

CATEGORY

TOPIC

v.

SeaClear System II

Water Levels –
Front vs. Back & Initial Filling of the Aquarium

1.0

One of our customers wrote in with questions about water levels in their System II Aquarium. We wanted to share the enthusiastic reply from one of our associates...

Dear Customer,

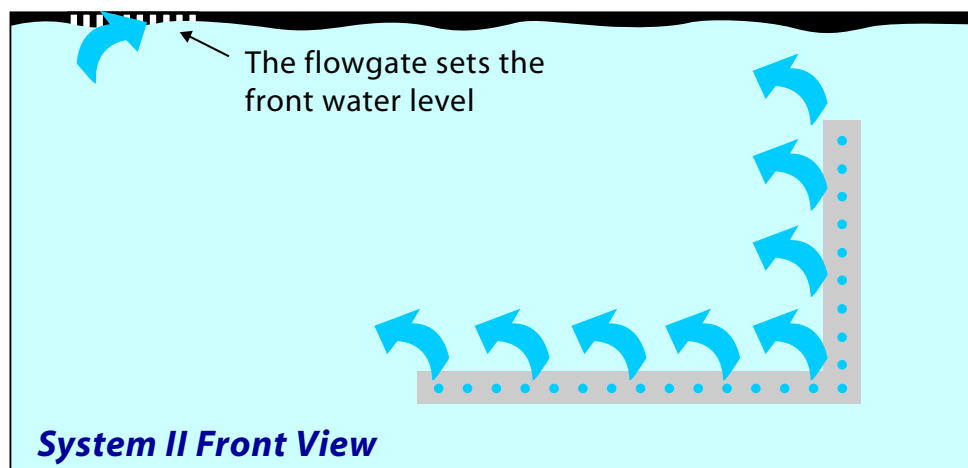
I am not sure if you want help understanding how the water level is set in both the front and back of the aquarium, or if you just want help during the initial filling of the aquarium. I will cover both just in case. This may be WAY TOO MUCH information... but better safe than sorry.

WATER LEVELS – FRONT AND BACK

I took a look at the text describing setting the water level, and can see where you might be confused, especially since I wrote it :-).

I will try to explain it a little better. There really isn't too much to the System II. To begin, let's go over how the water moves from the aquarium to the built-in filter and back again.

The pump is always pushing water from the back filter to the front aquarium. So the front will always have water coming into it. And the water will always be pouring out over the flowgate. How much water is in the front aquarium is set by the level of the flowgate. No matter where you set your flowgate, high or low, that is where the water level will stay. Most people keep their flowgate as high as possible because a full aquarium looks good!

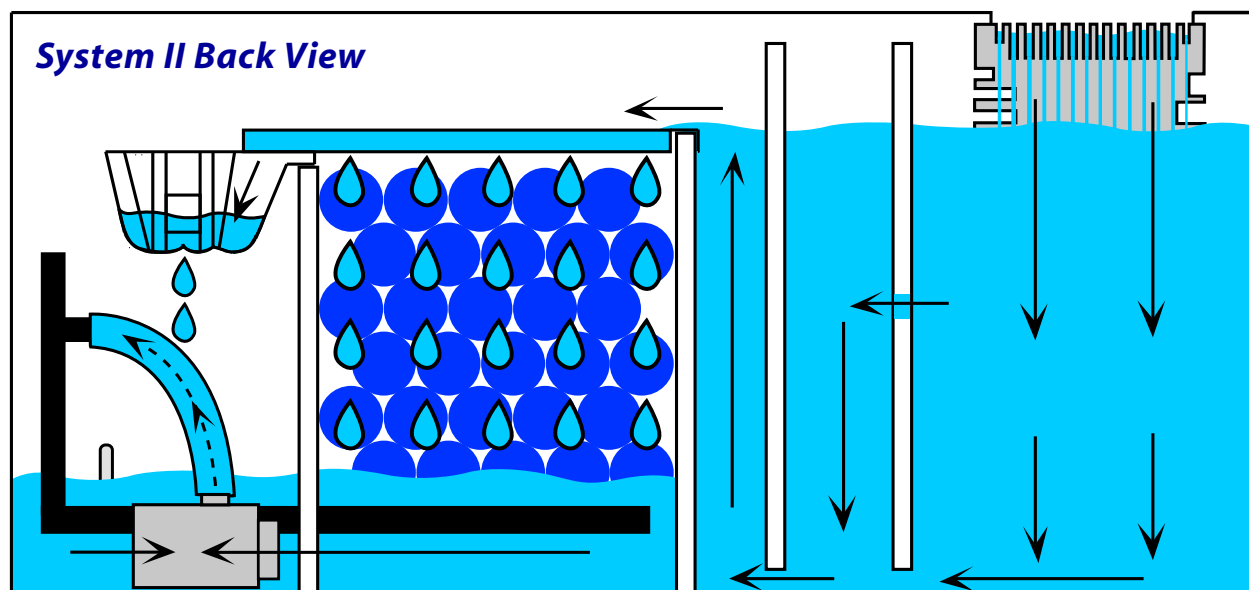


When the flowgate is set, we know the water level WILL NOT CHANGE in the front. The only place where the water level will change is in the back filter. However, there is no adjustable gates in the back, so how is the water level set in the filter? Easy, the water level in the filter is set by the TOTAL AMOUNT OF WATER in your System II.

Let me go over the back in general. Just as the front has only one exit, falling over the flowgate, the prefilter and skimmer/heater chambers also have only one exit. That exit is to flow over the drip tray. So, the prefilter and skimmer chambers will always be at the level of the drip tray.

That only leaves the bio-media and pump chamber. These two chambers are open to each other on the bottom, because there are slots cut in the divider that separates them. So the water level in the bio-chamber and the pump chamber will always be the same, though that level may change up and down together.

Not counting the front aquarium, whose level simply follows the flowgate, these chambers are the only chambers where the water level can change. This is because these two chambers are the only place where water exits from the bottom, via the pump, rather than falling from the top.



Whew!! Still with me?

The System II is a biological wet/dry filter. What is a biological filter? This means that little tiny bacteria grow on the bio-media (the blue balls), and they just love to gobble up the harmful elements in the water, and process them into other elements that aren't as nasty for the aquatic life in your aquarium.

Since the System II is a biological WET/DRY filter, you will get the best performance when there is AIR AND WATER (wet/dry) mixing together in the bio-media. That is why the water level is so important in the back filtration!

Too much water in the back and the bio-media will be entirely submerged. That is not good, too much wet and not enough dry. Too little water in the back and the pump will be pulling in air along with the water and shooting bubbles into the front of the aquarium. Not necessarily bad filtration-wise, but it doesn't look that great and is very noisy.

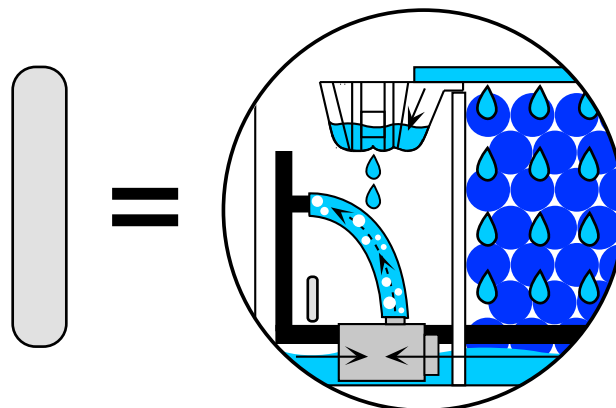
That is why we say in the instructions to keep the water level 1 to 2 inches above the top of the pump.

Okay! That is way more than anyone ever wanted to know about water levels and movement in the System II! Let's move on to...

WATER LEVELS - INITIAL FILLING OF THE AQUARIUM

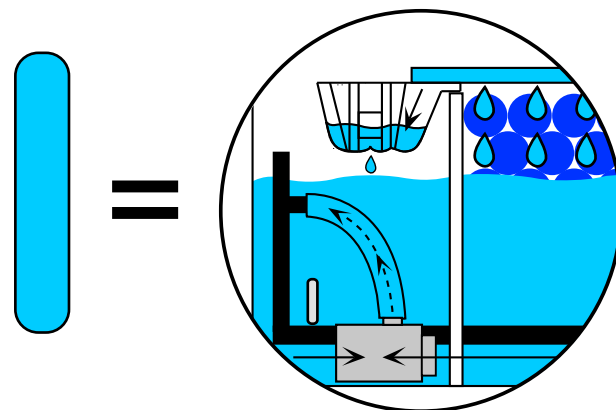
In the instructions we ask you to fill the aquarium up to an inch or two from the top and then plug in the pump. This is just an approximate amount of water and will need to be adjusted. When you plug in the pump, the water in your aquarium will begin to start the circulation process described above. After waiting a minute to let the water equalize between all chambers, you can begin to adjust the total amount of water.

If after a minute, the pump is blowing bubbles into the front aquarium, then you know you DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TOTAL WATER in your System II. Simply add more water until the bubbles stop and / or you see the water level in the middle of the view hole (#9 on instruction sheet). If you have a System II manufactured prior to 1998, which did not have a view hole, you can slid a compact mirror behind the aquarium and shine a flashlight on it to check your water level. Assuming of course, that there is enough room behind the aquarium to accomplish this.



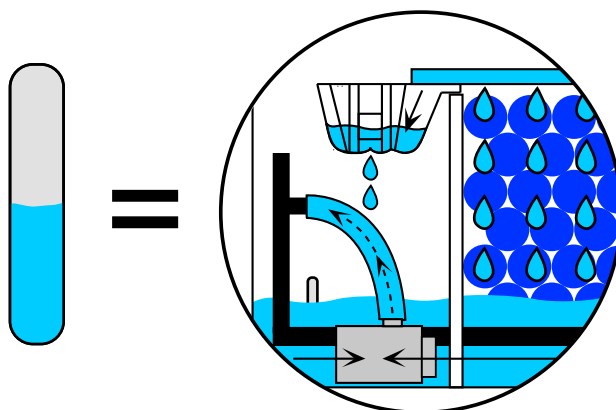
This System II doesn't have enough water...

If after a minute, no bubbles are coming into the front aquarium, and there is no water level visible in the view hole, then there is TOO MUCH TOTAL WATER in your System II. Remove water from the aquarium until you see the water level at the appropriate level in the view hole.



This System II has too much water...

If after a minute, no bubbles are coming into the front aquarium, and you see the water level in the back is in the middle of the view hole - pat yourself on the back - you put the perfect amount of water in on the first try!



This System II is just right!

TIP - A few months down the road, when you are performing water changes, all of these same rules apply for adjusting the water level. HOWEVER - we recommend at that time only adding and removing water from the back of the aquarium. Adding and removing water in the back is less stressful for the fish.