



CARING FOR YOUR GOLDFISH

ABOUT GOLDFISH

Goldfish aren't just gold anymore! Goldfish come in many different shapes, colors and patterns. The original breeders in eastern Asia began to see different markings in the offspring they were breeding and started to breed them for these unique traits.

The most common goldfish, often called a Comet, is the least expensive. Ryukins, Orandas and Fantails are wide, deep bodied goldfish. There are goldfish with unique eye structures, such as the BubbleEye or Telescope-Eye. You could also opt for the Pearlscale goldfish that has scales resembling pearls. Shapes are not the only choices available. Goldfish can also come in colors, such as the Black Moor Telescope.

SELECTING THE CONTAINER

Goldfish can live in a smaller aquarium, but the larger the container, the better. If you decide on an aquarium or larger bowl, the water will need to be changed less often, and the Goldfish will have more room to swim around.

Air pumps are a great addition. They increase the oxygen which helps your goldfish breathe easier. You can hook the air pump to a bubbling ornament or air stone.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED?

Decorating your Goldfish's home provides a hiding place for your fish during times of stress. You should only use decorations, such as gravel, ornaments, and plants, designed for use with fish. A small plant, either plastic or real, will help to duplicate a more natural environment for your fish.

Make sure to purchase aquarium cleaning tools along with the container. Household cleaning products, including soap, are harmful to fish.

In addition, you'll need a water conditioner, which will instantly neutralize the chemicals in tap water, making the water safe for your Goldfish. Tap water can be full of dangerous chemicals that can harm your fish, such as chlorine and chloramines. These are poisonous to Goldfish.

A small filter is the best way to keep your new Goldfish's home clean. Select the filter most appropriate for your fish and the new home you've chosen.

Electrolytes are essential for the uptake of oxygen and release of carbon dioxide and ammonia through the gills. Without sufficient electrolytes, Goldfish cannot properly breathe, making them more vulnerable to disease. Aquarium salt adds the important electrolytes needed to help Goldfish breathe easier and remain active.

While Goldfish will adjust to many pH levels, they do best at a pH of 6.5 - 7.5. If your pH is far off from this level, your Goldfish may show signs of a loss of appetite, sluggishness, and poor health. To help you determine the pH of your aquarium, get a pH test kit. There are also several products available to help set the proper pH level.

And of course, don't forget the fish food!

PREPARING YOUR GOLDFISH'S NEW HOME

Find a location for your bowl or aquarium where it won't easily get bumped or be disturbed. The location should not be in direct sunlight or near heating or cooling vents.

Rinse and clean the container with tap water and aquarium cleaner. Clean both the inside and outside of the container, as well as the decorations you have purchased.

First, prepare the water that will go into your Goldfish's new home in a separate container. Goldfish prefer a temperature of 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Add the water conditioner, following the instructions on the label. Add the aquarium salts and test the pH level. If you need to adjust the pH, add the required amount, following the package instructions. Add the decorations and filter to the aquarium, and then add the prepared water.

ADDING A GOLDFISH TO AN AQUARIUM

Whenever fish are netted and handled, their protective slime coat is rubbed off. When adding fish to any aquarium, be sure to add additional water conditioner to help relieve stress. The best method to add new fish is to float the unopened bag of fish in their new home for 10 minutes to allow the fish to adjust to the water temperature. Then, open the bag and add water by drip or cups every 5 minutes for an hour before releasing them. Then, open the bag and gently release the fish into their new home. The bag water may contain fish waste (ammonia), so try to avoid adding the bag water to the aquarium.

FEEDING YOUR FISH

It is best to feed your Goldfish only enough food that it can eat. If food is sitting on the bottom of the aquarium or bowl, the fish have been overfed. Overfeeding promotes fish waste (ammonia) to build up to a harmful level, and is one of the major causes of fish loss.

CLEANING YOUR AQUARIUM

Dirty aquariums not only look bad, they are unhealthy for fish. By following a few simple maintenance steps your fishbowl will always look beautiful. The following steps are an ideal regimen.

To keep your fish healthy, you should change at least half of the water in the bowl or aquarium every 3 days. Follow these steps:

1. Fill a separate container with tap water. Mix hot and cold tap water until it is the same temperature as the water your Goldfish is swimming in.
2. Add a water conditioner to the tap water to remove the disinfectants that are toxic to your fish.
3. Add the aquarium salts and test the pH level, adjusting the pH level as necessary.
4. Remove half of the old water in your fish tank.
5. Refill your Goldfish bowl to the usual level with the treated tap water.

Remember that this is just a guide to get you started. Please consult your fish store for more detailed advice in setting up your tank.