

Step by Step Guide to Fishless Cycling

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Things you will need:

- "Pure" Ammonia (usually purchased as an all-purpose cleaner, make sure it doesn't have dyes, scents or anything else added)
- Test Kits : Ammonia (NH₃/NH₄), Nitrite (NO₂), Nitrite (NO₃)
- An eyedropper
- A new tank, full of water, with a filter on and running
- (optional) A heater and airstone. The heater should be set to keep the temperature in the 80s
- (optional) a bacteria seed from an established tank. This can be an ornament, a plant, a nylon stocking with some gravel, or better yet, some of the filter media.

Firstly, you should add enough ammonia to your tank that it brings the Ammonia reading up to 4 to 6 ppm. The only way to do this is add a drop of ammonia, swirl it around, wait a moment, test the water and repeat. Remember how much ammonia you've added. It will vary depending on what concentration of ammonia you've bought, so there is no real guideline here.

Each day check your ammonia until it reads 0. When it reads 0, start adding the initial amount of ammonia every day and testing an hour later. When the ammonia reading drops to 0, start testing for Nitrite an hour after adding the ammonia.

Keep adding the ammonia, and checking the Nitrite every day. The nitrite level should climb, then drop down to 0. This spike will occur over a period of days, so be patient. When your nitrites are at 0 an hour after you add the ammonia, your tank should be cycled. Check your Nitrate to be sure. If your Nitrate reading is high, then you're on the right track.

Now do a big water change (50% to 75%), and add fish.

Congratulations, you're cycled!