

## 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 are 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 it 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.