

How to add fish successfully to the Home Aquarium

Taking fish home and putting them into an aquarium can be a stressful process for fish, and if not done correctly can lead to disease and/or death of both the new and old fish in the aquarium. This Care Sheet outlines a few basic steps that you should take to help ensure a smooth transition from the shop to the home aquarium.

1. Check the Aquarium

Before purchasing any new fish, make a quick check of the aquarium. Ensure the filters, aeration etc are working properly. Check the water quality, particularly pH and ensure it is at a suitable level – for most community tanks a level of 6.8 – 7.2 would be suitable. It may also help to improve the water quality if a water change is also undertaken before purchasing new fish.

2. Check Fish Compatibility

When buying the fish, check with the dealer to ensure the new fish will be suited to your aquarium and will mix with the species you already have.

3. Avoid delays

Your fish will have been bagged with minimum water at the Pet Store or Aquarium and changes such as temperature fluctuations, reduced oxygen levels and increased ammonia levels can occur rapidly. Try to get the fish home quickly and keep the bag out of direct sunlight and extremes of temperature.

4. Turn off lights

Turn off lights on the tank – bright lights can add to the stress of fish.

5. Equalize Water Temperatures

Gently place the sealed bag in your tank and let it float for ten to fifteen minutes. This will equalize the water temperatures.

6. Place fish in the tank

If the water in the fish bag is clean, open the bag and pour the water and fish into the tank. If the water is dirty, open the bag and carefully remove the fish from the bag with a net and place into the tank (alternatively you could carefully pour the water from the bag into a net and catch the fish, then place the fish into the tank).

7. Overcome Transport Stress

Do not feed for the first 24 hrs, and leave the light off for at least 3 hours to help the fish overcome the transport stress.

8. Observe with Care

Observe your fish carefully for the next few days. If there are any signs of disease (frayed fins, rash or blood spots) check with your dealer for the appropriate medication. A preventative treatment of the tank with a Whitespot or broad spectrum medication can be useful in preventing any outbreaks of Whitespot and other disease brought on by stress.



NB: Some websites recommend that an alternative approach to step 6 is to gradually add water from the fish tank to the bag over a period of 1 to 3 hours to help acclimatise fish. We do not recommend this, particularly if the tank water is alkaline, as it can cause problems with ammonia toxicity.