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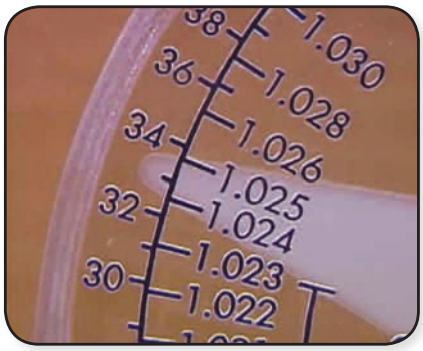
AQUARIUM SETUP GUIDE

Here Is What Is Required To Set Up A Saltwater Tank

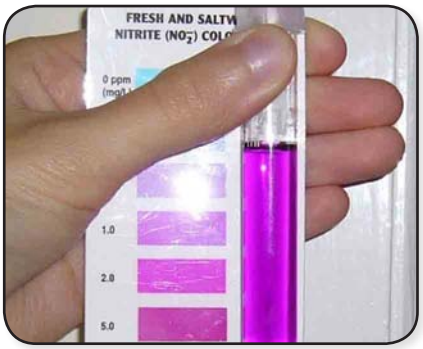
1. Tank any tank will do…bigger the better
2. Heater – to keep the water at 25 – 26C same as tropical fish
3. Synthetic salt for making saltwater with clean water – or buy pre-made water.
4. Hydrometer for measuring the Salt levels (Salinity) in the water
5. Live Sand and Live Rock for filtration / Decoration and a home for the fish
6. Test Kits – Ammonia, Nitrate, Nitrite
7. Power heads or pump to make sure the water is always moving.
8. Canister filter and or Protein Skimmer (optional for tanks with lots of fish)



Setup

Get your empty tank clean (use vinegar to get clean – never detergents). Use Reverse osmosis water or tap water with a de-chlorinator. Fill just under to the desired level. Add your heater and powerhead(s) and heat the water to 24 – 25C. Once at the correct temperature – Add your salt and measure with a hydrometer to ensure you are at 1.021 - 1025 p.p.m. of salt in the water. Once the water is correct it is time to add your live sand and live rock. Your water will be cloudy once you add the sand but this will settle after a day. If you have a protein skimmer or canister filter – now is the time to turn this on. Make sure your equipment is running correctly as per the manufactures direction – It make take up to 1 week for the skimmer to break in and start working correctly.

Cycling / Maturing Your Tank (3 weeks. BE PATIENT)

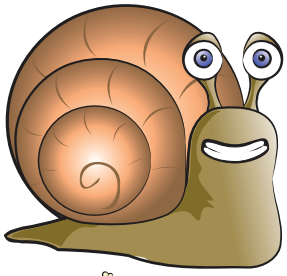


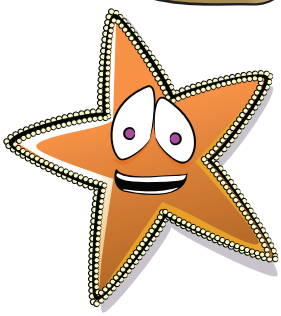
The tank is now about to go through what is known as the nitrogen cycle. Firstly use your PH test kit to make sure the water is within the range of 8.1 – 8.4. Live sand will help keep this level.

First to register on the test kits is Ammonia (NH3). This will rise after the tank has the live rock and sand after a few days. This is totally normal but the tank is not ready yet for fish. Test your tank every second day and write down the results as a marine water testing record.

Once the Ammonia starts to go down on the test kit it will turn to Nitrite (No2). Nitrite and Ammonia
need to register as 0 on the test kits as they are toxic to any fish / snail / crab or coral.

Finally Nitrate (N03) will show on the test kit (note them down if you test so you can look back at what has happened). Animals can live with traces of nitrate but it is best to keep them down to under 40 on the test kits. 0 – 10 is ideal but sometimes hard to get to. As long as there is no Ammonia or Nitrite – your water should be fine for animals. Adding Algae plants to your tank will help absorb nitrates from your tank. If you need to reduce the nitrate in your tank, do a water change.
A water change is when you take water out of your tank – say 10% of the total volume. You then replace this with new made up saltwater to replace trace elements in the water and to dilute any Ammonia / Nitrite or Nitrate in your tank.





Adding Clean-up Crew To Your Tank – Tank Self Maintenance

Clean up crew for your marine aquarium are the tank janitors. – Snails and crabs that keep your tank clean

They eat uneaten food – Graze on growing algae to help these to stop polluting your water. A basic guide

for clean up crew are;

1. Snails – will eat algae on your glass, and rocks.
2. Hermit crabs – eat algae and uneaten food and even the waste from the fish.
3. Serpent / Bristle Stars – More active at night will move around and eat anything that is decaying.
4. Shrimps – from eating unwanted parasites and dead skin on your fish. – Aquarium Beautician
5. Urchins – great algae cleaners
6. Sea cucumbers – eat sand and pass it out all cleaned.

The amount of clean up crew you need will be determined on the size of the tank and the load of fish in your tank. Once added – keep checking the water to ensure there is no Ammonia or Nitrite in the water – If there is – do a 10% water change. You need to feed your clean up crew whilst waiting for fish. Keep feeds small and every 2 days as they work best when hungry and are able to go hunting for there food.

Time For Fish – Nemo's Home Is Ready!

Start adding fish slowly! The bacteria in your tank from the live rock and sand will increase as the load in the tank increases. Add the fish – keep checking the water via the test kits. If all is fine add more fish the following week. If all is still fine – Add more fish. Remember – More fish – More maintenance on your water – water changes. A skimmer will help keep the water clean. Look at your fish and see if they are happy. Check that your fish you get are compatible. Some eat each other or will just fight if in the same tank.

Feeding

Never over feed your fish, 98% OF PEOPLE OVER FEED FISH. If there is food left in the tank after 30 seconds – you MUST remove it with a water vacuum or use a net. This will spoil the water. The clean up crew will no be able to eat massive amounts of food left over.

Keeping a marine Aquarium is about keeping your water quality right. Look after your water and the fish will be fine. Once running you will learn by looking at the tank and know when to test the water and when to do a water change. Don't let it go to far as things can go wrong quickly if left go.

Happy Marine Fish Keeping

Get a book and get on the web – there are many resources to learn more about keeping marine fish. It is not magic to keep a bit of the ocean in your home.

Corals

To keep corals you will need to know what levels of food each corals need. Light is all that is required for the basic corals like Mushrooms and leather corals – they only require low light. Corals like Anemones require medium to high light to survive. Minimum would be 2 x florescent tubes that are marine bulbs. Check with your retailer to make sure you have the correct setup for that nice coral you are looking at taking home.