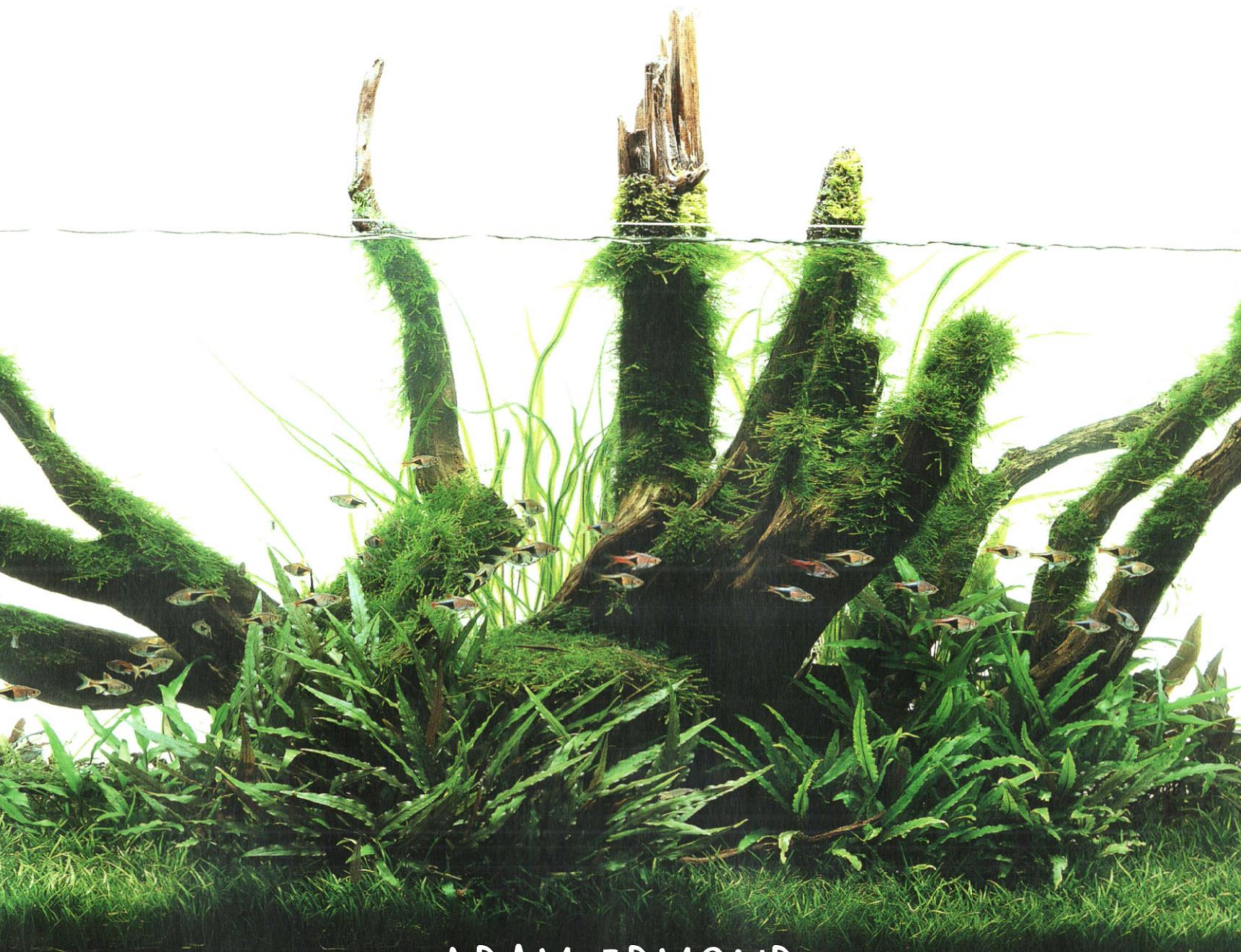


Complete Guide To **FRESHWATER AQUARIUM**



ADAM EDMOND

Complete Guide To **FRESHWATER AQUARIUM**

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INTRODUCTION

Having your own aquarium at home can be a great experience. It allows you to have a lot of fun, take on some responsibility, and enjoy a great hobby that a lot of people will admire. But what steps do you need to take in order to ensure that the tank and the fish are taken care of properly?

This guidebook will help you with all of the right steps to be safe. You will learn everything you need to know about your freshwater aquarium from the setup to adding in fish, and even some things to watch out for.

Chapter 1 explains how to set up the tank as well as the stand. The first decision will be how large you would like the tank to be as well as what will keep it supported. There are a lot of varieties of tanks that you can choose from, but most of the time it is best to stay somewhere between 25 and 50 gallons for a beginner. Chapter 2 will talk about the importance of a good filter to keep your fish happy as well as some of the aesthetically pleasing decorations and gravel.

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Moving on to chapter 3, the discussion turns to how to add water to the tank as well as the amount of heat that the fish need to stay as comfortable as possible. There are some great suggestions that you can follow concerning how to look for leaks and anything else to get the whole tank set up nicely. Chapter 4 will spend some time looking at ways that you can introduce the fish to the water. Whether this is your first fish tank or you just want a little bit of a refresher, this is a great thing for you to look into.

Chapter 5 will finish out the guidebook with some tips and warnings of what you should do when you are working on your aquarium. This is a great place to start if you still have questions and would like to get some things figured out ahead of time.

Use this guidebook in order to get started on the wonderful journey of starting your own fish tank in no time. Similarly, you can visit my website (TheAquariumGuide.com) for more information.

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CHAPTER 1

SETTING UP THE TANK AND THE STAND

Before you can bring home any fish and introduce them to their new living environment, you need to choose the fish tank that works the best for you. The tank size is going to depend on a few different factors such as limited space. The amount of space as well as the amount of time you have to spend on this project will all determine how big your tank should be.

One of the biggest determinants of your fish tank size is how many fish you would like to have and the types of fish. For example, if you want a lot of tiny fish, they may all fit in a decent size tank, but the bigger fish would need more space and therefore you could only keep a limited number inside the tank.

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In addition, the amount of waste that the fish produce and the decorations and plants you are keeping inside the tank must also be a factor when deciding on tank size. I've written an in-depth post regarding aquarium tank size on my website – [How to Choose an Aquarium Tank Size](#).

There are a lot of things to keep in mind when it comes to setting up your new fish tank:

- Calculate the size and amount of fish you can keep in your tank. You might want to choose the types of fish first and then mess around with the numbers to see how much of each you could comfortably keep inside the tank.
- The standard size tank is usually [55 gallons](#). This allows you to have a wide variety of fish, yet is small enough that a beginner will be able to handle. It is not recommended that you start out bigger than this, at least for the first time aquarist.

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- Many beginners will start out with a smaller tank of about 20 gallons. You can contain a few [fish that are pretty hardy](#) and see if you enjoy the hobby and want to try more; upgrading from this size is easy.
- Do not go smaller than 10 gallons. These tanks are too small to hold your fish and can be more work than the larger ones.

RECOMMENDED AQUARIUM TANKS

[Marineland Aquarium Kit with LED](#)

[Aquaculture Aquarium Kit](#)

[Seaclear Aquarium Combo Set](#)

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GET THE STAND

Once you have determined which aquarium you would like to get and how large it should be, you need to determine where you will place it.

For this, you will need something sturdy that can hold the tank, which is why there are specially designed stands for aquarium tanks. Not only is the glass around the tank heavy and hard to deal with, but you have to add water, rocks, plants, and fish inside this tank as well.

For this reason, you need a stand that will be strong enough and not fall or break with all the weight, causing a serious situation for your home and especially the fish. Here are some of the things you should consider when picking out the stand for your new fish tank:

- Most of your furniture is not going to be big enough to hold a 25 gallon or bigger tank and all of the equipment inside. Do not use wooden desks, end tables, TV stands, or dressers for this task.

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- There are a lot of great options that you can choose at the pet store. Talk to an associate who can help you to pick out the one that is big enough for your tank of choice
- If you are building a tank stand on your own, make sure you are choosing equipment that is strong enough to handle the tank that you are going with. Otherwise you are setting the whole thing up for failure.

LOCATION

Once you have all of the equipment, you must decide on the right place to place both the stand and the new tank. The right spot is critical. Not only does the right spot make it easier for you to keep an eye on the fish, but it can **keep the fish healthier for a longer time**. There are a few things that you must keep in mind when it comes to picking out the right spot for your fish equipment.

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These things include:

- **Keep the tank away from too much sun** or algae will begin to grow too much and cleaning will be more difficult. Instead, choose a wall that is in the interior of your home and away from the light.
- **Do not put the tank right underneath a vent.** This will cause dust to blow into your tank and make it more difficult to maintain a consistent water temperature.
- **Make sure that the floor is able to hold the weight of the tank,** including everything in the tank, and the stand. In most cases, it is best to set up the tank on a floor made of wood rather than on the carpet or on a rug.
- **Pick out a location that is near an outlet** since there are many features, such as the light and the filter, that need to be plugged.

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CHAPTER 2

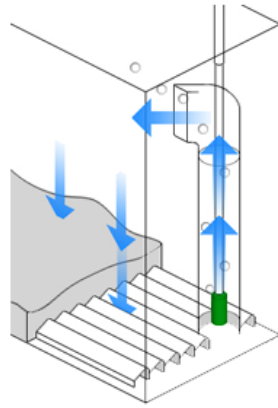
PUTTING IN THE FILTER AND ADDING THE POINTS OF INTEREST

Now it is time to get the whole system put up and together to see the best results. Your fish are not going to be able to just get into the tank and live happy lives. You must make sure that the filter is ready to keep the water flowing properly. There are multiple factors to consider when purchasing a filter and the other elements for within the fish tank.

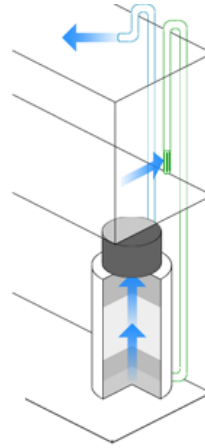
DECIDE ON A FILTER SYSTEM

Most people will choose to use a canister filter or an undergravel filter. If you go with the undergravel option, make sure to get a powerhead or air pump that is strong enough to keep up with the size tank you have.

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**Undergravel
Filter System**



**Canister Power
Filter System**

You will need to keep up on maintenance with this option in order to avoid the filter clogging. The canister power filter needs to be strong enough to circulate the amount of water in the tank that you choose at least five times every hour.

INSTALL THE FILTER

Now that you have had time to decide on the filtration system you will use, it is time to install it. The methods that you use for installation will change based on the filter.

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For undergravel filters, you will need to place the filter plate in the tank so that your lift tubes fit well. Do not turn on the filter until you have filled up the tank completely. Next, attach the air lines to the correct tubes, wait until the tank is full of water, and turn on the filter.

For the power filter, set it up on the back of your tank choosing a position where you can get the water distributed as evenly as possible. Do not turn this filter on until the tank is completely full.

To find out more about the different type of filters available in the market today, check out my post – [The 5 Filter Types and Their Uses In Planted Tank.](#)

RECOMMENDED AQUARIUM FILTERS

[EHEIM Classic 2213](#)

[Fluval 4 Plus Internal Filter](#)

[AquaClear 50 Power Filter](#)

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GRAVEL AND SAND (SUBSTRATE)

There are several components you will want to add to your tank for both the fish and the aesthetics of the aquarium such as gravel and sand.

Gravel and sand come in different shapes and colors and are available at any animal store. There are many advantages of using a quality substrate. I've written a blog post on substrate which explains in detail – [Understanding Aquarium Substrate](#).

Some of the things you will need to do when it comes to your substrate include:

- Rinsing out the gravel in clean water, never using soap, before you put it inside the aquarium. You do not want to have a lot of dust from the gravel in the tank so the filter does not have to work as hard to keep the tank clean.

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- Take the substrate and slope it up towards the back of your aquarium.
- If you are using an undergravel filter, you need to spread out the gravel so it is layered over the top of the filter. You may want to slowly pour some gravel in to give it time to settle.
- Make sure to put something on top of the substrate when you start to add water. This helps to keep it in place.
- Move the gravel around so that you have an even layer on the bottom of the tank

RECOMMENDED AQUARIUM SUBSTRATES

[ADA Africana Substrate](#)

[Power Sand Special](#)

[Tahitian Moon Aquarium Sand](#)

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PICKING THE DECORATIONS

Part of the excitement of having a fish tank is getting to decorate it with a specific theme. There are many options to choose from in the store. You can decide if you want decorations that look cool while enhancing the look and feel of your tank or you can choose some beneficial to your fish.

Before purchasing any decorations, do a bit of research to ensure you are choosing options that are not harmful to your fish while also being attractive for you.



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CHAPTER 3

ADDING THE WATER AND SOME HEAT

When you put your fish into the tank, you want to make sure that they are comfortable and will not get sick or die; you do not want to go out to the store and purchase new fish every few days. One of the ways that you can ensure your fish are happy and will live for a long time is to keep their water fresh at all times and to maintain the water temperature. These steps will assist you and your fish will remain content together:

STEP 1: LOOK FOR THE LEAKS

Before you waste your time filling up a whole 50 gallon tank, take some time to see if there are any leaks in the tank. Fill up your tank with about two inches of water and then leave for a while; after some time, return to see if the tank still has the same level of water.

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In most cases, there will not be a problem, especially if you bought a brand new fish tank, but it is better to find out with just a bit of water compared to the full 50 gallons.

If there are no leaks in the tank, you can fill it up to 1/3 full. Make sure that you are doing this whole process in an area where you do not mind having some water spillage. You can also keep a bit of sealant nearby so that if any leaks appear, you are able to take care of the issue right away and continue working.

STEP 2: ADD THE DECORATIONS

Once the tank is one-third full, you can add in your decorations such as live or artificial plants, driftwood, small statues or structures, or any of the decorations you see at your local pet store. Of course, the items in your tank should not be completely random. Some of the things that you can consider when picking out decorations for the tank include:

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- Choosing plants based on the fish in the tank. Each fish is going to like different plants, which can be a food source for them. Be sure the plants you choose are not harmful to the fish in your tank.
- You can submerge the plant roots into the gravel, but not the leaves or the stems.
- Adding fishing line will help keep the plants and other decorations in place inside the tank.

STEP 3: FINISH FILLING UP

Now that everything is placed in the tank and you know there are no leaks, it is time to fill up your tank completely. Leave a gap on the top rather than letting the water overflow; it is always better to have a little less water than too much when it comes to cleaning up a mess.

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STEP 4: TURN ON THE FILTER

After you have all of the water in the tank, it is time to start the filter. Fill up the filter reservoir and plug it in.

If the filter is working properly, you will notice that the water is going through it quietly and smoothly and it will begin to circulate after a few minutes. Allowing the filter to run a few hours without any fish in the tank will allow you to assess the filter, the circulation, and any leakage.

STEP 5: INSTALL THE HEATER

Installing a heater into the tank will help keep the water at the optimal temperature for the fish. Most heaters are going to attach to the tank with suction cups. It is best to place the heater near the mouth of the filter to help heat the water evenly. Most heaters come with a thermostat that is preset for the proper temperature range.

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After you plug the heater in and install the thermometer, check the temperature a few times throughout that day to ensure that it is steady. Fish swimming in water that is correct for their body temperature will be as happy as possible inside the tank. Read [this post](#) to learn more about aquarium heater.

STEP 6: ADD IN THE NEUTRALIZER

The tap water that you place inside the fish tank is going to have a lot of chemicals that can be harmful to your fish, hence, you will need to [add neutralizer to the water](#), unless you are using distilled water, which can be purchased at a pet supply store. Follow the instructions on your bottle of neutralizer to ensure you do not put too much in. This simple step will help to make the water safe for your fish.

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STEP 7: CYCLE THE TANK

Before adding the fish to the tank, complete a cycle of the tank. If you try to do a cycle with the fish inside, you will kill off the fish and waste a lot of your time and money. Follow the steps on the cycle container you received in order to go about this step properly the first time for the best results.

Here is a good resource on cycling aquarium water:

[4 ways to cycle a freshwater aquarium](#)

[Tips for cycling your new aquarium](#)

[How to cycle a home aquarium](#)

[How to cycle a fish tank](#)

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CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCE YOUR FISH TO THE WATER

It is usually not a good idea to pick out random fish from the store and put them inside the tank without any preparation. This is one of the ways many fish will die right away in your tank. Here are some of the steps that you should take in order to keep your fish as healthy as possible to live a long, healthy life.

CHOOSE YOUR FISH

You should take some time to choose the fish that you would like to have in your tank. You might want to do some research on the different types of fish before you head to the store to make sure that you are getting the right ones for your needs.

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The sales associate will be a great resource for explaining the diverse types, the care that you need to provide for each fish, and the benefits and detriments that can occur by having several types of fish in the tank.

Here are a few things you should keep in mind when choosing fish:

- You cannot just pick fish based on how “pretty” they look. You may see a few fish that you think are attractive, but these fish may not be able to live together in the same tank. If you go against the given advice and decide to bring them home, there will be a lot of trouble. You will find that both will lose their color because they are stressed and, over time, the non-alpha fish will die.
- Since this is your first tank, [choose fish for beginners](#). Some fish are really picky and need a lot of care, something that a beginner might not be ready for. Consider talking to a sales associate to discuss which fish would work out best for your needs.

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- Keep in mind that adult fish are not going to be the same size as baby fish. Are you going to be able to handle the adult fish when they become much bigger? You need to keep in mind the kind of fish you are taking care of and how much time you will have for the investment.

Overall, just do your research to find out which fish are going to work out the best in your tank. There are a lot of considerations for this and you have to keep in mind the size of the tank as well as if the fish will work well together. Talk to others who have fish and read books about fish and aquariums before making your choices.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS TO READ

[500 Freshwater Aquarium Fish by Greg Jennings](#)

[What Fish? A Buyer's Guide to Tropical Fish by Nick Fletcher](#)

[The Simple Guide to Freshwater Aquarium by David Boruchowitz](#)

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SPACE OUT THE PURCHASE

66

Buying smaller fishes first allow it to adapt to the tank and find hiding places before bigger fishes are introduced to the tank.

Ronnie B. McLendon

You do not want to go into the store and purchase every fish you would like all at once. You can have a list of fish that you would like to purchase at some point, but if you get ten fish at once, you may become overwhelmed.

Take things slowly and find out what is going to work the best for your needs. **Start out with the smallest two fish** that you would like and let them get used to the new area. After a few weeks, add two more fish and continue that process ending with the biggest fish you would like to get being the last one.

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TRANSPORT THE FISH

When you purchase fish from the store, you will get them in a clear plastic bag that is full of water containing the fish and some oxygen. You need to be careful once you get this bag to the car; place it in an area where it is not possible to roll around or nothing will fall on top. Your fish are only able to last on this oxygen and water for **two hours** the most.

SET THE BAG IN THE TANK

You cannot just open up the bag from the pet store and dump the fish right in the tank. Doing this could sicken or kill the fish. Instead, take the bag and set it inside the tank for about 30 minutes. In addition, open up the bag and place some of the tank water inside for an additional 30 minutes. Once the hour expires, use a net to carefully take the fish out of the bag and let them swim around for a time; pour the water from the bag into your sink, **NOT** the tank.

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LET THE FISH GET COMFORTABLE

Now that you have set up the tank and added your fish, let the fish become acquainted with the aquarium. You can start with just a few fish at a time and then add more, as previously discussed. If you are putting in too many fish, the water will not be able to keep up with the cycling and the tank can become toxic for your fish.

You need to have some patience during the first few months of owning the tank and only purchase a few fish at a time.

There are a few exceptions to the rules. When you are purchasing schooling fish, you need to purchase more than two or three at a time. Schooling fish need to have a larger number because that is how it used to living. If you get fewer than the schooling amount, you are adding a lot of stress to them and they might die.

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Consider getting at least five schooling fish at a time; these fish are usually smaller so there is not going to be an issue with the filter, however, do not get any other type of fish if you begin with schooling fish.

RECOMMENDED FISH FOR BEGINNERS

Neon Tetras

Black Molly

Swordtail Fish

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CHAPTER 5 **TIPS AND WARNINGS**

Being new to a freshwater aquarium can leave a lot of questions to be answered. You may not sure what you would like to do with the whole thing, but you want to enjoy the experience and not end up with a lot of dead fish or wasted money. Here are some of the things you should keep in mind about your aquarium when starting out.

TIPS FOR FRESHWATER AQUARIUM

1. Never leave your lights on all night long. Just like you, fish need to sleep and they need darkness to get their sleep. Fish do not need much light so unless you have live plants in the tank, you do not need the light often. When choosing a form of light, use fluorescent bulbs if you can since they produce less heat and showcase the colors of the fish. Check out my blog post on aquarium lighting – [The Best Aquarium Lights for Beginners](#)

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2. Do your research—find out the condition of the water and pick fish that work with the environment you are providing.
3. Run a fishless cycle before putting the fish into the water. This makes it safer for the fish before they are added.
4. When you are using a filter that goes under the gravel, make sure to clean it all the time so it does not become clogged.
5. Remember that 5 gallons of water will weigh about 42 pounds; keep this in mind when choosing the right place for the tank and the stand.
6. Test the filter out inside the store before purchasing. Some may say they are quiet, but once you turn them on there may be a lot of noise.

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7. Use live plants to keep the tank clean so you do not have to do as much work.
8. Add in the fish slowly. This allows the helpful bacteria in the tank to keep things clean and does not tax the filter as much.
9. Hook up the tank the right way in the beginning. This reduces the amount of stress that your fish will feel and keeps them healthier for longer.

WARNINGS FOR FRESHWATER AQUARIUM

1. Consider getting some [Danios](#) and breeding feeders before you get some of the carnivores.
2. Do not pick fish based on “cuteness.” Though many may seem “cute,” they can become terrors when they are older.

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3. Make sure to do a pH test every once in a while to assist you in knowing when it is time to change the water.
4. Never use a spray bottle or ammonia to clean out the tank; these can harm the fish.
5. Never bring in things that you found on the beach to your tank. These are freshwater fish and they may react negatively to things you bring in from the ocean.
6. Do not leave your tank near the window; this placement can heat up the tank water and glass too much and also allows algae to grow in large amounts.
7. Take a look at the fish you are purchasing for defects. You do not want to spend money on fish that will die shortly after bringing them home.

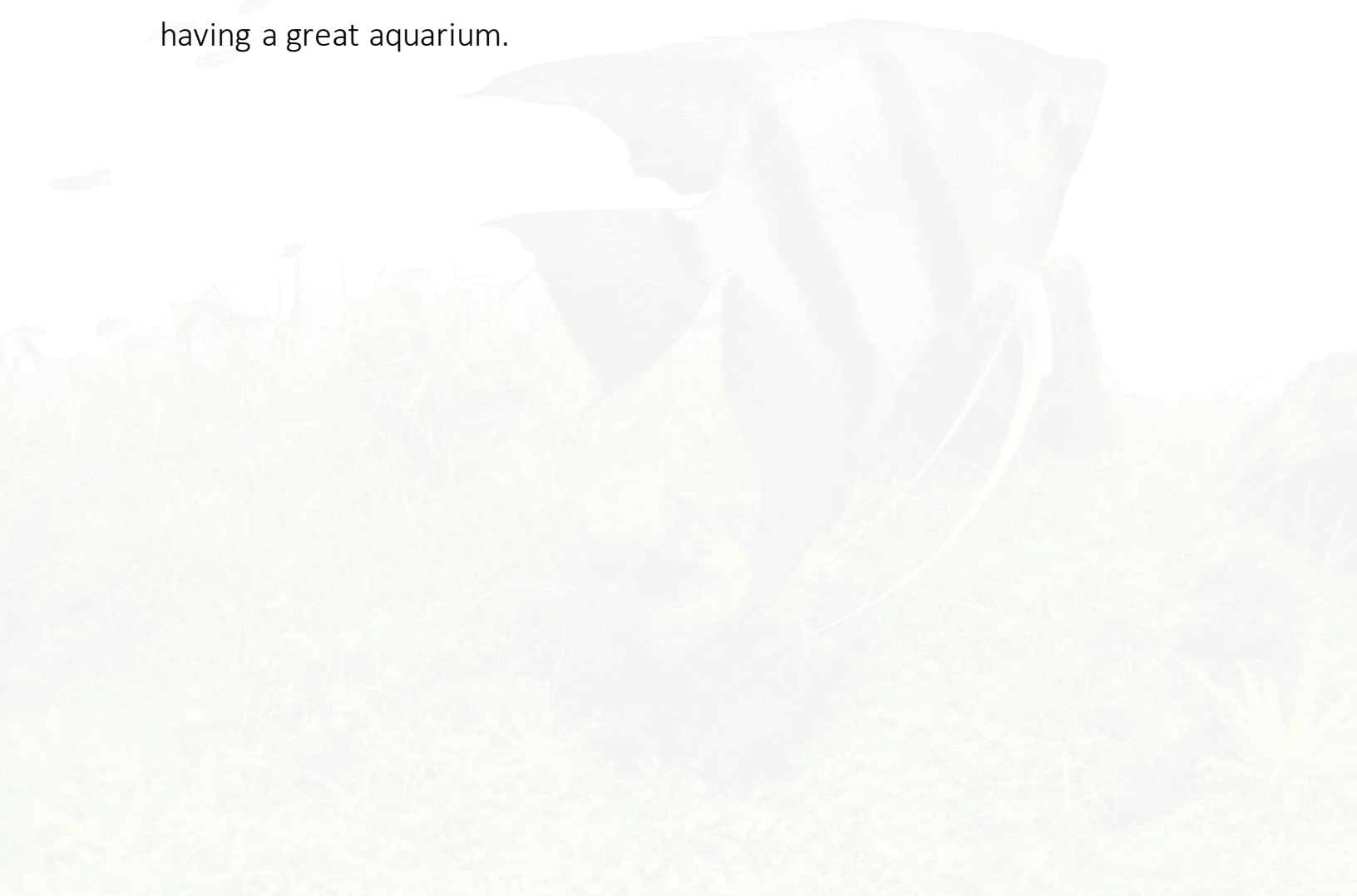
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8. Never tap on the glass of your tank. This will stress the fish causing them to be scared and irritated.
9. Always use the proper technique, as explained in chapter 4, to introduce fish to their tank in order to allow them to become comfortable in their new environment and not cause them undue stress, which may lead to death.
10. Always research the fish and their environment before making a purchase. This will help you get fish that are adaptable to your tank and the other fish you have purchased already.

There are a lot of things that you have to keep in mind when it comes to starting an aquarium and making sure the fish will live happily in your tank. This is not a matter of going to the store, picking up a few supplies, throwing the fish into the tank, and watching from a distance.

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Just like with any other project, you are going to need to take the time and effort to understand the factors involved with having an aquarium in order for it to be done the right the first time. Do your research, start out small in order to get used to the whole process, and follow some of the rules in the other chapters in order to start on the right foot to having a great aquarium.



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CONCLUSION

Taking care of a large fish tank can be a really rewarding experience, though it is also a time-consuming hobby. On one hand, you observe the fish growing and others may come enjoy your new addition, but it does take a lot of work and upkeep and you need to understand how the whole process works. Use the tips provided in order to get started properly. Before you know it, you will have an amazing aquarium to enjoy and all that comes with it!

For more useful information about setting up an aquarium and aquarium maintenance, check out my website:



<http://TheAquariumGuide.com>