

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.