

GRAVEL CLEANERS

harrogate aquatic
AQUARIUM & POND SPECIALISTS

A gravel cleaner is probably one of the most useful cleaning gadgets you will use—simple and cheap but essential! The only downside to them is that they are never supplied with useful instructions so we often hear the phrase “Oh yes, I bought one but could never get it to work so it’s just in the shed somewhere...” Well, go and get it out of the shed, grab a bucket, and try again—you won’t look back!

What is it?

Its basically a collection cup attached to a long hose. Its job is to suck all of the hidden debris and sludge from under the gravel and send it down the tube into your bucket. By removing this organic waste, you limit the risk of algae and water quality problems that would otherwise be caused by letting it decompose under the gravel. At the same time, you are draining water out ready for your water change—two jobs in one—winner!

How do you do it?

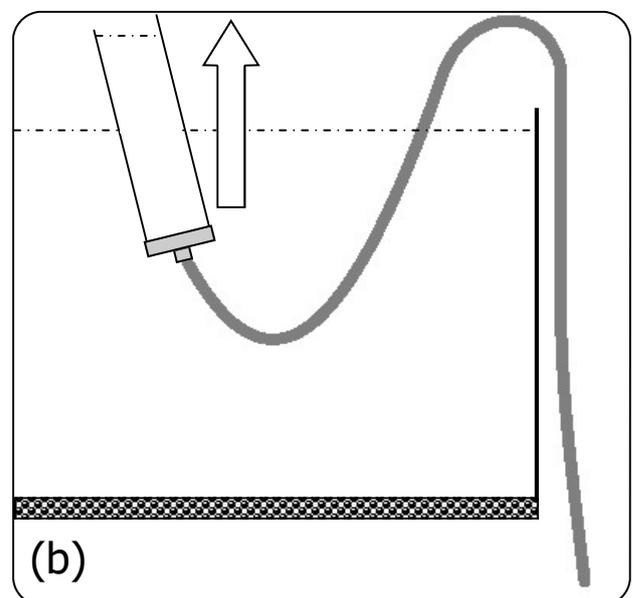
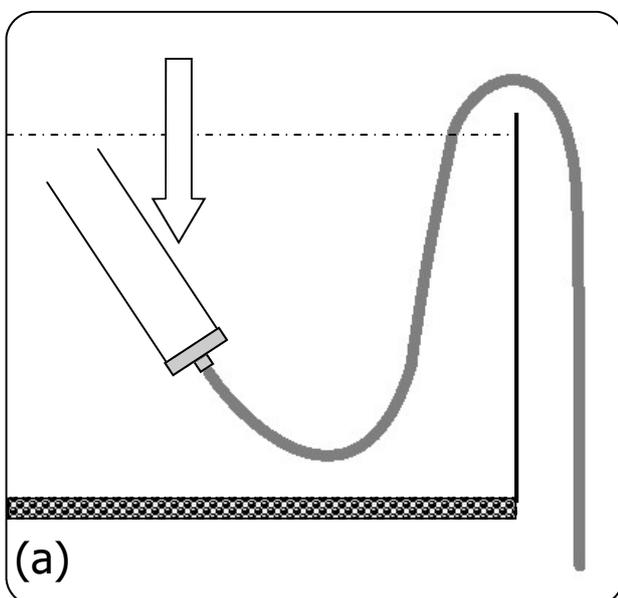
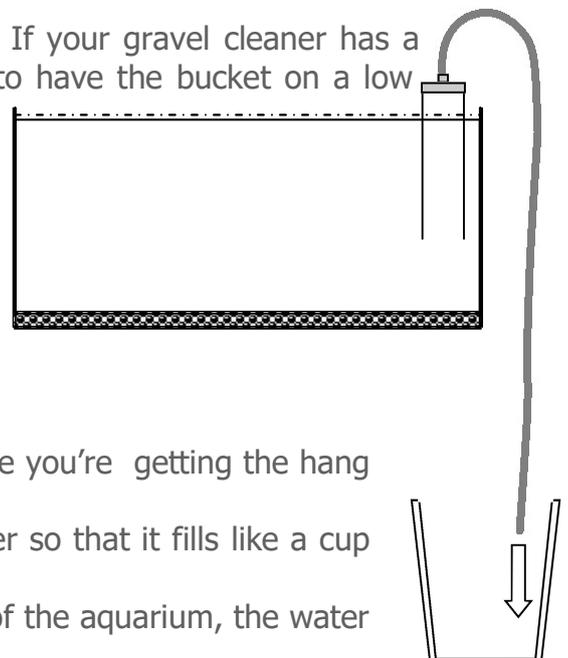
1. Set up the bucket on the floor next to the tank. If your gravel cleaner has a short hose or your tank is quite tall, it can be easier to have the bucket on a low stool or chair.

The gravel cleaner drains water from your tank using gravity: as long as the bucket is lower than the water level in the tank it will work! The bigger the height difference, the faster the water will flow, so having the bucket on the floor will give you a faster flow than if it was on a stool. Faster isn’t necessarily better—if the water flow is too fast you will find you’ve drained half your tank before you’ve cleaned all of the gravel!

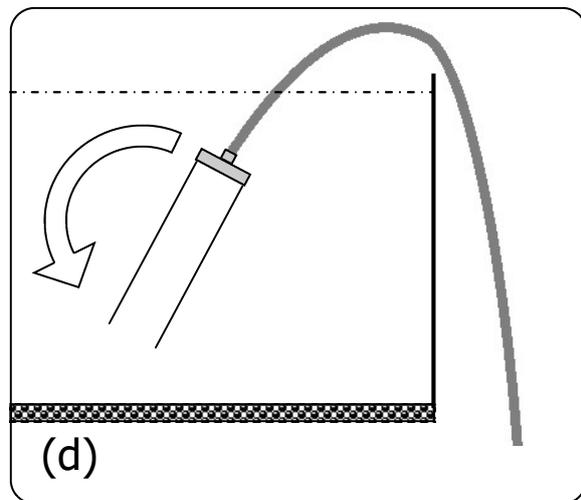
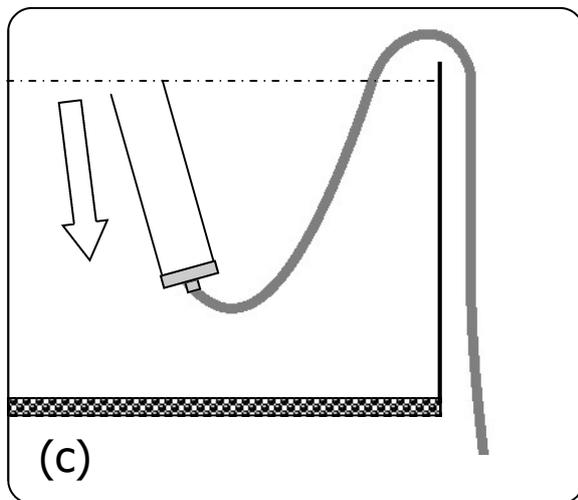
It’s a good idea to have towels spread on the floor while you’re getting the hang of it and in case of accidental spillages!

2. Push the gravel cleaner completely under the water so that it fills like a cup (a) then lift slowly up out of the water (b).

You will notice that once you’ve lifted it above the top of the aquarium, the water

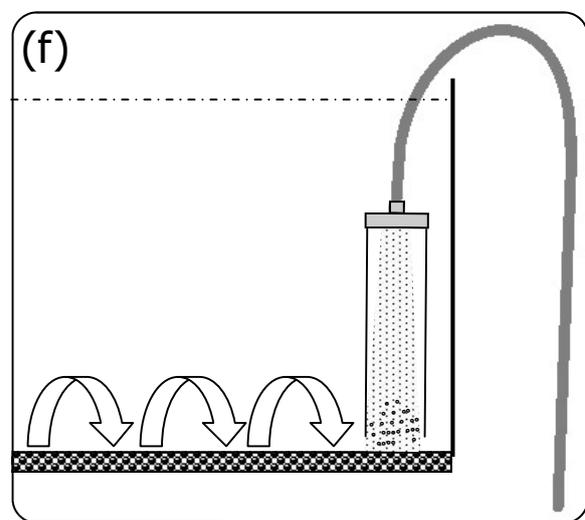
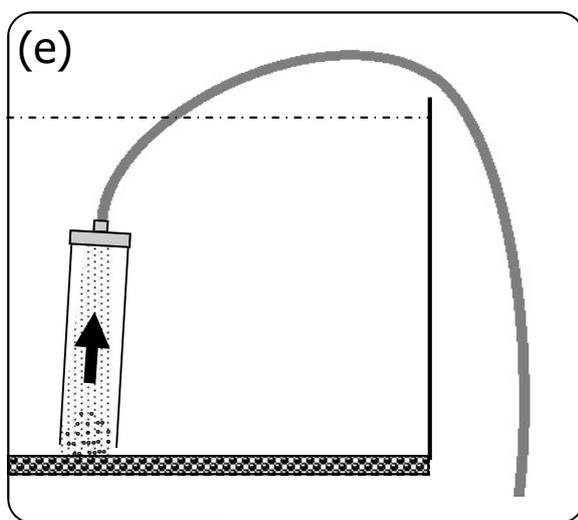


will start to run down the hose into the bucket. Before the level in the gravel cleaner has reached half way, slide it back under the water so it is now constantly siphoning water from the tank into the bucket (c).



Keeping the gravel cleaner under the water, slowly turn it over until the open end is about an inch above the gravel (d).

Gently press the gravel cleaner into the gravel: you will notice the gravel lift into the tube and bits of sludge/waste will swirl up the tube and into the bucket (e). After a few seconds, slowly lift the tube out of the gravel, pause until the bits of gravel drop back out of the tube and then move onto the next bit of gravel. Work slowly



and methodically in rows from one side of the tank to the other (f).

Keep one eye on how fast the bucket is filling: it's easy to get carried away and end up with wet feet! If you need to stop the flow at any time you can fold/kink the hose, and you can hold the hose poised to kink it as an 'emergency brake' while you work. Once the bucket is full, rotate the gravel cleaner so it's facing upwards again and lift it right out of the water until the pipe is empty. (Don't lift it out of the water while it's still facing downwards or you'll send a wave of sludge back into the tank when it leaves the water surface!)

Got questions? Talk to us!

harrogate_aquatic@hotmail.co.uk

@hg8aquatic

07514 506156

01423 869590