



# **Wet Pets N Critters**

## **Aquarium Maintenance**

### **Aquarium Maintenance Overview**

Taking care of an aquarium is a fun and rewarding hobby. Like any pet, fish need some attention to stay healthy, but the time required is minimal. Fish are hardy and can handle less-than-perfect conditions for a while, but if the tank is not maintained, problems will eventually happen.

Here's what you need to do to keep your aquarium in good shape:

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### **Water Changes**

Water changes are the most important part of aquarium maintenance. Every two weeks, remove about 25 percent of the water from the tank and replace it with fresh water that is the same temperature as the tank water. Make sure the new water has been treated to remove chlorine and chloramines.

It helps to use a gravel cleaner or siphon when you do this. The gravel cleaner stirs up waste in the gravel and helps remove it while you drain the water.

If you skip regular water changes, your current fish might survive, but they will not be as healthy or happy. Any new fish you add to a tank that has not been properly maintained are more likely to become stressed and may not survive.

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### **Filter Cleaning**

The filter in your tank should be cleaned on a regular schedule, but it does not need to be cleaned every week.

For external filters, clean them when you see the water flow slowing down.

For internal filters like sponges, box filters, or power filters, aim to clean them about once a month.

When cleaning the filter, it is important to keep about half of the filter media, such as cartridges, floss, or carbon. Rinse it lightly, but do not scrub everything clean. This helps preserve the beneficial bacteria in the filter that support a healthy tank.

If you clean the filter too thoroughly or throw away all of the media, you will lose the bacteria that keep the water safe. This can lead to ammonia and nitrite problems, even in a well-established tank.

Clean the filter to remove most of the dirt, but avoid making it sterile.

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## **Algae Control**

Algae is a natural part of any aquarium and cannot be completely avoided. It is part of a healthy tank environment.

Algae will grow on all surfaces. During your water changes, use an algae scraper or pad to clean the inside of the front glass.

Do not use anything from the kitchen, as it could have soap residue that is harmful to your fish.

It is best to leave the algae on the back and sides of the tank. This provides a natural food source for the fish and helps maintain a balanced tank.

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## **Keeping a Maintenance Log**

It is helpful to keep a record or log of your maintenance and water conditions, especially when you are just starting out. A log can remind you of regular tasks and help identify issues if they arise.

If you need help, we offer free water testing anytime. Just bring in a sample of your tank water.