FOLLOWING A CLEANING SCHEDULE TO MAINTAIN YOUR AQUARIUM

Preventative maintenance for your saltwater or freshwater aquarium is easy if you follow a schedule. A little maintenance every day will keep your fish and aquarium environment clean and healthy.

Do the following daily:

- [ ] Turn the aquarium lights on and off. Most aquarists prefer to use an automatic timer. If you choose not to, try to turn the lights on and off at the same times each day.
- [ ] Check your fish and invertebrates for signs of stress, disease, or death. Be prepared to remove or treat fish that aren't well.
- [ ] Feed the fishes and invertebrates twice a day, removing any uneaten food.
- [ ] Conduct water tests until the water matures and the nitrogen cycle is established. Routine tests include ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, and pH. Record the test results.
- [ ] Check the water temperature and specific gravity or salinity. Adjust the heater, as needed.
- [ ] Empty the protein skimmer collection cup, as needed.
- [ ] Check the water level and top off, as needed.
- [ ] Check all aquarium systems: heater, filters, aerators, protein skimmer. Make sure they're running properly and smoothly and pay special attention to intakes and siphon tubes. Make sure nothing is leaking.

Once a week, complete the following tasks:

- [ ] Remove excess algae, keeping beneficial algae at acceptable levels and getting rid of nuisance algae.
- [ ] Clean the glass, both inside and out, but don't use glass cleaner. Remove salt-creep deposits.
- [ ] Conduct water tests weekly after the water matures and the nitrogen cycle is established. Record all test results and add

trace elements and buffers, as needed.

Every two weeks, do the following:

- [ ] Clean filters, as needed. Partially change or rinse the filter media on some filters if the bioload is high, the media is dirty, or the flow is restricted.
- [ ] Change 10 percent of the tank water while vacuuming the gravel.

Every month, be sure you complete these tasks:

- [ ] Conduct thorough filter checks. Replace the filter carbon and rinse the filter media and components, as needed and depending on bioload.
- [ ] Clean the protein skimmer.
- [ ] Clean the outside of aquarium, removing salt and calcium deposits, dust, and dirt.
- [ ] Rinse any tank decorations that suffer from excess algae.

Quarterly (every three months), conduct a thorough examination of all aquarium systems, including lighting, heating, filtration, aeration pumps, and tubing. Replace or clean parts, as needed.

Make and Share Free Checklists
checkli.com