

# Shopping List for **Aquarium** Maintenance Items

## GENERAL MAINTENANCE ITEMS

In a fish-only freshwater tank, keep all of these items to help keep up on your maintenance.

- A 5-gallon bucket.** The bucket can store all of your maintenance items, as well as helping with transporting old water to be disposed of. Make sure this bucket has never been used for cleaning, and label it “For Fish Tank Only,” so no one accidentally uses harmful chemicals in it.
- A couple of smaller dipping containers.** Square ones are better than round ones because they are easier to use when picking up gravel or catching fish.
- Siphon/gravel cleaner.** A siphon helps make water changes easy. The combination siphon/gravel cleaner works the best, allowing you to remove waste material from the gravel.
- Water conditioner.** When added to new water, this will remove harmful substances, such as chlorine, chloramines and heavy metals that come from the tap.
- Nets.** Have at least two nets of different sizes. Using two nets makes netting a fish easier.
- Algae-cleaning equipment.** Algae scrubbers should come from the aquarium section at your local fish store and not from a supermarket. Regular sponges are not aquarium-safe, as they have already had chemicals or soap added to them that can harm your fish.

## ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The items on this list are not all necessary, but they can help you maintain a healthy and beautiful aquarium.

- Algae-eaters/cleaner animals.** These animals can help eat algae and uneaten food from your aquarium. They are not a solution to an unclean aquarium, but they can help.
- Substrate.** Substrate allows more surface area for beneficial bacteria to grow than with a bare-bottom tank. More beneficial bacteria in your tank allows for more biological filtration to occur. Bacteria will break harmful substances down into less harmful substances, which can be removed during water changes.
- Plants.** Plants use fish waste and uneaten food as nutrients. The more plants that are in your tank, the less harmful nitrate will accumulate. Plants should also outcompete algae for light and nutrients. A heavily planted aquarium should have less algae than an aquarium (with the same lighting, bioload, feeding, etc.) that just has plastic plants.
- Porous media.** Porous filter media, such as ceramic noodles, help build up beneficial bacteria that break down harmful substances that are in the aquarium’s water.
- Ammonia remover.** Zeolite is a type of medium that can remove ammonia from the water.