

Fluval Flex Desktop Aquarium Operation Guide

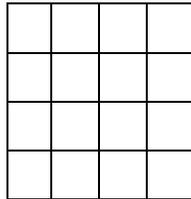
Setup

1. Find a good place to setup the tank.
 - It should be away from sunny windows or lights that are on 24 hours per day.
 - It should be on a level, sturdy stand or piece of furniture that will hold 100—150 lbs safely.
 - It should be close to an electrical outlet. You will probably need an outlet strip or device to plug in at least three devices.
2. Setup the tank per manufacturer's [Instruction Manual](#) then cut out and throw away the part on **Maintaining Your Aquarium**. It is just an ad to buy more of their stuff that is not necessary.
3. Rinse the Gravel. Fill a clean 5 gallon bucket a quarter full of water. Pour a 5 pound bag of gravel into the water and swish around. Pour out the water and repeat if necessary. Add the gravel to the tank. Use approximately 5-10 pounds for the 9 gallon tank and 10-15 pounds for the 15 gallon.
4. Add decorations. I usually avoid white and brightly colored décor because they will get algae on them and look dirtier quicker than natural looking décor. It is a small tank so decorations can be cleaned fairly easy, though. It's your choice.
5. Install the heater in the large chamber in the filter area. Set the temperature around 75° F (23° C) but don't plug it in, yet.
6. Add water. Adjust the temperature of the faucet to around 75° F (23° C) if possible.
7. Add the appropriate amount of Seachem Prime chlorine remover to the tank. It will remove chlorine and detoxify any ammonia that may be in the water as a disinfectant.
8. Plug in the pump, heater and the light.
9. Let the aquarium run for around 20 minutes to condition the water then test the water with a test strip.
10. The pH should be in the 6.8 to 7.8 range. The alkalinity should be in the 120-180 ppm range. Alkalinity is the measure of how easily the pH can change which is important in a small aquarium. If it is low, add a teaspoon of Seachem Neutral Regulator. Continue to add a teaspoon until the Alkalinity is in the desired range.
11. If the alkalinity is naturally above 180ppm and the pH is above 7.8, don't try to adjust either one and consult your local pet store to see what fish will do best in the water conditions in your area. It will be too difficult and dangerous to the fish to continually adjust them.
12. Once the pH and temperature of the water are in the correct range, you are ready to add the first fish. This can even be on the same day as setup.

Fluval Flex Desktop Aquarium Operation Guide

Adding Fish

1. This is the most critical part of setting up an aquarium to operate correctly. If done right, it can eliminate over 90% of the problems that can occur. Please follow my directions!
2. Fish give off ammonia as waste. There is a good bacteria that grows in the aquarium that uses this ammonia as food and eventually transforms it into less harmful waste, nitrate. Since this is a new aquarium, there are not any good bacteria present. It will take 4-6 weeks to build the bacteria to the level it needs to be at. It will grow in the gravel and also in the BIOMAX insert that is in the filter. I don't understand why the manufacturer's instructions tell you to replace it every 2-3 months because you are throwing your good bacteria away. Don't do this!
3. Start with a small amount of fish at first to keep the ammonia levels low. We will also adjust the feeding levels to keep the ammonia in check.
4. From the suggested fish chart, add 3 fish to the 9 gallon tank and 5 fish to the 15 gallon tank as long as the fish are within the 1 inch to 1 1/2 inch range. Follow the instructions in the **Aquarium Maintenance Guide** on how to properly add the fish.
5. Add Seachem Stability per the directions. This will jump start the good bacteria.
6. **Feeding.** Print out this page and use the following grid as a feeding guide for the fish you just added in Step 4. Each small square represents how much food each fish should eat per meal. The whole square represents 16 fish. The food should be flat on the paper and not heaped up. Each square is 1/4".



7. Weeks 1-2. Feed the appropriate amount for the number of fish EVERY OTHER DAY. It would be better for you to perceive that the fish are hungry than to have ammonia burning their gills and body.
8. Weeks 3-on. Feed the appropriate amount for the number of fish ONCE PER DAY.
9. Test the water once per week during the first month. Ensure all parameters are within the safe or ideal ranges. I usually don't worry with hardness. If the test shows that there is nitrite in the water, add some Seachem prime to neutralize it. I don't do a water change during this time.
10. Watch the fish for disease. Ich will be the most common. Remove the Carbon bag and treat the aquarium if it occurs.
11. After 4 weeks, if there is no nitrite present, add 3 more fish for the 9 gallon and 5 more for the 15 gallon. Add more Seachem Stability and repeat steps 8 & 9 for the next month.
12. This is the maximum number of fish that I would add to these aquariums.

Fluval Flex Desktop Aquarium Operation Guide

Maintenance

1. Test the water once per month with the test strips. Ensure that all parameters are within the ideal and safe ranges.
2. Vacuum the gravel to remove trapped debris into the 5 gallon bucket. Remove enough water to change approximately 25-30% of the water. Evaporated water doesn't count. If the Nitrate level is running on the high side, change more water and make sure that you're not overfeeding.
3. When refilling, adjust the temperature of the faucet to the mid 70's, add Seachem Prime to the bucket, stir, then pour into the tank. Add enough Prime to treat the whole tank.
4. Add Seachem Neutral Regulator if the Alkalinity and pH are getting low.
5. Clean the decorations and glass if necessary. Consult the **Aquarium Maintenance Guide** for cleaning advice.
6. Rinse the Foam Filter Block to remove debris. It's ok to rinse in the sink. There's enough good bacteria still in the gravel and Biomax Insert.
7. Replace the Carbon Insert every two months. Do nothing to the Biomax Insert.
8. Do not take the gravel out of the tank and clean. You will harm the good bacteria.
9. Add water lost to evaporation during the month.

That's it! That should be all it takes to maintain these tanks. Consult the **Aquarium Maintenance Guide** for any problems that may arise.

Fluval Flex Desktop Aquarium Operation Guide

Recommended Fish

Here is a list of fish that you can start with. It's not an exhaustive list but it will give you some safe choices.

Tetras

- Red Eye
- Serpae
- Silver Tip
- Diamond
- Black Skirt
- White Skirt
- Rummy Nosed
- Head and Tail Light
- Basic Glo-Light fish based off of a White Skirt Tetra.
- Corydora Catfish

Barbs

- Cherry Barbs
- Rosy Barbs
- Glass Barbs

This is a list of fish that may be tempting but I don't recommend starting with.

- Tiger Barbs - can be aggressive
- Oscars - too large and aggressive
- African Cichlids - bright colors but are too aggressive
- Most Central and South American Cichlids - too large and aggressive
- Bala Sharks - too large
- Pacu - too large
- Tinfoil Barb - too large
- Fancy Goldfish - too many potential health problems and too large
- Gold and Blue Gouramis - can be aggressive
- Powder and Fire Gouramis - have not had good luck with long term
- Neon tetras - have not had good luck with long term
- Guppies - Need salt and have not had good luck with long term
- Live Bearers - Mollies, Swordtails - Need salt and have not had good luck with long term