

# Freshwater Aquariums: How to set up

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Adding an aquarium to your home is the perfect way to bring beautiful color and life to your surroundings. Observing and interacting with your aquatic pets can help lower your blood pressure and reduce the stress of everyday life.

If you would like to add a freshwater aquarium to your home, but aren't sure how to get started, the following component list and step-by-step guide will help you on your way to creating a beautiful attraction like the 55-gallon aquarium setup pictured here. As you will see, adding an aquarium to your home is easy to do and well worth the years of enjoyment you will experience.

## You will need...

### Suggested equipment:

- 55-gallon aquarium
- [Aquarium stand](#)
- [Aquarium canopy](#)
- [Versa-Top](#)
- 5 bags [Natural Gravel](#)
- 200W [Marineland Precision Submersible Heater](#)
- [Vertical Thermometer](#)
- [Emperor 400 Filter](#)
- [API Freshwater Master Test Kit](#)
- 16 oz. [Chlorine Neutralizer](#)

### Suggested Aquarium Decorations:

- 4 [Mopani Driftwood](#) pieces
- 3 [Foreground plants](#)
- 2 [Variety Packs](#)
- 3 [Marineland 6"-18" Artificial Plant Multi-Packs](#)

### Step One: Set up Aquarium and Stand

Place aquarium out of direct sunlight.

- Allow 5" between the wall and the aquarium to accommodate the filter, and ensure the stand is level. Be certain this is a good location for the aquarium, as you will have to completely disassemble the system if you want to move it later.

### Step Two: Add Gravel and Water

Use a plate when adding water to prevent gravel displacement.

- Rinse the gravel in clean water and add it to the aquarium, sloping it up towards the back.
- Place clean plate on top of gravel and start to fill the aquarium with water. If your tap water contains chlorine, add our [Chlorine Neutralizer](#).

### Step Three: Install Filter and Heater

Install equipment, but do not plug anything in yet.

- Assemble and hang the power filter on back of aquarium.
- Attach the thermometer in a place that is easy for you to monitor.
- Assemble and install the heater under water level, near input to filter.

### Step Four: Decorate

Add decorations, but leave plenty of swimming room for fish.

- Rinse all the plants with clear water.
- Place all the background plants, arrange the driftwood, add accent and foreground plants, along with a few special stones.
- Fill aquarium and filter with water.
- Plug in filter and heater.
- Wait 24 hours for water temperature to stabilize before adding fish.

### Step Five: Add Fish!

Add about 10" of fish initially to begin the nitrogen cycle.

- After properly acclimating fish, release them into the aquarium (without adding the water they were shipped in).
- Place canopy and light fixture.
- Wait four weeks and test for ammonia and nitrite. When the levels return to zero, you can begin adding the rest of your fish a few at a time (up to 55 inches total). Or, use our [Live Nitrifying Bacteria](#) to quickly establish biological filtration and cycle your aquarium.

### Suggested Fish:

In general, a 55-gallon aquarium can house up to 55" of fish (adult sizes). We recommend the following:

- 3-6 [Bottom Dwellers](#)
- 3-5 [Otocinclus Catfish \(algae eaters\)](#)
- Other peaceful community fish include: [Danios](#), [Rainbows](#), [Tetras](#), [Barbs](#), [Rasboras](#), [Angels](#), etc.

**For More Information, See our Video [How to set up a Freshwater Aquarium](#)**