

How To Introduce New Fish To Your Aquarium

Introducing new fish to your aquarium in a manner that reduces stress...

Entering an aquarium for the first time can be shocking and thus incite anxiety in tropical fish. Hobbyists can minimize anxiety by “acclimating” new fish when they introduce them to an aquarium. Acclimating fish simply means allowing them to become familiar with their new surroundings prior to releasing them into the water. Introducing new fish to an aquarium by acclimating helps them physically as well as emotionally.

Fish are amazing creatures. It is no wonder hobbyists enjoy watching their fins flip through water so much it inspires them to take the fish home. Removing fish from one environment and placing them in another, however, can have adverse affects on their psyches. They do not understand why fishnets scoop them up and place them in plastic bags. They cannot fathom why they wind up in some other environment alongside unfamiliar fish, or in some cases, all alone. In furtherance, fish that become overexcited or anxious during transportation could lose healthy body slime.

There are a few different ways to acclimate fish when introducing them to new aquariums. Strategies include gestures such as equalizing water temperatures and adding chemical treatments to destination tanks. Hobbyists may choose from a few different strategies when equalizing water temperatures.

Strategy 1 – Adjust water temperature by floating fish in their transport containers. The water temperature of a new fish tank could be colder or warmer than water in a plastic bag or other container housing new fish. Since sudden temperature changes are not good for fish and can stress them

out, floating them while they are still safe inside their transport containers allows their body temperatures to rise or fall slowly until the levels match aquarium water temperatures. Thus, rather than pouring new fish into another tank of water immediately after arriving home; allow their bag (or other container) to float at the top of the aquarium for about 20 to 30 minutes.

Strategy 2 – Transfer aquarium water to the transport bag. This method calls for opening the bag, attaching it to an uppermost part of the inside of an aquarium, and transferring water from the fish tank into the bag. Slowly scooping small amounts of water from the aquarium and placing it in the bag with the fish speeds up the temperature adjustment process.

Strategy 3 – Place fish in a holding container. Do this by hooking the container from an area at the top of the aquarium in order to secure it. The container must be located outside of the tank. In order to make this method work, use an aeration line to drip, or siphon, aquarium water into the container. The water must come from the aquarium and drip into the container using the aeration line.

Use chemical additives to aid the acclimation process – Acclimating fish using chemicals can work in conjunction with other methods or as a stand-alone method. It would work as a stand alone when not using a temperature adjustment method.

Chemical additives help fish placed in another tank by forming slime over their bodies. The slime aids in stress prevention and helps to heal minor wounds they may accrue during capture and transport. Stress aiding chemicals also reduce ammonia levels thus improving aquarium ph.

Temporarily separate fish with aquarium dividers – Keeping fish separated from one another when changing tanks would work, more or less, as an extension of the acclimation process. The divider would enable new fish to observe the

aquarium, other fish in it, as well as objects such as rocks or wood. Familiarizing themselves with locations of rocks, wood, and similar objects could be useful to fish seeking places to utilize as hideouts. Dividers also allow fish already present in an aquarium to adjust to the idea that the new fish are there.

Poke holes in the transport fish bag – This method could work in two different ways when introducing fish to another tank; however, it is not a preferred method. Hobbyists could either poke pinholes in the transport bag or poke large holes in the bag. Pinholes would allow a transfer of water from the tank into the bag thereby speeding temperature adjustment. Larger holes would speed temperature change while at the same time allow fish to swim from the bag at their leisure.

The hole puncturing method is not preferred because it releases “foreign water” into the destination fish tank. Should the foreign water contain disease-causing bacteria, it would contaminate the destination aquarium.

Rapid temperature changes may be the major factor that causes stress and anxiety in displaced fish. Reducing stress and anxiety factors when introducing fish to different aquariums may be the best way to increase their chances of surviving the relocation process.