

Maintenance

Once a week you will need to clean the gravel and remove 15% of the water. You also need to remove the algae. The first step is to use an algae scrubber to clean the tanks' inside walls. It is not good to remove all decorative items and scrub them. There are many good bacteria living on the items. Only clean the ones that have an algae buildup. To remove the water and clean the gravel, it's best to use a siphon, which can be purchased along with your tank. Cleaning the gravel means removing all of the debris that has collected. The siphoning process will clean the gravel and take out the water at the same time.

Treat the water that you use to replace the water you take out with dechlorinator. It is not enough to put new water in without cleaning the tank. Some water will evaporate, but the evaporation will leave behind chemicals and debris. When replacing the water, use the siphon to put water from a bucket into the tank. Never use the bucket you use for water for your tank for anything else. Even small amounts of soap or chemicals can kill your fish. By putting the water in this way, you will not disturb the gravel or the fish.

It is not good to clean or change all the items of your filter system at once. Many good bacteria live in the filter system, so you want to remove and clean or change one part of the system a day.

Filter manufacturers suggest replacing the filter media, (sponge or floss), monthly. This is not a good idea because there are many good bacteria in these items. If you think it is time to change the media, leave the old media in the tank for a week so that the bacteria has a chance to establish itself in the new material.

You will also want to test the water for ammonia and nitrates when you clean the tank. If too much food has gotten into the tank or if the pump was not working for any part of time, the biological filter may have changed. If it has, remove and replace more of the water. Cleaning the tank properly and weekly is the key to keeping healthy fish.

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Goldfish An Overview of Their Care.

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Goldfish Care and Tank Set Up

Goldfish are one of the best choices of fish to keep in a tank. This is because people breed all the goldfish available. Other types of fish are sometimes caught in the wild and when they are being caught, many are killed. With proper care, Goldfish can live for fifty years!

First Step

Before you set up your tank, feed your fish or clean the tank, it is important to wash and thoroughly rinse your hands. This is to be sure that no bacteria, oils, or chemicals get into the tank.

Set Up

The first job is to choose your tank. Though they will probably outgrow their first tank, to start with choose a tank that is big enough. You will need ten gallons of water for each goldfish. So decide how many goldfish you want and times that by ten to determine how big of a tank to get. You will eventually need a tank twice that size.

You will need the following equipment and supplies;

- Gravel, use larger gravel so the fish don't suck it up.
- Filter and Pump System, there are many to choose from. The type you choose will depend on how big your tank is.
- Hood, this keeps the water from evaporating and chemicals or debris from getting into the tank
- Light, keeps fish happy and allows plants to grow.
- Declorinator, this not only takes the chlorine out, it also provides a coating for the fish.
- Algae scrubber to clean the tank with
- Siphon, to take debris out and put water in.
- Bucket, for water and supply storage
- Quality Food
- Water Testing Kit
- Plants
- Goldfish Care Book

For a goldfish tank, it is important to give the fish many things to hide in. Plants and decorative objects, that do not have sharp edges, should fill half the tank. If given enough hide spaces, the fish will spend more time swimming in the open because they will feel safer.

Once you have everything you need, you'll have to rinse it all off. This includes the decorations, tank, plants and gravel. After rinsing, fill the tank half full with water. Once that is done, you can place gravel, plants, filter, (corner type, under gravel filter obviously goes in before the gravel), and decorations. Place the gravel in a slope with the shallower end at the front of the tank. This way, the debris will float go towards the front and be easier to siphon out.

Now that everything is in place, add more water. Once full, add the amount of dechlorinator necessary for the size of tank that you have. Now turn the light and filter system on let the tank set for 48 hours.

You can add the fish by placing the bag they are in on top of the water in the tank and letting it float for five minutes so the fish can get use to the temperature of the water. But beware, the set up is not complete until the biological filtering system has established itself. This will take up to eight weeks. Until this has occurred, your fish are in danger of being exposed to ammonia and nitrates that there feces and decaying food and plant matter create. This will no longer be the case once the Cycling has taken place.

One way to help this process is to get some of your water from a tank that already has an established biological filter.

Cycling

In the first eight weeks of setting up your tank, you will need to test your water frequently. A test kit to check the levels of ammonia and nitrites is necessary to be sure that these items are not in the water. Make sure that the test kit you purchase is compatible with the dechlorinator product, as some types of tests will show false results with some additives. For the first week, you will want to test everyday. After that, every other day for the remaining seven weeks will probably be adequate. If you find ammonia and/or nitrites in the water, you will need to remove and replace fifteen percent of the water. It will take the tank twenty days to develop any nitrites. Within six to eight weeks, your tank should have no ammonia or

nitrites, and a healthy level of nitrates. If not, you will want to go over the overall situation to see why it has not. Improper feeding and excess debris from dying plants will keep your tank from reaching its' proper biological balance. Once created, the balance is likely to remain stable.

Temperature

The temperature of the water in the tank should never go above 73 degrees. The average temperature should be 65 to 68 degrees. If the water goes above 68 degrees for long periods, it will create a lack of oxygen and cause heart and nervous system damage. It will also compromise the immune system of the goldfish and that makes them susceptible to disease. Goldfish do not need a heater, but they do need lights.

Feeding

Gold fish require once a day feeding. Only feed them the amount they can eat in three to five minutes. There are many high quality fish foods available. It is good to give your goldfish a variety of foods because one food may not have all of the nutritional ingredients needed. Feeding them fresh peas occasionally will keep them from getting constipated.

Disease

Starting with healthy fish is the best step you can take. Check to see that all fish in the tank yours' is chosen from are active and alert. Make sure their fins are erect, eyes clear and that they are active and alert. Look for visible parasites, most books will have lists and pictures you can check. Make sure the store places the plastic bag with fish in a brown paper bag so the fish aren't stressed in transport.

An experience goldfish caretaker and a fish care book are real assets in helping you determine what is going on with your goldfish. There are several over the counter medicines available, but make sure you know what you are dealing with before you start treating your fish.

Questions?

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