

## M.T.S. Multiple Tank Syndrome: A FishGeeks Tale

Written by

Monday, 02 May 2005 21:35 -

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It all starts out so simple. You have finally decided to get that little fish tank that stares at you everytime you go to your local fish store (LFS). Oh, how hard can this whole fish keeping thing be, you say to yourself. This harmless little 10 gallon tank would be such a nice addition to the house. Little do you, your family, and wallet know that this cute little 10 gallon tank will grow to be a monster!

For me it started when my little girl would not sleep in her own bed at night. The idea was brought up to get a little 10 gallon fish tank to stick in her room, to give her comforting friends, and a little light to help her get to sleep. That was roughly 5 years ago. Since then her mother and I were divorced and have since both remarried. Everyone from both families get along well, so in the end it worked out well. Word came that the little 10 gallon fish tank was on its way out of her Moms home. It seems the tank was no longer welcome in the room that it had spend so much time in. My wife and I decided that maybe we could become fish tank masters, so we decided to rescue the poor fish from an uncertain fate. We had also decided that maybe a 10 gallon would be a little smaller than we would like to start with, so we went looking at the LFS to see what the going rate was for a slightly bigger tank. Well we searched through the entire row of tanks most of which came with tank, stand, and hood and although I secretly was pulling for the 55 Gallon, the wife thought maybe it was a little big for the room we had in our house. The nice corner tank also looked appealing, but cost a little more than we wanted to spend so we decided on the 30 gallon regular. Just a shade over \$150.00 if I remember right seemed like a good deal to us so we gave each other the nod and strolled over to the equipment isle. We had both had a little experience with fish tanks so we knew the basics that we would need. We loaded up the cart with a couple bags of gravel, an underground filter, a HOB hang on back filter, a heater, a thermometer, an air pump with bubbewall, and and assortment of decorations one of which I fell in love with that was prominently displayed in one of the display tanks. Well the \$150.00 price tag needless to say grew by leaps and bounds even with the 10% discount we received by purchasing it all there. Holy snikees good thing we only have to do this once!

Now we were feeling all warm and fuzzy about our new hobby. That is also when the first symptoms of MTS started creeping in and rearing its funny little head. It seemed my best friend had in his possession a little 30 gallon hex tank that he has had for years. He used to keep a gecko in it back when we were roommates after high school. He has since been married to a nice girl who happen to have a little girl. She wanted to try fish keeping so my buddy went out and bought the stuff needed to transform the tank into an actual fish tank again. I think it lasted all of about a month. The fish were all gone and the tank was put into the basement for another few years of dormancy. My friend then said the MTS growing words... "You can have it it you want it". Ohhh yah this will be great I thought. Just think of all the fish we can have with 2 tanks. A brief discussion with my wife brought us to the conclusion that it was indeed a good idea, after all it was free right. Well the tank had an in tank filter that I knew wouldn't suffice so I bought another HOB to match the one that was in the 30 Regular ( same size filter bags...brilliant). The gravel was neon colored...hmmm thats no good better buy new gravel. What there is no heater in here either, tosses a heater in the cart. I don't even what to tell you how many stores we had to go to to find a little light strip for the top. Don't forget to add some more of those got to have decorations, and what had been a free tank turned into another wallet attack. Holey Snikees good thing we won't have to do this again!

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Tank three was the one that actually started the whole ordeal. The original 10 gallon tank that had not been a part of the new plan was now sitting in its new perch on top of the entertainment center. Well what the heck you know, we might as well use it. If you are thinking another free tank you are right, out came the wallet monster. The tank had a major algae problem and the filter that was running without a filter bag was pretty nasty. The rocks were sitting in about a half inch of the green stuff and of course it had no heater either. Cha-Ching its back to the LFS store for a new HOB filter, heater, gravel, odds and ends, and of course the had to have decorations. This is sick I thought as I pushed my debt card through the charge machine for what seemed like, no what had to be the last time.

With a 30 gallon regular on one side of the corner couch, a 30 gallon hex on the other end, and a nice clean little 10 gallon on the entertainment center everything was settling in nice. The MTS bug had finally died down, and the debt card was firmly nested in my wallet. My little girl had a couple of male guppies in her tank and so we decided to put them in the 30 hex with the mollies. They turned out to be the germ that got the MTS back into swing. The little guppies would follow around our female mollies and bug them to no end. Finally we decided we should go and get them a little tank to live out the rest of their lives in. Besides my wife was eyeballing bettas and a little tank would be good for one after the mollies had passed on. Another trip to the LFS netted us tank number four, a nice little 2 1/2 gallon all glass aquarium. It was cheap, only about 7 bucks I think, and with the use of the old filter that was now cleaned up from the 10 gallon all we had to buy was some filter bags. What is this a cute little underground filter/bubbler on the markdown table, better add that. Once again out came mr. debt card, luckily it was an inexpensive trip.

Now with everything being whipped into a lather again the time of year for my birthday had arrived. I didn't pay to much mind to it but I seemed to always have one eye pointed toward a newspaper, an online classified, or e-bay. E-bay is a breeding ground for MTS. I did find a great deal on some plastic plants on E-bay though so the occasional glance at the tanks never hurt right. For now E-bay was not my poison it was an online classified. I had found a 75 gallon tank for sale \$300.00 or best offer. After some email negotiations I had come to the price of \$250.00 for a tank that needed nothing but water and fish! SWEET that would be a great birthday present to me. Well my wife kind of looked at me a little cross eyed, but agreed to let me have it. That weekend my daughter and I drove the 45 minutes and picked up the new tank, tank number 5. Full blown MTS was in the house and it felt so right. I thought half the needs for this tank I already had, water. Well the heater was kinda old so a little trip to the LFS should suffice. Heater..check. The gravel was mostly red and a little black which didn't really suit me so to go with the lesser evil we decided to get another bag of black gravel to tame it down a bit....check. Guess we will be needing some filter bags for the HOB...check. It is a very large tank so we need just a few gotta have decorations...check. Wallet open again for debit card, oh boy;.. check.

I was now in fish tank heaven. Fish here, fish there, fish EVERYWHERE.

The little betta tank, or tank number 6 as the tank flows, was a true freeby and cost me zilch. A small victory, but one that MTS sufferers should look at as an aspirin or placebo perhaps.

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Actually tank number 7 was around before I knew my wife. She has had this monster claw toed frog for 10 years in a 10 gallon tank. It was a gag gift from her sister, and the only gag to be had was Toadys'.

With the 2 30 gallon tanks bookending the sofa, the 10 gallon on the entertainment center, the betta hex and 2 1/2 gallon on the computer stand everything was once again in line.

MTS had then, under my nose, reached its pinnacle. E-bay had a auction for a tank. Not just any tank mind you , but a corner tank, one like we had ogled at when we first looked at tanks. It had a high bid of like \$70.00. Holy snikees that is the best deal on a tank that I have seen, and with just 6 hours left it would be a steal at that price. The palms were sweating, the legs started twitching, and I was rocking in my chair. I bet I could bid a hundred bucks and still wouldn't win right?? A quick peek over my shoulder convinced me the wife was not looking so I punched in 100.00 bid now.... Hmm I was outbid. HEHEHE it almost felt like I was 15 again sneaking a peek at a dirty magazine. I typed in again \$151.00. I took in a breath and hit the bid now button. What the heck I had been outbid again. This time however the bid again price revealed that with another small addition, say 5 bucks, I would be winning!! Ahh thats when the real sweating started. The visions of a corner tank were rooted firmly into my backbone. I could put some fire belly toads in the 30 regular if I won the 50 gallon corner tank, and have room for yet more fish. YES YES YES this is a great idea!! Hmm another glance over my shoulder and nobody was looking. \$155.00 BID NOW BABY. You are the current high bidder. Yahoo what a deal I am getting.... O sh#t I don't want another tank. Wait yes I do sweet....what am I doing.... The conversation I had with myself over that bid lasted what seemed years but was only really a few minutes. I got up from the desk and walked into the living room. I didn't know what to do. My wife is gonna shoot me in the head for this I thought. I couldn't bring myself to tell her, like when you break your moms flower pot when you were little and were afraid to fess up. I knew I had to tell her and after her saying I was acting funny for an hour we went to bed. The auction was ending at midnight so I didn't know if i was really gonna win or not. After beating around a fairly big bush I caved and told her. She understood, but made me agree to give up tank searching in the future. I agreed and fell asleep.

The next morning I rushed downstairs to see the picture of my new corner tank. I had in a few hours the previous night already planned out the whole thing. Getting the tank, sprucing it up, getting toads, moving fish, blah blah blah. Newts shortcuts..clickclick, Ebay..Click click, then it hit me in big bold letters. YOU WERE OUTBID> AUCTION OVER. Bittersweet is all I can say. I did have my hopes up, but knew it was probably a good idea for everyother reason that I lost. MTS's fever was high the night before but the fever broke and with it after all was said and done I was cool again.

Not to be outdone, I decided there must be a cheaper route to getting my fire belly toad tank. A quick call to a LFS found me tank number 8. A used 75 gallon tank. It needed a lot of tlc but it fit the bill nicely at 40 bucks.OF course another trip to another LFS cost me a bit to get stuff for the toads, but its all good.

The toad tank is on top of the entertainment center because there was no place else to put it. The 10 gallon tank is on the computer stand with the betta tank and 2 1/2 gallon. The 30 gallon

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is still sitting in its spot on the left of the couch, but now has a shelf above it for the 10 gallon clawtoed frog tank. The 30 gallon hex is also in its spot to the right of the sofa. We had to rearrange the dining room to fit the 75 gallon tank in about the only spot we could stick it. the bakers rack got moved to the dungeon, but it was only a small sacrifice. The table now sits in the middle of the room because we have no place for it to sit. We are now almost literally out of space for anything, and the house sounds like we live in the back of Niagra falls. We think its great!

I still keep an eye out for killer deals on tanks, but am committed not to buy anymore. Do you hear that MTS I will not buy anymore tanks! That in a nutshell is the story of one FishGeeks fight with MTS. Be wary my friends it can happen to you!

\*\*\*\*\*UPDATE\*\*\*\*\* July 16th 2005 I have since bought a 55 gallon tank off ebay and there is a used tank at the lfs I haven't talked my wife into yet. I'm trying though! MTS is still following me.....

\*\*\*\*\*UPDATE\*\*\*\*\* January 27tg 1006 I have a fishroom... I have had this for some time now, and am very happy with it. MTS is like the plague, but eventually it will run its course. I haven't bought a tank in several months, and started trading fish to find exactly what I want as far as fish go instead of finding a new tank to fill. I have 16 fishtanks with many different styles. Constantly learning more and more and passing what I find out to those who want the info. This should be the last update until I move to a new house and can give my tanks a little more room. Then I will deal with a new MTS also known as MegaTankSyndrome. That's a whole nother story... hehehe