

Aquarium therapy

Aquarium therapy is the use of an [aquarium](#) to provide potential [health](#) benefits.^[1]

Health Benefits

Contemplation of fish in an aquarium seem to have a significant effect in reducing levels of [stress](#) and [anxiety](#). The effects of the presence of an aquarium on patients awaiting [electroconvulsive therapy](#) were examined in 2004 study by Purdue. While statistically significant differences in [blood pressure](#) and heart rate between the test and control were not found, the patients demonstrated a 12% reduction in self reported pre-treatment anxiety.^[2] In a 1985 study of dental patients, both contemplation of an aquarium and [hypnosis](#), used together or alone, produced a significant increase in relaxation in comparison to a control group and a group of patients who contemplated a poster. This study also found that hypnosis did not augment the effects of exposure to an aquarium. Degrees of relaxation were determined by both subjective and objective criteria, and included blood pressure and heart rate.^[3] Additional studies confirm that watching fish in an aquarium can be effective in reducing anxiety in patients awaiting [dental surgery](#).^[4] Observation of aquaria has also been shown to reduce muscle tension and pulse rate in elderly subjects in comparison to control groups who watched a placebo video tape or a video tape of an aquarium.^[5]

Although aquarium owners often report problems with maintaining tank cleanliness and controlling temperature and water balance, they also claim that watching fish has a calming effect and creates a feeling of serenity.^[6]

Other Health Benefits

A Purdue study in 2009 examined the effect of aquariums on the [nutritional](#) intake of patients diagnosed with [Alzheimer's disease](#). The study followed 60 patients in three [health care](#) facilities. In two facilities patients were exposed to aquaria, and the patients in the third facility were used as a control group and exposed to paintings of seascapes. Patients exposed to the aquaria averaged an increase of 17.2 percent in the amount of food they consumed. Weight also increased significantly, and the patients required fewer [nutritional supplements](#). In addition to the nutritional benefits, there was also a noticeable decrease in physically aggressive behaviors among the patients.^[7]

The [Mystic Aquarium](#) in [Mystic, Connecticut](#) has a program designed to help children with learning and developmental challenges enhance their social skills. The program uses "touch and learn" sessions with aquatic invertebrates to facilitate relaxation and development of social skills.^{[8][9]}

Feng Shui

In feng shui, moving water is considered beneficial in balancing chi, and a well maintained aquarium in the right location increases wealth and luck. ^{[[unreliable source?](#)]}

[10][11]

References

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