

Cat Fountain Pump Maintenance and Troubleshooting



Fig 1: Dissembled Pump with Impeller Removed (and optional tweezers if needed to remove impeller from impeller well)



Fig. 2: Dissembled Pump with Front Cover and Impeller Cover removed, Impeller still in Motor/Impeller Well



Fig. 3: Assembled Pump with Tygon Tube

Cat fountain pumps are very simple and easy to clean and maintain. The pump is comprised of four parts (shown from top to bottom in Fig. 1 at left): the motor with the impeller well, the impeller, the impeller cover and the front cover with the flow intake lever.

To disassemble the pump for cleaning, first remove the front cover. It will resist a little but essentially simply snaps on and off.

The next piece on the pump is the impeller cover, a kidney bean shaped piece. Put your finger nail under the edge and pull it off. This reveals the impeller, a 3-blade plastic fan attached to a round magnet. The magnet holds the impeller in place inside the pump. At first it may appear that the impeller is securely attached but it will lift out easily once the magnetic connection is overcome. If you are unable to get it out with your fingers, you can use a pair of tweezers. Be careful not to damage it.

Removing and cleaning the impeller, cleaning it and inside the impeller well is essential to the maintenance of your fountain pump. If your pump stops working it is almost certainly because the impeller well has debris or mineral deposits in it and is impeding the turning of the impeller. Using a Q-tip swab, clean inside the well and rinse the impeller with tap water. If you have hard water, you can also get mineral build-up on the shaft over which the impeller fits and on the impeller itself. Customers have contacted us, telling us their pump has stopped working and they need to replace their pump. In the majority of situations, this is probably not necessary.

To get the pump working again if it has stopped, disassemble the pump as described above and clean the impeller and the impeller well. Put the impeller in a small bowl with white vinegar for two or three minutes. Do the same with the pump, making sure to submerge the impeller well in the vinegar and swish it around for two or three minutes to dissolve any remaining mineral deposits. You can also rinse or soak the front cover and the impeller cover with vinegar to remove any residual debris or build-up but this is not as critical in keeping the pump running. Rinse the impeller and pump with tap water and reassemble. Please note that the flow intake lever on the front cover must be moved to the “plus” side (all the way to the left) to allow the maximum amount of water to flow through the pump. If a slower flow is desired, you can adjust the water with this lever. In almost every case this is all that is needed to get the pump working like new again. With regular cleaning and maintenance, the pump should continue to work for years.