

Salt Water Tank Set Up Instructions

1. Placement for your new tank:

Set your tank where you want to keep it. They are heavy when filled with water and not easy to move. Usually keep them 4" from a wall and away from windows.

2. Coral Prep.:

Spend plenty of time rinsing the crushed coral several times. The coral needs to be as clean as possible to minimize the result of cloudy water. We recommend a pound of crushed coral per gallon for a 1" covering in your tank.

3. Adding Water:

Add water, leaving about 3" from the top.

4. Pumps and Filters:

Now you can start your pumps and filters to ensure they are working properly.

5. Heater:

Put your heater in the tank; don't plug it in for a few minutes. Plugging it in before it can adjust to the water temperature can cause the glass to break. Once the heater is plugged in, use the dial to adjust the temperature. (refer to adjusting the temperature below)

6. Adding Salt:

Add your salt but DO NOT add as much as you think you will need. It is always easier to add more salt than to remove water because you added too much salt. Let the salt dissolve check the salt level. We like to keep the specific gravity between 1.018 – 1.020. Why so low? Fish breathe easier and parasites hate low salinity. Not only that, but as the water cycles over time the fresh water will evaporate from the tank so the water will become saltier and saltier.

7. Water De-Chlorinator:

Now it is time to add your de-chlorinator. We have chloramine in our water. Not chlorine. In the old days you could leave water out and the chlorine would go away. Not anymore. You MUST use some kind of chemical to get rid of it or it can be deadly to your fish.

Tip: In about 3 months you will be ready for the first water change. Mix up enough buckets of water to equal about 20% of the tank water and let them set over night before you change the water. Don't forget to de-chlorinate every time you add or change the water.

8. Adjusting the Thermostat:

There is a light that comes on when the heater is heating and to set it properly turn it up to the desired temperature (77 degrees is just fine). For the initial set up you will need to keep a close eye on it to see if it heats the water to the proper temp then turns off. If the light stays on and the temperature continues to creep past the desired range you need to carefully (mark by mark on the dial) turn the heater down until the light goes off. You will leave your heater on 365 days a year and once the thermostat is set you can forget about it because the thermostat will turn the heater on and off as needed.

9. Adding Starter Fish:

As soon as possible add damsels. You should add 1 fish for every 10 gallons. Since these fish are starter fish don't begin naming them. Sometimes all the fish live, but usually half die. Sometimes they all die but this is normal. This is all part of starting the natural cycle in your tank.

10. Test Water for 6-8 Weeks:

For the next 6 – 8 weeks the water chemistry will change. Continue to check the PH, Ammonia, Nitrite and Nitrate levels and adjust as needed. During this period only add one flake of food per fish per day. By the end of 6 – 8 weeks your tanks initial water has cycled. After tests confirm the water conditions have stabilized your tank is ready to add fish.

Tip - Algae Growth:

In about 3-4 weeks you will begin to seeing black or brown algae growing. This is totally normal. In fact this is a sign that your tank is doing what it is suppose to do.

11. Adding Fish:

Now it is time to have fun! Begin adding 1-2 fish per week until your tank is full. We consider "full" to be about 1 inch of fish per every 10 gallons. At this time you might want to add a protein skimmer. Your tank will be truly established after 6 months.

12. Ending Tips:

Remember, this is a hobby, not an exact science. The more you read, ask questions and have reasonable expectations, the more successful you will be. We are always glad to answer questions and help when we can. That is the difference between us and a "chain" store. WE care!

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