



As your water feature transitions out of winter hibernation, follow these simple steps to ensure that your water feature gets off to a great start each spring:

- Determine if your pond needs an all-out cleaning or if it just needs tidying-up.**
If you see a layer of crud (that's a technical term) at the bottom, most likely an all-out cleaning would be best. Small scattered amounts of debris can be cleaned up with a fine mesh skimmer net.
- If an all-out cleaning is necessary, drain your pond, clean the interior, and refill.**
When the pond is completely thawed, place a sump pump or siphon hose in the deepest part of your water feature and drain into the surrounding landscape. Relocate the hose several times to avoid flooding your landscape. When the pond is empty, remove large debris by hand and hose down the interior with a hose or pressure washer. Periodically turn on the pump to remove the dirty water. When the pond is clean, fill it with fresh water to operating level. Make sure pumps are properly submerged.
- Take good care of any fish during the cleaning process.**
Follow these steps to ensure a healthy transition for your fish:
 1. Fill a container with pond water before you start the draining process.
 2. Drain your pond partway, and then use a net to catch your fish.
 3. Place fish in container for duration of the cleaning process. Cover container with a net.
 4. When the pond is filled, dechlorinate the new water.
 5. Slowly add the new, dechlorinated water to the container that is holding the fish. Allow the fish to acclimate gradually to the new water. When the fish have acclimated, release them into the pond.
- Clean your filter, skimmer, and pump prior to water temperature reaching a consistent 50°.**
When the water temperature is at or below 50°—before bacteria have started to grow—clean the filter, skimmer, and pump. After you remove the filter media, remove the dirty water and debris at the bottom of the filter box. Rinse the filter thoroughly and put it all back in place. Rinse out your skimmer and pump.
- Check and start all pond equipment.**
Once your water feature and all equipment have been thoroughly cleaned and fish have been returned to their home, perform a couple quick checks: (1) use o-ring grease on couplings and (2) check your ground fault systems to verify proper functioning. Start all equipment; watch for leaks or flow problems.
- Test the water; add any additional equipment to ensure water clarity and quality.**
Perform a comprehensive water test to identify any water composition problems. In addition, you can get a head start on crystal-clear water with some additional equipment. Aeration devices increase oxygen flow and make it difficult for unpleasant algae to grow. This is also a good time to consider adding an ultraviolet (UV) clarifier to help remove algae. Consult your Tier One Landscape professional for details.
- Add bacteria when water temperature reaches a consistent 50°.**
Once the previous steps are completed, add beneficial bacteria such as Aquascape™ AquaClearer™ Extreme or Ecological Laboratories Microbe-Lift/PL®. This bacteria is vital to your pond ecosystem.
- Begin feeding any fish when water temperature reaches a consistent 55°.**
Consider starting to feed your fish with a low-temperature formulation; switch to regular food when the water warms up completely. Aquascape's Koi Balance™ is available in both formulations.
- Add new plants according to grower instructions; fertilize both existing and new plants.**
Different types of aquatic plants may be added to your water feature at different points throughout late winter and early spring. For example, submerged plants such as water lilies may be added to the bottom of your pond during the draining and clean-out process. Consult with your grower for full details, and be sure to fertilize according to grower instructions.