

14 In-Home Aquarium Ideas and How to Care for Them

There's nothing quite like seeing all the colorful fish swimming around in an aquarium. And if you're looking for a unique way to incorporate nature in your home, then in-home aquariums are something to consider. From how to get started to tank maintenance, we've reached out to professionals to share their insights. So if you're ready to create your own in-home aquarium in [Austin TX](#), or want to spruce up your existing aquarium in [Boise ID](#), read on to get started.



Tank maintenance is important

Believe it or not, your wet pets become part of the family. Keeping their tank clean and beautiful starts out as "required maintenance" but quickly converts to a satisfying feeling of knowing your pets are being well taken care of. Plus, you'll get better at it! Using pumps and hoses instead of buckets, wavemakers to prevent waste build-up, and filter-floss that can be easily replaced are all veteran hacks that cut maintenance time in half. - [KaveMan Aquatics](#)

Aquarium essentials

My advice to a new fish-keeper would be to get a tank no smaller than a 10-gallon (bigger is better), use a no maintenance sand substrate of 3-4 inches that is never disturbed, and a Hang-on Back (HOB) filter - either Fluval Aquaclear or Seachem Tidal with bio-sponge filter media only. Use living plants, especially fast-growing floating plants to aid in water purification. Select community fish that will not outgrow the tank. Modestly feed a high-quality fish food and perform weekly water changes of approximately 50% as generally speaking, there's no such thing as too much clean, freshwater. - [MJV Aquatics](#)

All-in-one style aquariums are great to start with

AIO (All-In-One) style aquariums are an excellent option. All the filtration equipment is built-in to help make setup and maintenance super simple. Most AIO-style aquariums can be used for both freshwater and saltwater fish. - [Planet Aquariums](#)

Location, location, location

When considering an aquarium for your home one of the biggest decisions you have to make is the placement of the aquarium. Where will it go? It's important on many levels but one of the main reasons is as follows.

You want to place the in-home aquarium where it can be enjoyed by the family and easily accessible. An aquarium that is placed in an inconspicuous area is often overlooked, unmaintained, and usually ends in it being an eye-sore and is promptly decommissioned. Out of sight, out of mind does usually apply to an aquarium. A centrally located aquarium will allow everyone to appreciate it and will also require it to be maintained properly leading to years of learning and enjoyment. - [Reef2Reef](#)

Keep your aquarium simple

When setting up your first in-home aquarium, many beginners like to complicate things. So you need to keep it super simple at first. Here's what I'd do for your first tank;

- Start with a 20-gallon tank, add some gravel, a nice rock, or driftwood. Use a basic LED light, nothing too expensive, and set it on a timer for 8 hours a day.
- Use low-light, water column feeder plants like Java Fern, Anubias, and Bucephalandra.
- Start with guppies.
- The guppies are active, colorful & super hardy. The low-light plants will thrive and keep algae and toxins down as you learn to control your parameters in check.

- [Tropical Fish Care Guides](#)

Freshwater or saltwater in-home aquariums

A thriving in-home aquarium is a token of prestige and adds a sense of tranquility to any living space. When choosing if your family would be best suited for a freshwater aquarium or a saltwater aquarium, it is important to consider a number of factors. For example, consider where you will place the aquarium in your house, what your budget is to start this new hobby, and the regular maintenance needed to keep your aquarium inhabitants thriving. Most importantly, find a local fish store that can walk you through the journey. - [Glass Aquatics](#)

Budget for your tank

Our biggest advice for someone planning a DIY aquarium would be to take whatever size aquarium your budget allows and cut it in half because you're going to end up spending half that budget on quality life support system components (filtration, temp control, and lighting). Lastly, invest in quality equipment. Eventually, components are going to fail. It's inevitable. Paying a little more, in the beginning, could make the difference of that component failing in 6 months or 10 years. - [Aqua FX Aquariums](#)

Make it fun and simple

Get a large tank no one will miss, put the right equipment in from the start, stock it with fish that get along, and the tank will draw everyone's attention. Support the fish with nourishing food tailored to them, a natural-looking environment, and tank cleanings and you will have a fun and rewarding experience. - [Oak Park Natural Pet & Fish](#)

Create your aquarium as the focal point

An in-home aquarium should be the focal point of the primary gathering space within the home. Naturally inviting from afar, well-executed aquatic art will set the mood and tone through its built-in source of light texture and movement. It's essential when planning a home aquarium to consult with local professionals who can offer more guidance in achieving your underwater ideals. - [Island Fish & Reef](#)

Learn about the nitrogen cycle for a healthy tank

While everyone wants to "get to the good stuff" immediately when building a tank (aka the fish!), it is highly recommended you take the time to learn about the nitrogen cycle in an aquarium in order to start a healthy tank. Allow time for the nitrogen cycle to become established before adding additional fish, otherwise, you may lose them. When looking into filtration systems, look for filters with dedicated biofiltration sections, and choose high capacity biofilter media; this allows for more beneficial bacteria to grow, reduces tank maintenance, and provides extra protection in case of an emergency in the tank. - [CerMedia LLC](#)

Do your research

The best tip I can give anyone is to know what they are getting into before getting a large aquarium. Research local service company prices if you won't be servicing the tank yourself, and make sure to include that service cost in your budget when deciding on your dream aquarium. Saltwater fish cost significantly more to maintain than freshwater fish, in both time and supplies. So, make sure you ask what the difference in price would be to service each. An expensive fish tank is just a box of dirty water without a proper maintenance schedule. - [Aquarium Network](#)

Test the tank water before adding the fish

Some of my best tips for a new home aquarium is to always test the aquarium water for the correct parameters before adding the fish. Always trim dead pieces of live plants so the live plants have a better chance of growing sooner. And buy the best lighting set up for the fish tank that you can afford to make your tank really stand out, so you can show it off to your family and friends. - [Which Fish Tank](#)

Consider freshwater shrimp

Have you considered an all-freshwater shrimp aquarium for your home? They are a perfect and fascinating addition to a small home aquarium. An all-freshwater shrimp aquarium can make a wonderful conversation piece. - [Planted Aquarium Expert](#)

Add plants to your in-home aquarium

Use plants to purify the water for your fish, shrimp, etc. Have a soil underlayer, water hardness, decent lighting, and enough fast-growing plants. Take it easy on tank cleaning as tank debris provides plant nutrients. Start out small (5-10 gallon tank or bowl) to gain experience and accumulate acclimated plants. - [Diana Walstad's Books and Articles](#)