

MOVING HOME

harrogate aquatic
AQUARIUM & POND SPECIALISTS

Moving house with your aquarium isn't as complicated as it sounds, especially if you plan it properly. If possible, do it on a separate day to moving all the rest of your furniture and belongings so you can give it your full attention. You'll need a few essentials—there is a check list on the back to help you work out what you need.

1. Plan where the tank is going in the new house: pick somewhere away from draughts and direct sunlight. Make sure the floor is level and stable (no bouncy floorboards!) and there are electric sockets in reach. Think through what access you will need to water and drains for maintenance. Check it isn't going to be in the way of doors opening and think about whether you'll be replacing carpets or redecorating in the room: better to temporarily set it up in another room now to limit how many times you need to move it.
2. Spread towels out on the floor around the tank just in case! Take out your filter and any loose décor. Ideally transport the filter in a bucket of water so the good bacteria in the sponges doesn't dry out. Don't clean out your filter sponges or swap them for new ones—you need the mature bacteria to travel with you! If you can't transport it in water, wrap it tightly in a plastic bag or cling-film.
3. Catch your fish and put them in fish bags. This is the safest and gentlest way to transport fish and get them used to any change in water chemistry in their new home. Don't mix different types of fish or put too many fish in the same bag. Be especially careful catching catfish as they often have armour-plated scales and sharp tips on their fins: they can easily get tangled in a net or pierce a bag. Ideally catch them in a container (large plastic food box or ice cream tub etc) and transport them in that. As a general rule you need $\frac{1}{3}$ water and $\frac{2}{3}$ air in each bag or container—this means there is plenty of air to oxygenate the water in transit.
4. Put the fish bags in an insulated box so they stay at a constant temperature. For long journeys (more than a few hours) it's best to have a heat pack. You can use a coolbox/freezer bag or give us about a week's notice if you want to borrow some of our polystyrene boxes.
5. If the chaos of catching the fish has made the water in the tank cloudy, let it clear and settle before you do anything else.
6. Siphon out as much of the mature aquarium water as you can (without stirring up any of the gravel) and take it with you. The more mature water you can take, the less chance you have of upsetting the balance and more chance of settling the fish in safely. Transport the water in jerricans, buckets with lids, toy boxes, clean dustbins etc. Don't use buckets that have had bleach or cleaning products in. You can make splash-proof lids for buckets with cling-film and tape round the edges—this will stop 'sloshing' in the car/van but you'll still need to make sure the buckets are wedged in tightly so they can't tip over.
7. Scoop out the gravel and clean it thoroughly (with mature aquarium water, not tap water) if you are keeping it. Now is a good opportunity to swap it for new gravel if you are ready for a change of décor. Do not attempt to move the aquarium until **ALL** of the water and gravel has been removed, as you run the risk of straining the silicone seams (which will make it leak in the future) or even cracking the glass.
8. Carefully carry the empty tank outside and hose it off (it's safe to do this with tap water as you've safely stored the mature water and filter bacteria). Now is also a good time to give any stubborn algae patches a good scrub! When it's clean, load it into the van or car and cushion it with polystyrene or cushions and bedding. Load the stand or cabinet in and all your water conditioners etc! Make sure these don't get mixed in with everything else on the journey as you'll need them quickly for setting the tank up at the other end!
9. When you arrive, carry the cabinet in and put it in position, making sure you can reach the sockets to plug the filter, lights and heater in when you need to. Next bring the tank in and ideally use a spirit level to check it's level before you start adding water. Stand back and

check that it looks right where you've put it—now is the time to decide on the location before it's full of water and too heavy to move!

10. Spread towels out in front of the tank as this next bit usually involves splashed water or spilled gravel! Add the gravel to the tank (either new or original). Place a bowl in the gravel and start pouring in the mature water you've brought with you so it cascades gently over the bowl (don't pour directly onto the gravel as you'll end up with very cloudy water for a few days!). When the tank is half full, add your decorations and plants—it's easier to do this while the water level is low. You can also add the filter and heater at this stage but don't turn them on until the water level is high enough to cover them.
11. Switch on your filter and heater but leave the aquarium lights off at this stage. Unpack the fish and float the bags on the surface. After about 10 minutes you can open the bags and tip the fish and water into the tank. This is a quicker acclimatisation time than when you buy new fish as they are simply going back into the water they are used to and you are only allowing time to equalise any temperature difference.
12. The fish will now be cruising around in the tank, possibly looking pale and sluggish, but they should regain their colour and confidence after a couple of hours. Leave them in the dark for a few hours to settle. Don't worry if they don't want to eat on the first day—they will be disoriented from the journey and change of environment and may take a few days to relax.
13. The water level now needs topping up but do this gradually, e.g. raise the level about an inch every hour. Remember to add water conditioner/dechlorinator to the new water before it goes in the tank. Add a double-dose of live filter bacteria to help boost the filtration and replace any bacteria lost in the move.
14. Over the next few days monitor the pH, ammonia and nitrite levels carefully as the balance of the water chemistry may have changed during the move. After a few days you can clean out your filter sponges in a bowl of tank water (not under the tap) which will remove any extra debris stirred up from the gravel.

You will need:

- Polystyrene Boxes
- Nets
- Fish bags
- Dechlorinator
- Filter Bacteria
- Test Kit
- Thermometer
- Buckets
- Towels!
- Siphon/ Gravel Cleaner
- Algae Pad/Scraper

While you're at it, do you need to change your...

- Gravel?
- Ornaments?
- Background poster?
- Suction cups on your heater and filter?
- Plants?

If you need to borrow polystyrene boxes, buckets or jerricans give us about a week's notice. We ask for a £10 deposit for buckets and jerricans (which you get back once you return them) and charge 10p each for fish bags.

 Got questions? Talk to us!

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