



**TO SAVE OR
TO FINANCE?**

**TIPS ON PAYING
— FOR YOUR NEXT —
INGROUND
SWIMMING POOL**

R&R Pools
...everyone deserves a little R&R

Inground swimming pools transform a backyard into an oasis of fun and relaxation. They're havens for fun and games, exercise, and quiet respite. But inground pools aren't cheap. There are ways to make them affordable, but they don't come free. If you're considering installing an inground pool but are unsure of how to pay for it, here are some tips to help you come up with a plan.

PAYING FOR A POOL: THREE OPTIONS

There are three ways to pay for a pool installation, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages:



SAVING

until you can pay for the pool yourself



FINANCING

the installation with a pool installation company, like Latham Pool Products



FINANCING

the expense through another financial institution

SAVING FOR A POOL

Saving for the expense has the most obvious advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, you won't have to pay interest or other fees associated with a loan. Families that don't want to go into debt especially appreciate this advantage. On the other hand, you won't have a pool to enjoy until you save enough to pay for it. For families with children who are quickly growing, this can be a concern.

How quickly your family can save enough for a pool will depend on your income, but many people can save enough in about a year. Families use a variety of strategies:

- Set aside a specific amount each pay period, week or month (e.g. \$100 per paycheck)
- Forgo a summer vacation or ski trip (a potential savings of thousands per getaway)
- Stop going out for dinner (a possible savings of \$50 to \$200 per meal out)
- Make coffee at home (saving \$5 on a daily latte, per person)
- Get a part-time job, from which the earnings are directed into a savings account

If you plan on saving for a pool with one or more of these strategies, get a quote so you have a target to save toward. Even if your final costs are different from the quote, having a specific goal will help you remain motivated.

FINANCING WITH LATHAM POOLS

Many families decide to take out a loan so they can install a pool without waiting months or years. Latham Pools has partnered with LightStream, an online lending division of SunTrust Bank, to help our customers who want financing. For customers with good credit, LightStream can provide unsecured loans from \$5,000 to \$100,000 at competitive, fixed rates and with no fees. Funds can be spent with any contractor or service provider, for any product you choose.



APPLY TODAY

In some cases, it may actually be cheaper to take out a loan and pay the interest on it. If pool installation costs rise in the next year, financing an inground pool now might be a financially better option than saving to install one in the future. The interest payments might be lower than the increase in installation costs.

While many financial institutions offer home improvement loans, Latham specifically partnered with LightStream because the company provides a level of service that's equal to Latham's commitment to their customers. You can complete the application, be approved, sign the loan agreement and receive your funds in as soon as one business day.[†]

Like Latham, LightStream stands behind their products and services. Not only do they promise to provide the highest level of service, but they offer a \$100 Loan Experience Guarantee, assuring you'll receive an outstanding loan process.[‡]

FINANCING WITH OTHER LENDING INSTITUTIONS

You could also finance an inground pool through another financial institution, such as your bank or credit union. If you look for an unsecured loan, you'll be hard-pressed to find better terms than LightStream offers. Their interest rates are among the lowest available, and they're able to provide a level of convenience that other lenders who don't work directly with Latham are unable to give you.

If you ask another financial institution about a secured loan, however, you'll find different interest rates. Secured loans require collateral that the bank can claim should you fail to repay your loan. The most common secured loans for pool installations are second mortgages and refinancing an existing mortgage, both of which use your home as collateral.

When compared to saving for a pool, secured loans have the same advantages and disadvantages as unsecured loans. You can afford your pool sooner by paying for it with a loan, but you'll need to pay interest and fees.

Compared to the unsecured loans offered by LightStream, second mortgages and refinancing options may afford slightly lower interest rates. Because these loans pose less risk to financial institutions, banks can lower the interest rate on them slightly. Taking out a second mortgage or refinancing, however, often involves appraisals, paperwork and fees that LightStream's loans don't have. These fees may offset any reduction in interest and sometimes make the loan more expensive than LightStream's.

There's not one right way to pay for an inground pool. Instead, there are three options, each of which has advantages and disadvantages, and you need to decide which one (or combination of saving and borrowing) is right for your family.

REDUCING INSTALLATION COSTS: SCHEDULING THE INSTALLATION

No matter how you pay for your pool's installation, strategic planning can significantly reduce how much you either need to save or borrow. There are two primary considerations: who will be installing your pool and when they'll be installing it.

GET MULTIPLE QUOTES FROM REPUTABLE POOL INSTALLATION COMPANIES

When comparing quotes, it's important to look at more than just the price. Take into account:

- Each pool contractor's reputation, including reviews, ratings and references
- How long the contractor's guarantee lasts (Latham stands behind its fiberglass pools with a lifetime warranty)
- Whether the quote is for a fiberglass pool

Fiberglass pools sometimes cost more than other types, but they have many advantages over vinyl and concrete pools. You'll quickly make up the additional cost because fiberglass pools:

- Don't have a liner that needs to be replaced every 8 to 12 years (like vinyl pools)
- Don't need to be repainted or resurfaced (like concrete pools)
- Won't crack when the temperature swings or soil shifts
- Inhibit algae growth (so you can save on maintenance costs)

Armed with multiple quotes, you'll not only know which company has the cheapest price, but also which contractor provides the best value.

SCHEDULE THE INSTALLATION FOR FALL OR WINTER

The pool industry slows down during the fall and winter, and you can often save money by scheduling your pool's installation for the off-season. In the Northern United States, late-season installations will need to be finished before snow starts falling, so you'll want to schedule work for early in the fall. In the South, many pool contractors work on outdoor pools year-round, and you can schedule an installation for any time between late summer and early spring.

You'll have to ask each contractor whether they'll provide a discount if the work's done in the offseason. Some won't, but others will significantly reduce their quote if it helps them remain busy during a slow time.

MINIMIZING INSTALLATION EXPENSES:

DESIGNING YOUR POOL

Your pool's design is, by far, the primary factor that will determine how much you'll have to pay to have it installed. While some features, such as a fiberglass pool, are worth paying for, others can be skipped. There are some design features that you don't ever need, and others that can be delayed until after you've paid for the initial installation.

BUILD A SMALLER POOL

When shopping for a pool, it's easy to become captivated by a large design. Many people who already own a pool, however, would be happy with a smaller pool than the one they have. A small pool, even one that's just 20 feet by 15 feet, is plenty large enough for playing volleyball, goofing around with kids, splashing with pets, doing aerobics and diving (provided it's deep enough). It's only if you want to swim laps that you'll need a long, narrow pool.

When selecting a smaller pool instead of a larger one, you'll save on more than just the pool itself because you can get by with:

- Smaller pipes
- Smaller filters
- A smaller pump

All of these things cost less to purchase than their bigger counterparts. A smaller pump will also reduce your ongoing expenses, because it'll use less electricity than a larger pump.



INSTALL BIGGER PIPES, NOT A BIGGER PUMP

There are two ways to increase the amount of water that flows through your pool's filtration system. You can either use larger pipes or put in a more powerful pump. Upgrading the pipes is the less expensive option, not just because PVC pipes cost less than a motorized pump, but also because bigger pumps require more power to run and, therefore, increase your ongoing costs.

PLAN FOR AN AUTOMATIC SAFETY COVER, BUT WAIT TO PURCHASE IT

You'll need a pool cover by the end of the season. Auto safety covers are the best type available because they:

- Open and close automatically
- Are strong enough to support a child and two adults
- Can inhibit algae growth by up to 30 percent, so you don't need to use as many chemicals
- Retain heat, so you can save on heating costs



You don't need to pay for an auto safety cover when your pool is first installed, though. As long as your pool's designed for an auto safety cover, you can purchase one whenever you're ready. If you plan on upgrading to an auto safety cover later, be sure that your pool can accommodate it. For instance, you may want to go with a simple rectangular shape rather than a free-form design.

Depending on the size of your pool, waiting to purchase an automatic safety cover could reduce your initial installation costs by several thousand dollars. Equipping a pool for a future cover is easy and inexpensive, and you can upgrade when you have the necessary funds.

WAIT TO BUY A HEATER UNTIL AFTER YOUR FIRST SEASON

While not having a heater might shorten your swimming season by a few weeks, there are several reasons to delay purchasing one until your second year with a pool. You'll:

- Likely reduce your initial installation costs by over \$1,000
- Not have to pay to heat your pool the first year (which would be expensive without an insulating cover)
- Be better able to gauge how much you want to use your pool in cooler weather, which will dictate the size and price of your pool heater
- Have a chance to decide if you want a heater that also has a cooling feature
- Possibly find a heater on sale during the winter

PLUMB FOR WATER FEATURES, BUT DELAY PURCHASING THEM

Similarly, you can delay the purchase of features, such as a slide or fountain. Retrofitting these on an existing pool can be expensive. If you plan to add features later, you can save by having the plumbing for them installed when your pool is put in. All you'll need to do is purchase the feature and hook it up to the built-in piping.

How much you can save by delaying the purchase of water features will depend on the number of features you want and how advanced they are. In many cases, though, you can save several thousand dollars.

PLAN FOR A PATIO...LATER

In many cases, installing a patio costs just as much as installing a pool. If you want a large, beautiful patio, plan for it – but delay actually putting it in until you've paid for your pool. A simplified version of your dream patio can suffice for a year or two.

Putting off investing in nice outdoor furniture and a grill alone can save you more than \$1,000. These aren't necessary to enjoy your pool, so don't think of them as part of your pool installation costs. Instead, treat them as separate expenses.

If you want an inground pool for your family to enjoy, don't let the expenses deter you from talking with us at Latham Pool Products. Whether you want to save or finance the installation costs, there are ways to pay for an inground pool. There are even more ways to defray those expenses until you're able to afford additional features. At Latham, we don't want finances to prevent your family from having a good time.

†You can fund your LightStream loan today if today is a banking business day, your application is approved, and you complete the following steps by 2:30 p.m. Eastern time: (1) review and electronically sign your loan agreement; (2) provide us with your funding preferences and relevant banking information; and (3) complete the final verification process.

‡After receiving your loan from LightStream, and within 30 days, if you are not completely satisfied with your experience, please contact LightStream. They'll email you a questionnaire so they can improve their services. Once LightStream receives your completed questionnaire, they'll send you \$100. Limit to one payment per funded loan. SunTrust and LightStream employees are not eligible for the Loan Experience Guarantee.

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**FIND A LATHAM
BUILDER NEAR YOU**