

9 ESSENTIAL TOOLS TO BUY FOR CLEANING YOUR AQUARIUM



A clean fish tank is essential for the optimal health of its inhabitants - fish, as well as plants and corals if they are part of the tank ecosystem - and provides them with a comfortable home. A fish tank is a finely balanced ecosystem which can easily become an unhealthy environment if not kept properly clean.

Maintaining sanitation in an aquarium requires preparation and the right equipment. All the products and materials needed for the job can be easily found and bought on Amazon, which boasts a wide range of equipment for setting up and maintaining the ideal environment for your fish. This is a guide to the process and the essential tools needed for the task.

CLEANING AN AQUARIUM: SMALL WATER CHANGES

Small and frequent water changes are preferable to big water changes. An aquarium should ideally never need an entire change of water, as changing a small percentage of the water on a regular basis is the best way to keep the tank environment fresh and free of harmful agents.

The percentage of water and the frequency it is changed is of more importance than the volume of water. An essential factor to be mindful of is the difference in water chemistry, and how stressful the water change will be to the fish.

Fish live in water with constantly changing parameters. These are:

- Water chemistry
- Water clarity
- Luminosity
- Temperature

As fish are adapted to living in this variable environment, almost all will tolerate water within a broad range of conditions. However, few fish are tolerant of sudden changes in any conditions.

Long-term changes that can be expected to take place in the tank involve the chemistry of the water; the nitrate level rises and the overall impurity level will also rise as water evaporates; the natural biological processes which occur in a tank will also slowly push the pH down; over time fish (and live plants if present in the tank) strip many trace elements out of the water, and changes in water chemistry will affect oxygen and carbon dioxide saturation.

BENEFITS OF FREQUENT, SMALL WATER CHANGES:

- The detritus of the fish tank never builds up to a point where a big, messy, time-consuming water change is needed.
- Frequent water changes do not have to be large to be effective, and when kept up, small, frequent water changes will save time.
- Frequent water changes are less stressful for the fish.
- Small, frequent water changes are easier for an aquarium owner to schedule in and to develop a regular habit of doing.
- Reduces risk of chemical or temperature differences in the new water.
- Spares fish the stress of being chased around the tank to be put in a bucket, bowl, or spare fish tank for the duration of a large water change.
- Less stressful for live plants, and eliminates the risk of them becoming dried out when removed from the tank.

- Reduces damage to live plants when dried out and re-submerged, which can also bring about die-off and thus increase decaying organic matter in the tank - which will bring the cleaning process back to square one.
- Large water change itself can cause stress to the overall aquarium system which can dramatically increase the maintenance needed to keep the tank clean and healthy until it stabilizes again.

Overall, small and frequent water changes keep the tank adequately clean, minimise the threat to chemical equilibrium and reduce stress on the tank environment and inhabitants, while also minimising stress for the tank owner.

Keep in mind that the percentage of water in the tank that needs changing is the most important thing, rather than the volume: A 10-15% water change weekly for most tanks is sufficient.

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There are 9 essential tools that are needed to successfully undertake a tank cleaning. The table below constitutes both a description of their function, and a step-by-step guide to cleaning your aquarium. Each of these tools for cleaning your aquarium can be found on Amazon.

TOOLS	FOLLOW THESE STEPS	
	<p>Fish Net</p>	<p>First, carefully remove the fish using a fish net. Fish nets are available in a wide range of styles and designs and can be found and bought on Amazon. Select one of an appropriate size for both the fish and the aquarium.</p> <p>Be careful to minimise stress to the fish, by having water on standby in a spare tank or bucket to put them in during the tank clean.</p>
	<p>Algae Pad</p>	<p>Begin by giving the glass a good cleaning on the inside with an algae pad. There are many varieties of algae scrapers on the market, from long handled scrubbers to magnetic scrubbers, all are easily found on Amazon. Look for reviews on various models and designs for comments by other tank owners on which they found most useful, and consider the design and shape of the tank that it will be used to clean when selecting a style.</p>

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	Razor Blade	<p>For stubborn residue on the glass, use a razor blade to scrape it off, taking care to not cause any injury in the process. If an aquarium is acrylic, using a plastic razor blade is preferable to prevent scratching.</p> <p>Once the inside glass is clean, remove rocks, plants and decorations that have significant algae growth or are noticeably dirty. Do not clean them with soap or detergents; usually a scrub with an algae scraper will remove the algae and dirt from these accessories.</p>
	Siphon	<p>Clean the gravel by using a water siphon to remove the debris. There are several types of siphons available on the market; essentially, they all work in the same way. Read reviews and reports on siphons to gain insights to which makes and brands are recommended by other tank owners.</p> <p>Vacuum the entire surface of the gravel thoroughly so that all debris is removed.</p>
	Aquarium-Safe Glass Cleaner	<p>Once the inside of the aquarium is cleaned, clean the light, tank top, hood, and outside glass.</p> <p>Regular glass cleaners contain ammonia, which is toxic to fish, as are standard lime cleaners which are even more toxic. Cleaners designed to be aquarium safe are preferable, and make sure they are rinsed well.</p> <p>When the outside is clean, the rocks, plants, and accessories may be returned to the tank.</p>

	<p>New Filter and Media</p>	<p>A filter containing carbon, ammonia absorbers or ion-exchange resins should be replaced if more than three weeks old. After a fortnight the absorbing qualities of the media have been expended and no longer filter efficiently.</p>
	<p>Filter Brush</p>	<p>The filter tubing and other parts of the filter assembly will also need to be cleaned. A filter brush will help clear out the algae and sludge that builds up in all the small folds and areas of the filter. There are many varieties and brands of filter brushes on the market which can be found on Amazon.</p>
	<p>Magnetic Glass Cleaner</p>	<p>On-going maintenance for a tank can be greatly aided with the addition of a magnetic glass cleaner. These devices help clean glass by magnetising from an outside pad to the inner glass cleaner part; this removes the need to immerse your whole arm in water when cleaning the tank, which can be unpleasant when cleaning the tank on a regular basis. They make maintaining the tank in-between cleans much easier by allowing the process to occur without removing all the water or getting wet.</p>

CONCLUSION

Cleaning a fish tank should be done regularly and carefully to ensure the optimal health of the fish and the maintenance of their environment. Different tools yield different results, and personal preference and budget will all affect choice of purchases. In addition to the nine essential tools listed in this article, a wealth of other options and gadgets are available on Amazon, where finding the right one is simple and easy, and can also be accomplished from the comfort of your own home.