

about **HOW TO SET UP AN AQUARIUM**

First steps:

Positioning an aquarium is an important decision. Try to keep the aquarium away from direct sunlight, vibrations and loud noises (speakers etc). The floor must be strong and level. Ensure that electric points are easy to access. Try to position the aquarium so that it is easy to view and maintain. If the aquarium does not have a plinth, use polystyrene tiles to rest the aquarium on.

Gravel:

Wash all gravel very well in tap water. Use a bucket or bowl to rinse the gravel, allowing the dirty water to run away leaving clean gravel for the aquarium. Coral sand, coral gravel and other substrates must also be washed well. Using gravel that has not been washed well, will result in a cloudy looking aquarium.

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Background:

Background pictures come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The most common is a picture "off a roll". This can be used either inside the aquarium or outside. Sticking the picture inside gives a much brighter and cleaner looking background, but has the disadvantage of needing to be glued (using aquarium sealant). Also if the picture ever needed to be changed, the aquarium would have to be drained. Placing the picture on the outside of the aquarium (with sellotape) is the easier option.

Filters:

With the aquarium in position (resting on polystyrene tiles is needed), and the background picture attached, the filter needs to be added.

Undergravel filters: Most undergravel filters come as a complete kit, containing uplift tubes, air line and air stones. The filter plate is positioned so that the uplift tubes are at the rear of the aquarium, and the outer edges of the plate are **FLAT** with the bottom of the aquarium (we have visited many aquariums where the plate is upside down).

The uplift tube may need to be shortened so that the water level is **ABOVE** the top of the uplift tube. Attach the air line and the air pump (which sits **OUTSIDE** the aquarium - it is not submersible!). If powerheads are being used, remove the air line and air stones, and seat the powerhead(s) to the uplift tube(s).

Cover the filter plate with gravel, to a depth of between 3/4" and 1" thick.

Power filters: *Read the instructions provided with the filter.*

The filter needs to be positioned where it can be easily maintained, as well as being unobtrusive. The filter will need to be removed from the aquarium on a regular basis, so ensure it can easily be reached and removed for cleaning.

Heating:

Most aquariums use a combined submersible glass heater and thermostat.

Read the instructions provided with the heater. Position the heater so that it is provided with good water movement and circulation, but is also unobtrusive.

Do not position the heater where it can be damaged by falling rocks or other items in the aquarium.

Lighting:

Read the instructions provided with the light control unit.

Most aquarium hoods come without lighting fitted. The lighting will come as two separate units, the light tube and the light control unit (LCU).

The LCU can be attached to a wall next to the aquarium, seated on the floor or in a cupboard, or if the hood allows, fitted inside. The LCU should have a switch which will allow the lights to be turned on and off. This needs to be in a position which is easy to reach on a regular basis.

The light tube needs to be fitted inside the hood, the wires which fasten into the hood need to be threaded into position and then attached to the tube. The end caps which fasten to the light tube will be tight fitting.

If clamps are provided to fasten the light tube in position, fit them so that as much light as possible will enter the aquarium.

Water:

The aquarium is now ready for water.

Add tap water to the aquarium. Fill the aquarium from a bucket or hose pipe, using a plate or rock for the water to spill onto. This stops the gravel from being disturbed.

Once the aquarium is full, switch each electrical item on one at a time, testing each operation.

The water will be cold and cloudy. Allow 24 hours for temperature to rise and the filter to remove most of the debris in the water.

Add chemicals to remove chlorine, and if provided, bacteria for the filter. We would advise that the bacteria is added just before adding new fish, rather than to an empty aquarium which will then be left to stand.

The glass will be covered in bubbles, these will clear within 24 hours.

The temperature for a tropical community aquarium should be: **24 - 26 deg C.**



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