

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.