try to remove any excess food after feeding time in order to keep the tank tidy: and take notes. Remember how much was consumed previously and try to replicate that at the next feeding time. Over feeding fish is a common mistake, especially amongst new aquarium owners.

The next item on the list of raising a healthy fish is keep the water properly regulated. It is imperative to keep the salinity levels, P.H. and temperature consistent in a saltwater aquarium. Test the water daily and make any necessary adjustments immediately. Check the water for cloudiness and clean the filter regularly.

Have you ever heard the saying that a happy baby is a healthy baby? Well, the same is true for fish. Fish should be made to feel as comfortable as possible in their new home. You should try to recreate their natural habitat. Research to find out what type of specific corals, sponges and plants the fish have in their open water environment. If a particular fish lives on a coral reef, try to incorporate that into the grand scheme of the aquarium. Stress can be minimized by providing ample opportunities for fish to act normally.

Lastly try to avoid overcrowding the tank. This is another common problem that can be easily avoided. A general rule of thumb is one small fish per every ten gallons of water. Keep in mind however, that what is considered a small fish, may not be so small next month. Research, again is important because it is necessary to find out how large a fish will grow and weather or not it is compatible with its tank mates.

**Aquarium Care for Sand Sharks**

Sand sharks are viewed as the most timid and least aggressive of the shark species. Sand sharks are usually smaller in size than other sharks and move fairly slowly. These sharks are found all over the Atlantic Ocean, and are the most common type of shark. Although these sharks would seem to be the perfect aquarium kept fish, because of their smaller size, they are not. They still grow to reach an average length of about five feet, and can weigh as much as three hundred pounds. This is really too large to keep in a home aquarium. The population of these sharks has dwindled in recent years, due to fishing activities. Therefore they are being considered for the endangered species list. It would be irresponsible to attempt to house one of these creatures, unless fully educated on their care needs.

Sand sharks adapt the best of all sharks to a captive environment. The types of aquariums that house these very large fish are usually public state supported aquariums. These facilities have the resources to build large enough tanks to house the sharks. Sand sharks can be kept in a tank with other large fish. The sharks are usually fed three to four times a week to discourage them from eating tank mates. For the most part this works well, although, every so often some of the fish seem to disappear. When housing sharks, care should be taken to ensure there is adequate space for swimming. Sharks by nature cruise the open waters. When visiting a public aquarium, notice sand sharks tend to be constantly moving, while some of the other fish just hang out in the tank.

A good alternative for a sand shark in a home aquarium is the catfish shark. Although labeled as a shark because of their dorsal fins, these creatures are much smaller. They usually grow to be about a foot long. They will still need a larger tank with plenty of space, because they too will have a cruising nature. These fish, like true sharks will eat just about anything that will fit in their mouths. Therefore be careful not to house it with smaller fish. The catfish shark should be kept in a tank with brackish water. Brackish water is more difficult to maintain because it is a mixture of both salt and freshwater.

In the wild these fish live in areas where ocean waters meet streams or rivers. The Albemarle Sound is an example of brackish water.

The same general type of equipment is required for brackish water and saltwater aquariums as fresh water. It is a good idea to upgrade filters and heaters, however, because saltwater and brackish water fish are more sensitive to water irregularities. Sharks are accustomed to a darker environment, so it is not necessary to have a lot of lighting. Sand sharks have the same basic care requirements as most other fish. They need, and adequate food source, regulated water and an environment that would be similar to their natural habitat.

**Caring for Bubble Coral in an Aquarium**

As more and more people set up saltwater aquariums, more are also adding coral to the décor. As with any living thing, it is best to understand the creature and how to care for it properly before bringing it home. Coral is no different as it is a live animal that you will be adding to your tank. The care and maintenance of coral should be well understood before making the final decision to add this beautiful animal to your aquarium.

The most common species of coral that are used in aquariums are called bubble coral. Due to the fact that they are so common, we will use this species as a guideline. Within the bubble coral family, there are three subspecies. They are simple bubble coral, pearl bubble coral and grape bubble coral. They are all cared for in the same way, so they will be referred to as bubble coral throughout the rest of the article.

One of the most important things to know about your coral is how to space them when you add them to the tank. Bubble coral have long tentacles which are armed with stinging cells. Mostly, they remain retracted until nightfall, when they are extended to aid in feeding habits. These tentacles will sting neighboring coral if they are close enough. Be aware of this as you position the coral in your tank and try to keep coral pieces at least 6 inches away from others.

As your consider the placement. Also take into consideration the available lighting where they are placed. If you have additional light sources aside from the tube in the hood, bubble coral should do well anywhere in the tank. If you are using the included florescent tubes for lighting, it may be better to place the coral closer to the surface. This species of coral prefers low movement of the water. Be sure not to place it in any direct current. Doing so will cause the coral's vesicles to remain closed. This will eventually result in death.

When you have the coral situated in the aquarium, you must remember it is a living animal and must eat just as your fish do. For bubble coral, feed it shrimp or small pieces of clam one to two times a week. Place the food morsels on the polyp of the coral. Any food that is trapped by the tentacles or among vesicles, will be eaten almost immediately. It is important not to overfeed the coral or your fish. Algae is a pest that will cause damage or even death of the coral. Keep the algae as controlled as possible by scheduled and routine cleaning of your aquarium. Bubble coral may also get flat worms. These worms are easily spotted and usually appear as circular spots on the coral's vesicles. They are not

a cause for alarm and usually do little damage if any. However, if you notice a significant amount or a large population of these worms, you will have to take action as they could cause death.

Coral is a wonderful addition to any aquarium. Many people are uninformed as to how to care for this animal. It is advised that you learn all you can about the animal, how it functions and lives before adding it to the aquarium. Once you have the knowledge and can properly care for it, coral will help to create a studding underwater paradise.