

Fountain Maintenance Checklist & Filter Guide

The weekly-and-monthly routine that keeps your cat's fountain an asset instead of a chore — tick-boxes, inspection points and the descaling steps.

Households don't fail at fountains on hardware — they fail on the calendar. Print this, tick as you go, and stick it inside a kitchen cupboard door.

Every Week

Rinse and refill the water — 1-2× per week. Stale water defeats the fountain's purpose.

Wash the basin + lid with hot water and a soft sponge. No soap residue — cats taste it.

Glance at the water level — a low reservoir makes the pump louder and run hot.

Every 2–4 Weeks

Replace the carbon filter. Clogged filters reduce flow and grow things.

Rinse the foam pre-filter if your model has one (extends carbon-filter life).

Every Month

Disassemble and clean the pump: separate the impeller, rinse hair and slime from the housing with hot water and a bottle brush.

Descalc if you have hard water (see page 2).

Per-material inspection: *steel* — dents, limescale rim; *ceramic* — run a finger inside for glaze cracks/hairlines, especially at the waterline; *plastic* — feel for roughness inside the basin (micro-scratches = biofilm territory; roughness after washing means it's time to replace).

Listen: a pump that rattles even after cleaning has a worn impeller — replace the pump, not the fountain.

Hard-Water Descaling (Monthly)

Mineral scale coats pump parts and sensors, making fountains louder and weaker. Mix 1–2 tablespoons of food-grade citric acid per litre of warm water (bulk citric acid is cheapest), disassemble the fountain, and soak the basin and pump parts 20–30 minutes. Scrub gently, rinse thoroughly until no residue remains, reassemble, and run one full reservoir of plain water before refilling for your cat. White vinegar works too — citric acid simply smells less.

Filter Cheat Sheet

Filter type	What it does	Change	Tip
Carbon cartridge	Removes odours, improves taste	Every 2–4 weeks	Buy multi-packs; check cartridge availability BEFORE buying the fountain
Foam pre-filter	Catches hair and debris	Rinse weekly; replace 1–3 months	Extends the carbon filter's life

Replace, don't clean, when:

a plastic basin stays rough or smells after washing · ceramic glaze cracks or chips · a pump rattles after cleaning (worn impeller) · filter cartridges have been discontinued. A fountain you can't get parts for is a bowl with extra steps.

Want the full comparison? Read *Best Cat Water Fountain: Stainless Steel vs Ceramic vs Plastic — The Honest Material Comparison* at smartcatcrm.com for the material tables, the placement-and-noise setup guide, and the honest limits of fountains.