



Setting Up a Freshwater Aquarium

Learn how to create an aquarium that's healthy,
balanced and beautiful

Checklist – what you need to get started:

- Fish tank
- Filter – internal, hang-on, canister, under-gravel, other
- Light
- Water conditioner
- Fish food
- Gravel
- Ornaments/plant life
- Thermometer
- Air pump, airline & air stone
- Heater – if tropical tank being set-up

Setting up

1. Determine the size and location of your aquarium. Be sure it's near a power source, but out of direct sunlight.
2. Rinse-out your tank & place on an appropriate stand.
3. Setup your filter now, but do not turn on.
4. Rinse your gravel thoroughly & add to tank.
5. Fill your tank with water treated with water conditioner – follow the instructions on the bottle based on how many litres are in your tank.
6. Place decorations, thermometer and plants in desired locations. If necessary, connect air pump and air-line tubing to appropriate attachments.
7. If necessary - Place heater where water flow from the filter will mix the heated water throughout the aquarium. Do not turn on until fully submerged in water.
8. Follow manufacturer's instructions to finish setting up filtration (a filter should be able to process all of the water in the aquarium 5-10 times per hour) and turn on.
9. Place hood/light on tank and plug in (light should be on for 8-12 hours a day).
10. Run filter for at least 48 hours before adding the fish and adjust the heater to the appropriate temperature for the species of fish you will be adding.

Adding fish

1. Test the water's pH, ammonia, nitrite and nitrate levels. Bring in a sample & the Brontosaurus team can test this for you. If levels are elevated, perform a partial water change.
2. Determine how many fish your tank can handle. If you are unsure check with the Brontosaurus team.
3. Take fish home immediately after purchasing
4. Float the bag of fish in the tank 10 minutes to allow water temperatures to equalise
5. Add some tank water to the bag & leave floating for another 10 minutes
6. Remove the bag and slowly pour the fish into a net over a bucket (this is to prevent adding the water in the bag to the aquarium)

7. Feed the fish two hours after they have acclimatised. It is very important not to overfeed your fish, as this is one of the most common mistakes. Feed once daily and only as much as can be consumed in 2 minutes.
8. Retest the pH level 48 hours after adding your fish.
9. Over the next few days, watch the tank for cloudiness. If it becomes cloudy, use a tank-clarifying product such as Geo Liquid or Magic Clear (both available at Brontosaurus)

Maintenance

Maintaining a healthy environment for your fish is an ongoing commitment. You can keep your aquarium in great shape with minimal effort by following this schedule:

Daily:

- Feed fish once daily (only as much as can be consumed in 2 minutes)
- Check water temperature
- Check general health of fish

Weekly:

- Scrub for algae – utilise a magnet cleaner to clean glass

Monthly:

- Perform a 25% water change/gravel vacuum and replace with dechlorinated water (utilise water conditioner)
- Perform filter maintenance **only** if required (eg. replace filter cartridge, replace carbon, rinse pre-filter, etc.)
- Remove plastic plants/decorations and clean (if necessary)
- Replace air stone if used (allows for more efficient operation and makes the air pump last longer)
- Prune live plants (if necessary)

Always wash your hands before and after handling fish or cleaning the aquarium.

Aquarium cycling

Your aquarium is a delicately balanced ecosystem dependent on the nitrogen cycle. By breaking down the unhealthy elements within the water, this cycle helps generate the "good" bacteria your aquarium needs. Critical to the health and survival of your fish, this cycle is a vital part of every aquarium. The first cycle can take 4-6 weeks to complete. Here's how you can get the cycle started:

1. Start slowly and let the tank run at least 2 days before adding any fish
2. Add a few hardy fish such as danios, gouramis or livebearers (tropical) or comets (coldwater) that can withstand the presence of ammonia and nitrites.
3. Seed the aquarium with bacteria by purchasing a cycling aid product (Cycle available at Brontosaurus)
4. Do not overcrowd your tank. This is sure to lead to toxic ammonia levels. Check with the team at Brontosaurus as to how many fish can fit in your tank.
5. Do not overfeed. This is the most common cause of fish loss & dirty tanks.
6. Be sure water is at the right temperature for your fish.

If you have any questions or issues call our team of aquarium experts at Brontosaurus Pet Super Centre on (02) 6652 4308 or email info@brontosaurus.com.au.