

## Pool Care Basics

- Remove debris and clean the strainer baskets: Use a long-handled net to skim your pool's surface every few days is one of the fastest and easiest ways to keep your pool clean – it increases the efficiency of the pool's circulation system and lowers the amount of chlorine you'll need to add to your pool. Don't forget to clean strainer baskets at least once a week to help circulation and lower your pool's chlorine demands.
- **Clean and maintain the filter based on manufacturer's** recommendations: A small amount of dirt in your filter actually helps to trap other particles, which removes debris from the water. It's best to clean your filter when the difference in flow between the pressure gauge and flow meter reaches 10 to 15 pounds (4.5 to 6.8 kilograms) per square inch. If you wash your filter too frequently, it won't be able to reach its cleaning potential.
- Check the circulation system: Your pool's circulation system, which includes the skimmer, pump, pump strainer, drains, and filter, helps chemicals work effectively and ensures proper water filtration. Make sure to run your pump an hour for every 10 degrees of temperature each day to make sure the water is properly filtered and keep each item clean and in good condition.
- Check and maintain water level: The water level of your pool will decrease due to evaporation and activity such as swimming, splashing and exiting the pool. Simply use a garden hose to bring it up to safe levels.
  - **Note:** It can be difficult to determine if low water levels are due to evaporation or a leak. You can discover leaks in your pool by conducting a simple bucket test. Fill a plastic bucket  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of water and mark the waterline on the inside of the bucket. Place the bucket in the pool and mark the waterline on the outside of the container (remove any handles to allow for better stability while floating). Let it float for two or three days. If the water levels inside and outside the bucket reduce by the same amount, the cause is evaporation. If the pool water level is reduced more than the level of the water inside the bucket, your pool has a leak.
  - **Never drain your pool:** If the groundwater is high enough it can push the entire pool out of the ground. Depending on the topography surrounding the pool heavy rain could cause it to pop out of the ground.
- Maintain appropriate chemical levels: Pool water should be tested regularly to make sure it's clean and healthy. Aim for ideal chemical levels of:
  - **pH:** 7.2 to 7.6 (at 8.5 pH, chlorine is only 10% active, and it's 73% active at 7.0 pH. Chlorine is 50-60% active at a pH of 7.5, allowing you to use to best utilize chlorine already in the pool)
  - **Alkalinity:** 80 to 120 parts per million
  - **Calcium hardness:** 180 to 220 parts per million
  - **Chlorine:** 1 to 3 parts per million
- Maintain your Salt Generator: Check the salt per million levels one time per month and adjust the level per manufacturer guidelines. In the summer months you will need to adjust the chlorine percentage higher as the temperature rises.

Check the cell every three months for calcium buildup or debris and clean as needed.

- Shock treatment (super chlorinate the water): Organic contaminants like ammonia or nitrogen accumulate in your pool, interacting with chlorine to form chloramines – which emit that harsh chlorine odor. Adding a large amount of chlorine to a pool (super chlorinating/shocking) allows you to eliminate the odor. Consult your manufacturer’s manual for specific instructions for your pool.
- Vacuum the pool and brush walls and tile: Vacuum your pool at least monthly to keep water clear and reduce the amount of chemicals you need to add. Brush the walls and tile using stiff bristles (for plaster-lined concrete pools) to help minimize algae buildup and calcium deposits.