Your fun start to fishkeeping

An easy guide for beginners

For more information: www.tetra.net
Discover your own underwater world

Creative
Educational
Relaxing
Enjoyable
Instructive
Decorative
There are many reasons for keeping fish: the pure enjoyment of caring for natural, beautiful, colourful fish; the fun of decorating the aquarium to bring movement and colour to any room; to give kids the chance to experience the rewards of pet ownership.

Whatever your reasons you are never too old or too young to take the plunge and dive into the fascinating underwater world that aquarium ownership brings.
What fish will you keep?

There are two main types of aquarium for the beginner to consider: a goldfish (coldwater) aquarium or a tropical fish (heated) aquarium.

Your local aquatic shop will be happy to show you the range of fish they have available as there are some groups of fish that will thrive especially well together. It pays to do some planning and get some advice on the fish you want to ensure all are compatible with one another. Sometimes those really colourful fish that look fantastic in the aquatic shop are either very aggressive towards other fish or grow to a large size that would make them unsuitable for your tank.
Tropical fish, in their natural environment are found in warmer waters, and therefore would not survive in an unheated coldwater tank, so if you want to keep tropical fish your tank must be heated, using a water heater. Your local aquatic store will stock a dazzling array of tropical fish, many of which are perfect for the beginner.

You should aim to keep a community of tropical fish that will fill all layers of the aquarium. For instance guppies and platys swim near the water surface, tetras and danios occupy the mid-water level and small corydoras catfish busily roam the bottom gravel layer looking for morsels of food.

The goldfish aquarium offers a wonderful introduction to fishkeeping. They will feed on a wide range of foods and rarely show aggression towards tank-mates. Your aquatic store will stock a range of goldfish varieties, e.g. shubunkins are a multi-coloured variety, displaying all sorts of patterns and colours. Comets are often red and white, with longer flowing tails.
Now choose your tank

Before purchasing your aquarium, it is important to think about what you want from it and where you are going to place it. Taking a few moments to do this will avoid problems later on and make setting up your new aquarium easier.

Size

The size of the aquarium will not only determine how many fish you can keep, but also how easy it is to care for. For example, the traditional goldfish bowl does not offer an ideal home, and is usually much harder to look after compared with modern aquariums.

Having planned for your aquarium, you can now discuss your requirements with your aquatics outlet. They will be able to show you some suitable options to choose from.

Modern aquariums usually come with the equipment included, which makes buying them easier. However, if you want a particularly large aquarium, or a more unusual design, you may need to buy everything separately. Your aquatics outlet can advise you on exactly what is required, or see our website for more information www.tetra.net.
Position

A filled aquarium is heavy, so thinking about its position now will avoid you having to move it in the future. An ideal position would be:

- In a reasonably quiet area, away from sudden noises.
- Away from areas of very high activity.
- Away from sources of heat or cold (e.g. radiators).
- Easily accessible, to allow for any maintenance.
- Out of direct sunlight, to prevent algae growth and overheating.
- Well supported, to take the weight of the aquarium (a litre of water weighs 1kg).
- Near to an electric supply to plug in equipment, but far enough away to avoid any danger of splashing.
How will you decorate your aquarium?

Decoration will not only enhance the look of your tank, it will also provide refuges and interest for the fish.

Live plants will add extra interest to a tropical tank, provide oxygen for the fish and help keep algae away. Synthetic plants from the Tetra DecoArt range are an alternative, as they look good and are easy to maintain.

The choice of substrate for the base of the tank is important because it can, for example, help provide better rooting and nutrition for the live plants. There is a wide choice of colours and textures. Usually gravel substrate is used, since it’s the easiest to maintain. To protect your fish, use gravel that does not have sharp edges.

A wide variety of aquarium decorations are available too: natural structures like tree roots, driftwood and stones; underwater features such as shipwrecks, ruins or characters from children’s films and cartoons can be used to decorate your tank to your tastes.

Ensure you use decorations bought from your local aquatic store, these have been manufactured as aquarium ornaments and will not leach toxic chemicals into the water.
How will you decorate your aquarium?

Personalise your tank with DecoArt StickerSets.

There’s a choice of tank posters that fit easily to the side of your aquarium.

Some aquarium decorations can be connected to an air pump so that bubbles rise from the structure, adding interest to the tank.

Tetra offers great products to create your own underwater world: The Tetra DecoArt posters are easy to fix and available in different themes. Also, the Tetra DecoArt StickerSets are self-adhesive, making redecorating easy and fun.

Personalise your tank with DecoArt StickerSets.
Fishkeeping is enjoyable and rewarding for people of all ages, but as with all pets, fish need to be cared for with correct feeding and a healthy environment. Looking after your aquarium is simple and quick as long as some basic maintenance is completed.

**Feeding your fish**

Feeding your fish is the most enjoyable part of having an aquarium. It gives you the chance to interact with your fish (some will even become so tame they will feed from your hand!). A goldfish tank or tropical community aquarium should be fed 1-3 times a day. **TetraMin** for tropical fish and **TetraGoldfish** for coldwater fish are ideal foods. They both come in flake format and contain everything your fish will need to thrive.

**Water changes**

Over time, your tank will start to look unsightly. That is why you should make water changes on a regular basis. A gravel cleaner such as a **Tetra GC** is ideal for carrying out this task. The tank looks invigorated after a water change and the fish appreciate the difference too!

How often you change the water depends on many factors like the size of your tank and your choice of water conditioner.

If you are using **Tetra Water Care Tabs**, 20-50% of the water in your aquarium should be replaced with fresh water once a month. Simply siphon out the tank water and replace with temperature-matched tap water.

Dose with **Tetra Water Care Tabs** to ensure that your tap water becomes safe for your fish. For tropical tanks, first dose with **Safe Tabs** and then **Clear Tabs** alternate weeks, and for goldfish every fortnight.
Fishkeeping is fun and it’s so easy

**The golden rules of fish keeping**

**Fishkeeping, do’s**

- Do.. make tapwater safe for your fish by dosing with Tetra Safe Tabs
- Do.. regularly check outflow of the aquarium’s filter
- Do.. regularly clean the aquarium gravel with a Tetra GC gravel cleaner
- Do.. perform regular partial water changes
- Do.. siphon or net out uneaten fish food as soon as possible

**Fishkeeping, don’ts**

- Don’t.. overstock the tank with fish
- Don’t.. stock with aggressive fish or species that will grow too large for the tank
- Don’t.. stock all the fish you intend to keep in the tank in one go. Plan a phased stocking programme.
- Don’t.. overfeed the fish (feed the fish as much as they will eat in 2-3 minutes, 1-3 times a day)
- Don’t.. feed low quality food to help keep your water clear and your fish healthy

**Filter cleaning**

The filter does the vital task of keeping the water in your aquarium safe for the fish. Without the filter the tank would soon become so polluted the fish would die. Check the outflow of the filter, if it’s not working properly, the filter needs cleaning.

Most filters like the Tetra INplus have foam pads which need to be removed and cleaned out in a bucket of water taken from the tank (not from the tap).

**EasyCrystal filters** are even easier to maintain because the filter contains a throw-away cartridge that is changed once a month.

For answers to the most common questions about your aquarium see our website [www.tetra.net](http://www.tetra.net)
Getting started

What do I need?

Aquarium
The aquarium itself is the starting point and, just like with the fish, there’s a huge choice of sizes, shapes and colours! For complete reassurance you may want to buy a quality aquarium starter kit such as a Tetra AquaArt aquarium which is available in different sizes. It contains everything you need to get started with either coldwater or tropical fish.

Filter
The most important piece of equipment in any aquarium is the filter. All aquaria, no matter how small, need a system to filter the water, keeping it clean and safe for the fish. There are a number of different filters available, all suited to different aquarium types. Again, the advantage of the starter kit is that a suitable filter, the EasyCrystal Filter has been selected for you.

Heater
If you have decided to keep tropical rather than goldfish (coldwater) fish you will require a thermostatic aquarium heater. They are available in a range of sizes and the larger the aquarium the greater the wattage of heat will be needed. If the heater is too small it will not be able to keep the tank warm enough.

Thermometer
You should place an aquarium thermometer prominently in the tank to allow you to check that the heater is maintaining the correct tank temperature.

Shopping List:
- Tank (tank stand optional)
- Lighting
- Filter
- Heater
- Thermostat
- Substrate
- Gravel, decor
- Tetra Water Care Tabs
- Fish food
- Tetra SafeStart
What else do I need?

To look after your new fish there are some easy-care products that are essential when starting out with a new aquarium. *Tetra Water Care Tabs* are required to make tap water safe for fish. Dosing is easy on a weekly or fortnightly basis and there are two types for goldfish or tropical fish. Always read the instructions on the pack first.
It’s so easy to set up your aquarium

Having chosen your equipment, substrate and décor, and found a suitable location, you can now get started on setting up your aquarium:

5 easy steps

**Step 1  Substrate**

Wash the substrate thoroughly under running water to remove any dust. If you are going to have live plants, place a layer of **TetraPlant CompleteSubstrate** on the base of the aquarium, before adding the substrate. Cover with a layer of your chosen substrate.

**Step 2  Equipment and decor**

Position the filter, heater, thermometer (and if present, the air pump) according to the instruction manual. Give your chosen décor a good wash (without soap), and then arrange this according to your own design. Try to use the décor to conceal the equipment, and don’t forget to provide hiding places for the fish.

**Expert assistance**

Tetra TopTips

To prevent cracking, place a mat under the tank.
Step 3  Water

Lay a plate or saucer on the gravel, and then pour the prepared water onto it. This will avoid disturbing the substrate as the aquarium is filled. Only fill the aquarium half-way at this stage to facilitate your planting.

Step 4  Plants

Plants will enhance your aquarium and there is a great choice of artificial and live plants to choose from.

Step 5  Settling-in phase

Once the aquarium is full, you should switch on all the equipment to check it is working properly. Dose with Tetra Safe Tab for the water to become safe and balanced. Tetra SafeStart will help reduce the time you need for settling in.
Taking care of the water

One of the keys to a healthy aquarium is good water quality. If you follow Tetra’s care advice, the water quality in your aquarium should remain good.

For a quick analysis of your water quality, Tetra Test 6in1 Strips give values for the important water quality parameters in just 60 seconds!

Tetra has made it even easier to keep water safe, clear and healthy with two unique tablets – Tetra Clear Tabs and Tetra Safe Tabs. Safe Tabs create safe and healthy water all the time for your fish and Clear Tabs used at regular intervals keep the water sparkling clear.

Used separately or together it’s so easy to keep your tank in peak condition all the time. Tetra Water Care Tabs in the form of effervescent tablets are safe and simple to measure out and very easy to use.

For more information on water care and other Tetra care products see www.tetra.net
Like any animal, fish need a balanced diet for good health and condition. **Tetra** offers a variety of fish diets, formulated and tested for their specific needs. Although you should check each new fish’s dietary requirements, most require feeding 1-3 times a day, with only as much as they can consume within a few minutes.

All **Tetra** foods are designed to minimise waste production, helping to keep the water clean and clear. They also contain patented BioActiveFormula to maintain a healthy immune system. They contain everything fish need for a balanced, healthy diet, with minimal waste production. They can be used as the main part of your fishes’ diet.

**Daily foods**

**Tetra Goldfish Flake** is a complete flake food for goldfish, and is an ideal daily diet. Alternatively, **Tetra Goldfish Sticks** are easier for children to feed, as the sticks can be counted out to avoid over-feeding.

**TetraMin** is the world’s best selling tropical fish food, and is suitable for a wide range of commonly kept species. **TetraMin** is available in two formats – **Flakes and Crisps**. Crisps offer an even more advanced diet, as they are produced using Tetra’s patented low-temperature production process. This helps to preserve vitamins and improve digestibility.
Weekends and holidays

For short breaks – Tetra Weekend Foods

_TetraMin Weekend_ and _Tetra Goldfish Weekend_ are 100% edible food that provide all nutritional needs for your fish for short breaks and weekends away. Unlike plaster-based holiday foods, they will not cloud the water or alter its chemistry.

For longer breaks – Tetra Holiday Foods

_TetraMin Holiday_ and _Tetra Goldfish Holiday_ are unique gel-based holiday foods containing Daphnia with added vitamins and minerals. Unlike plaster-based holiday foods, it is 100% edible and will not alter the chemistry of the aquarium water. The Tetra Holiday foods offer a gel-based natural food source for up to two weeks’ feeding.
As a result of the success of many Tetra innovations over the last 60 years, Tetra has remained the global leader in the aquatics market and today distributes to over 90 countries.

Tetra was founded 60 years ago by Dr. Ulrich Baensch. His work resulted in the world’s first complete flake food - *TetraMin*. Tetra’s success as the global leader in this market has been built on a commitment to quality and innovation. By continuously improving its range of products and services, Tetra makes it easier than ever to create the ideal aquarium for your fish.

Tetra has a large range of high quality food and care products to cater for all your fishes’ needs. For details of our range of products or for more information about fishkeeping please check out the website at [www.tetra.net](http://www.tetra.net)

**Taking Responsibility**

As market leader, Tetra considers it their duty to treat the world and its resources responsibly. Through constant improvement to the products, packaging, logistics and service, Tetra not only meets the needs of the business but also protects the environment at the same time through a continuous programme of sustainability as one of its guiding principles.