

## A refresher course on backyard pool maintenance

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Everyone loves the fun of a dip in the pool, but pool maintenance? Maybe not so much. Keeping your pool in tip-top shape doesn't have to be a scary chore, though. With these handy tips, you'll be delegating tasks like a pro and breathing a (poolside) sigh of relief at how easy it really is.

### **Pool Maintenance Basics**

#### **1. Open the pool – yay!**

Opening for the season is the biggest job apart from closing in the Fall, so set aside a half day to get 'er done. After removing the pool cover, you'll want to hook up the filter and turn it on, then vacuum the pool for debris and add chemicals to balance the water. This goes for splasher pools as well. Keep swimmers happy with a strict regiment meant to help the water stay clean, clear and balanced.

#### **2. Maintain the water level**

Since you should never drain your pool without professional help – and only in the event of a major repair or vinyl liner replacement – we're just talking about top-ups. A good rule is to keep the water level within 3 cm of the top of the skimmer opening. Use the skimmer screws as a visual clue. Evaporation doesn't take down the water as fast as you might think, so if you think you have a leak you probably do and you need to get it fixed immediately.

#### **3. Be sure to run your pump/filtration system for an adequate length of time**

This really means all the time. Stagnant water breeds bacteria and promotes algae growth so keep that pump running! If you are concerned about energy usage and have an inground pool contact your local pool store for options. Splasher pools and concrete pools usually need more filtration to keep them crystal clean.

#### **4. Skim regularly**

Fishing out leaves and insects that have fallen onto the surface is a job kids can handle with supervision! Not only does it make sense to complete this task regularly it also saves you money. You may want to invest in an automatic vacuum system to deal with significant debris.

#### **5. Test the water regularly and keep the water chemistry balanced**

Weekly, use your test strips test for alkalinity, pH, calcium hardness and stabilizer as well as chlorine; prescribed safety levels make it easy to ensure your water is within the correct ranges. Monthly, pop in to the local pool store for a detailed analysis and make it easy on yourself.

## **6. Give the walls, steps and floor a weekly scrub with a pool brush**

This is especially important for concrete pools, which tend to attract algae more than vinyl liner or fibreglass pools. Tip: A pool brush is one of the most important tools professional Pool Cleaners use.

## **7. Treat the pool every week by shocking the pool**

With many products it is recommended to run through the cycle at dusk but check with your local pool store for which product will suit you.

There is no reason to be intimidated when taking care of a pool. Partner up with a good solid local company, get yourself the right tools and regiment and dive right in. It is a process you will need to become more familiar with but once you do you can then sit back, relax and enjoy.