



Helping You Succeed With Your Saltwater Aquarium



**150 Things**

**I Wish I Had Known**

**About Reefing!!!**

**All Those Tips You Could Have Done With 5 Minutes Ago!**

## HELLO & WELCOME!

How many times, not just in your aquarium hobby, but life in general, have you done something and then found out a great Sanity Saving Tip afterwards!?

Plenty I Imagine!

This is how it is for me. I swear I'm one of those people that seem to spend hours researching, doing, or even better, screwing up only to have then found out that one piece of Golden Information that would have helped prevent this road to hair loss! - My wife Stacey tells me I cannot blame the kids, so I have to blame it on something!

I created this list to not only pass on as much of the many great things I have learned over my decades of Reef Keeping, but also to help me find new tips I did not know about.

I spent weeks scouring the search engines and forums to try and find as many tips as I could so that even if just one tip helps you not run for the hills, then all this work will be worth it!

Enjoy!



**Richard**  
Founder & Owner  
The Beginners Reef

## HERE WE GO!!

1. Knowledge is power - Hence The Beginners Reef
2. Patience is everything - The more you have or develop the better!
3. Start slow - Build the solid foundation first!
4. You WILL get addicted - If you are not already!
5. It's going to get expensive - Just accept it!... And hide the receipts from your spouse ;)
6. When in doubt – don't do it - This is a BIG one!
7. Don't get lazy with maintenance - Procrastination Kills!
8. Don't chase tank parameters - Your tank will find its own levels to some degree
9. Use only quality test kits – I have used only Salifert test kits for years
10. Take pride showing your tank, you will have earned it!
11. Get the biggest tank you can afford and fit - More stable but more expense
12. Don't get too many tanks – They will all suffer - Focus your efforts
13. Never compromise on quality - wait and save that little but longer
14. Research every animal you want to have - habitat, food, compatibility
15. Don't cycle your aquarium with fish. Its cruel! - Use a bacteria culture like Dr Tim's
16. ALWAYS quarantine new livestock - An ounce of prevention.....



Shoaling Green Chromis

17. Your tank mini-cycles every time you add livestock - Only add a few animals at a time
18. Don't buy a fish because 'It Looks Cool'
19. Never impulse buy! It will bite you!
20. Keep schooling fish in a school.

Green Chromis are an easy, hardy fish that are perfect for the beginner. Keeping them in odd numbers seem to survive longer for some strange reason!

## MORE...

21. Create a fish stocking plan to check for compatibility while tank is cycling
22. ALWAYS Acclimate your new fish slowly over an hour – QT (Quarantine tank) preferred
23. Learn what fish you CANNOT have in your tank
24. Many fish jump when startled, keep your tank covered with mesh or canopy
25. Buy a good variety of Clean-Up-Crew critters to look after various cleaning jobs. Scarlet Hermit Crabs are great detritus eaters while not as aggressive towards your snails when they want a new shell!
26. You don't need a huge clean-up-crew package that stores recommend
27. Don't buy all your cleanup crew at once. Stagger them as their food source grows
28. Provide empty shells for Hermit Crabs – Keeps your snails safe from attack!
29. Only keep Angelfish in large +150G aquariums
30. Do not keep more than one Pygmy Angelfish in a tank



Scarlet Hermit Crab

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## Always Use FRESH WATER To Top Off Evaporation Loss

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31. Have a variety of meaty, green, pellet and microscopic foods
32. Mandarin Goby's only for established tanks with large, reproducing Pod populations
33. Damselfish and large Clownfish can become very mean!
34. Don't put a Tang in a small tank – Min 75 Gal for one only!
35. Don't overfeed your fish
  
34. Learn what corals you CANNOT have in your tank
37. Let you and your aquarium mature several months before adding corals
38. Start your journey into corals with easy corals like zoanthids and Palythoas
39. Learn about Palytoxin Poisoning - Its Very Rare but it could save your life!
40. Don't buy a coral that grows like weeds because your new tank is bare

## AND MORE...

41. Research if that coral is going to sting its neighbors
42. Research how big a coral is going to get
43. Always dip your corals - Kill those unwanted hitchhikers!
44. Always inspect your new coral and plug for pests & nuisance algae
45. When able, get into coral fragging and make some \$\$\$
46. Always wear protection when fragging - See Palytoxin Poisoning
47. Don't hand feed your fish - You can pass on bacterial diseases to them
48. Beware of anemones, they can move or release and get sucked into powerheads
49. Use coral food to enhance colors - *Reef Roids*, *Reef Chili* & *Coral Frenzy* are great!
50. Buy nori from the grocery store - Cheaper than the fish store
51. Beach sand and play sand will only cause you problems - Sand from Carib-Sea Is great
52. Add liquid garlic to fish food - Helps fish immune system
53. Make your own frozen food - It will save you a fortune! Blend it and freeze in Zip-Locs
54. Have a QT tank ready to be set up quickly - Mine cost <\$100 and can be setup in 10 min
55. Have a staple of common medications on hand - Cupramine & Prazipro are good basics

Stinging Sweeper Tentacles

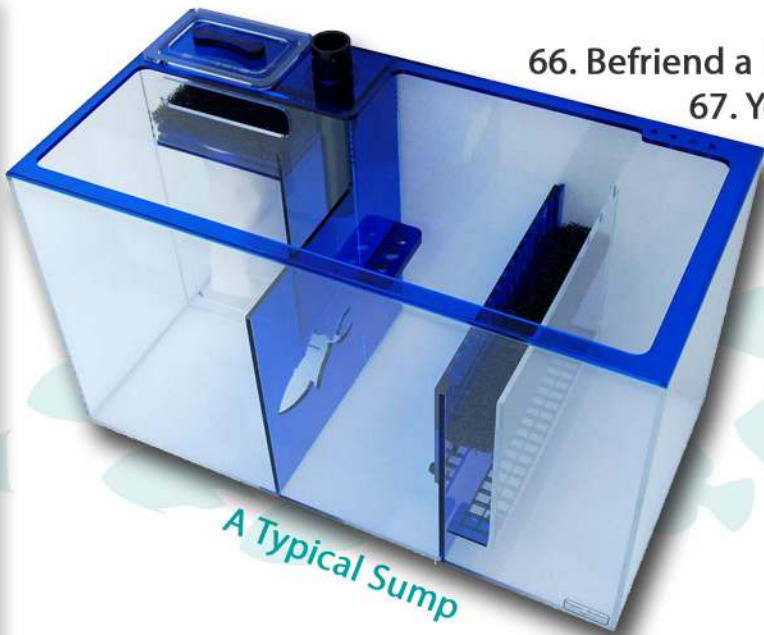


## Water Changes Are A Great Way To Reduce Nitrates

56. Take quick action to remove a sick fish - Prevent it spreading an illness or disease
57. Never leave a dead animal to rot away - It will spike Ammonia, Nitrate & Phosphate
58. Learn the different fish & coral diseases to spot any signs early
59. Learn about nuisance pests and algae like Aiptasia, Asterna Snails, Bryopsis
60. Get your family supporting your reef - It is a family member

## YEP MORE...

- 61. Never go to a local fish store without a plan
- 62. Don't always believe what your guy at the store recommends!
- 63. Never impulse buy livestock – Always research
- 64. Not everyone is right – Ask lots
- 65. Join an aquarium club and get on the forums



A Typical Sump

- 66. Befriend a local reefer to come to your rescue if needed
- 67. Youtube is great for reefing 'How-To' videos
- 68. Plan your tank – Moving it is very stressful
- 69. Get a drilled tank or have it drilled for a sump
- 70. Get a sump - Hide all that equipment!
- 71. Set the stand height for optimum viewing - Looking down on coral improves color
- 72. Have a power outage plan
- 73. Have a vacation sitter plan
- 74. Dry Rock is the best if you dont want pests and hitchhikers
- 75. Refugiums work – Get one installed

- 76. Always have Fresh RO/DI water stored and ready to go
- 77. Have backup equipment – Especially Heaters & Pumps
- 78. Always rinse hands before putting in the tank
- 79. Awesome tanks begin with awesome aquascape planning
- 80. Bare bottom tank looks un-natural in my opinion



## STILL MORE...

81. Never work on your tank when you are tired
82. Never test your water parameters when you are drinking alcohol
83. Never adjust anything if you're tipsy! - Alcohol has led to many a tank crash!
84. Test, Test, Supplement, Wait, Test, Tweak
85. Keep dog toys and kid's toys out of the room – Flying Objects Break Tanks!
86. Get in the habit of touching your tank when you pass – Temp check
87. If your tank relies on house AC, keep it serviced and on when you're away
88. Have a digital water thermometer with alarm as an easy indicator
89. Get an aquarium controller - I will never have a tank without one!
90. Automation can be a great time-saver, but keep it maintained and monitored
91. LED's are intense and can bleach coral - Coral acclimation is essential
92. Never ship livestock in the dead of summer/winter
93. Get a polystyrene box and heat pack for transporting livestock long distance
94. All electrical outlets should be GFCI protected – Test them regularly
95. Fit a smoke alarm near your equipment or in your stand! - It may save your home!



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## Train a Fellow Reefer On Your System Before Leaving On Vacation

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96. Clean the glass often and make it sparkle
97. Saltwater dripping on an electrical powerbar can cause fires
98. Don't steal your partner's kitchen utensils – Get your own!
99. Have a good supply of 'Old Towels' for tank use only
100. Don't spray aerosol air fresheners in the same room as the tank

## AND MORE...

101. Keep on top of salt creep
102. Fully operate any plumbing valve every week to keep it from seizing
103. Always properly secure any electrical equipment
104. Always install drip loops in power cords
105. Change bulbs and filters when recommended

## Painting The Back Panel (Non-Water Side!) Black Makes Coral Colors 'Pop'



Wifi Camera

106. Webcams on your tank when on vacation relieve anxiety
107. Teach what you have learned – Welcome to The Beginners Reef!
108. Help other new tank owners
109. Only adjust one thing at a time and wait before trying something else
110. Always have 2 online heaters – Don't rely on just one
111. Service your chiller filter regularly in summer
112. Buy the best equipment you can afford
113. Secondhand equipment is gold
114. Saltwater rusts tools. Keep them rinsed and dry
115. Watch your tank in the middle of the night with a red flashlight – It's a different world!

### Popping Coral Colors

116. Don't let kids tap on the tank
117. Put a lock on your stand if you have kids
118. Keep your chemicals, supplements and tools out of kids reach
119. Don't just buy it because it's shiny
120. Buy what you need – But buy the best





## ALMOST THERE...

121. Magnetic Algae scrapers Rule!
122. Mag Scrapers with razor blades Rock! Glass Tanks Only!
123. Keep razor blades away from tank seams
124. Never pull out a power cord with wet hands
125. Keep a running journal/whiteboard of test parameters
126. Learn how to acclimate new corals to LED lights, especially SPS
127. Buy a magnifying glass and learn about Redbugs when getting into SPS
128. Keep your filter floss clean or replaced regularly
129. Never clean filter media under the faucet – Rinse in used tank water
130. Deep 'Picture Window' tanks suck for cleaning
131. Plan for access to each corner of your tank
132. Keep floor area clear when working on a tank
133. Place down towels on the floor when working in the tank
134. Use good steps if required – Not a chair!
135. Ensure your new salt mix is identical to existing water parameters
136. White vinegar baths are great for cleaning equipment
137. Copper-based fish medications can kill some corals/Inverts
138. Nitrates are lowered through water changes
139. Buy a battery-operated air pump for power outages
140. Find a tank you like and learn all about it, their setup, maintenance etc



## FINALLY...

- 141. Water flow is King in a tank with corals
- 142. Buy the biggest Protein Skimmer you can afford and fit
- 143. Do not use Crushed Coral as a substrate
- 144. UV Sterilizers are not needed
- 145. Air Bubbles are bad for a saltwater tank – Airpumps for power outages ONLY!
  
- 146. Do not use Test Strips for testing – Not accurate
- 147. More light is better for corals
- 148. Install an Automatic Top-Off (ATO)
- 149. Never add a chemical you cannot test for
- 150. Always run carbon on a reef tank



Gyre Wave Maker

## 3 MORE FOR LUCK!

- 151. Own a Refractometer
- 152. Filtration is not a place to cheap out on
- 153. Always use RO/DI filtered water in your tank, ATO & water change

That's It!!!

Well there is just a small election of many tips that you will find during your journey! I hope that as you find more you also pass them on to save someones sanity!

Many of these tips are covered in far greater detail by articles on TheBeginnersReef.com I highly recommend you head over to the website article index to easily find the topic you are searching for and hopefully it answers it for you!

<https://thebeginnersreef.com/easy-article-finder/>