

Frequently Asked Questions

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CHLORINE... ITS PURPOSE AND APPLICATION?

Disinfection is the most important single factor in maintaining a swimming pool, which is safe and healthy. Chlorine is the most widely applied disinfecting agent and used for the disinfection of residential swimming pool water.

WHAT IS CONDITIONER?

Conditioner or stabilizer is an essential chemical used in the proper disinfection of swimming pools. Its chemical name is cyanuric acid and it forms a protective bond around the chlorine, making it more resistant to being burned off by the sun. This chemical is typically added during the spring months, but pools with high water loss will also need to be reconditioned throughout the summer. This is a very expensive chemical and we ask that you DO NOT backwash or clean your filter for five days after this chemical has been added. Pools should also be stabilized whenever large amounts of fresh water are added. It will sometimes appear as a white powdered substance on the bottom of the swimming pool, but will dissipate after a few days (brushing helps).

ALGAE... WHAT CAUSES IT?

Water treatment system guarantees a crystal clear, algae free swimming pool. However, even when chemical levels are properly balanced, algae will occasionally appear in a customer's swimming pool. Algae comes in a variety of forms, and appears for various reasons.

Algae spores are everywhere: these microscopic single-cell structures are blown into the pool by the wind, washed into the pool by rainfall, or carried into the pool on swimmers' skin or bathing suits. Under the right conditions, tiny spores will bloom into those dreaded bright green, mustard yellow, or black discolorations.

HERE ARE THE KEY FACTORS IN ALGAE GROWTH:

Inadequate filtration will often lead to algae growth.

Water clarity depends on daily circulation and filtration. Anything that impedes water flow from the pool to the filter -- clogged skimmer baskets, a dirty or damaged filter, a defective pump motor, or a failure to run the pump for an adequate amount of time each day -- will encourage algae growth. The first warning sign of a filtration problem is hazy or cloudy water. Left unchecked, cloudy water can quickly lead to a full-fledged algae bloom.

ALGAE CAN DEVELOP WHEN LITTLE OR NO CHLORINE IS PRESENT.

Sunlight, rainfall, temperature, number of swimmers and frequency of pool use affect the rate of chlorine loss. The lower the chlorine level, the more likely algae will bloom. Weekly super-

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chlorination, coupled with the application of conditioner or stabilizer designed to shield residual chlorine from the effects of heat and sunlight, helps ensure that there is always sufficient chlorine in the pool. Spas, which are often heated to temperatures well above 100 degrees, are especially susceptible to algae growth.

ALGAE LOVES A DIRTY POOL!

Leaves and dirt left on the bottom of the pool for an extended period of time, not only promotes algae but also causes pool staining. The longer you allow leaves and other debris to sit on your pool floor, the more likely that you'll see algae, and staining. In an extremely dirty pool, algae will continue to bloom, even when the water chemistry is properly balanced.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ALGAE?

Immediately after using the spa, adjust the valves so that the pool water will flow through the spa when the filtration system is running. This will replenish chlorine-dissipated spa water with chlorinated water from the main part of the swimming pool.

Remove your pool cover one day per week to allow the water to "breathe". For best results, uncover the swimming pool on your regular scheduled service day.

Periodically check to make sure the water is circulating adequately. Clean or backwash your filter if necessary.

Make sure the pump timer is set to run for at least 4 to 5 hours each day in the winter, and 10 or more hours daily during the summer months.

Contact our customer service department -- we'll dispatch a service technician to double check chemical levels and, if necessary, re-treat the pool! There is never a charge for this service!

Make sure your filter is clean and your return lines have strong water flow.

Some spots of dead algae may remain on your pool walls, even after chemical treatment. Brushing the pool walls with a nylon bristle pool brush will remove dead algae, and help keep live algae from forming. A stainless steel brush should be used when dealing with black algae; it is made for this purpose and works great!!

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I RUN / CLEAN MY FILTER?

Water clarity depends on three factors: proper chemical balance, adequate daily circulation, and quality filtration. Your swimming pool water needs the combination of these three variables to stay crystal clear, algae free and ready for swimming enjoyment. The filter is designed to trap small particles suspended in the pool water. These small particles are what make inadequately filtered pool water look hazy or milky.

A dirty filter can have a dramatic effect on circulation. As water passes through the filter, millions of tiny particles cling to the filtration elements. Eventually, these accumulated particles make it difficult for water to pass through the filter. A dirty filter can reduce pump efficiency by up to 80 percent. In other words, circulating your water for 10 hours a day when the filter is dirty is the equivalent of circulating the water for 2 hours a day when the filter is clean. Many times, a homeowner will find their water is cloudy and greenish, even though the chemical levels are fine, and the pump is running for an adequate amount of time each day. A dirty or damaged filter is usually the source of the problem.

Since filtration and circulation play such an important role in keeping your swimming pool water clear and properly maintained, we have included the following standard instruction for the three types of filter systems. Following these instructions will assist you in keeping your filter system

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working efficiently and effectively.

1. SAND FILTERS (USUALLY A ROUND FIBERGLASS OR STAINLESS STEEL)

Run filter system for approximately 1 1/2 hour for every 10 degrees of outside temperature:

Summer 10 to 15 hours per day

Winter 4 or more hours per day

(If pool looks cloudy, run filter until pool clears)- then go back to your regular schedule)

"Most filter manufacturers recommend backwashing after a clean filter has built up 5-10 PSI of pressure as indicated on the pressure gauge". Sand filters take 1 to 4 weeks. Over backwashing can lead to algae problems in the heat of the summer. Please perform major water exchanges in the cooler months." Report any major water exchanges to Pembroke Pools immediately in order to ensure that the necessary additional chemicals are added.

2. DIATOMACEOUS EARTH FILTERS (LARGE STAINLESS STEEL CYLINDER)

Run filter system 1 hour for every 10 degrees of outside temperature:

Summer 8 to 10 hours per day

Winter 4 to 8 hours per day

"Most filter manufacturers recommend backwashing after a clean filter has built up 5-10 PSI of pressure as indicated on the pressure gauge". D.E. filters typically build up these pressure levels in approximately 1 to 3 months. Over backwashing can lead to algae problems in the heat of the summer. Please perform major water exchanges in the cooler months." Report any major water exchanges to your local servicing branch immediately in order to ensure that the necessary additional chemicals are added.

Even with regular backwashing, D.E. filters accumulate debris and it is a good idea to have your filter dismantled and acid washed at least once a year. This affords an opportunity to check internal elements for wear and tear, and to ensure that the filter is working at peak efficiency.

3. CARTRIDGE FILTERS (SMALL STAINLESS STEEL CYLINDER OR FIBERGLASS TUBE)

Run filter system 1 1/2 hour for every 10 degrees of outside temperature:

Summer 10 to 15 hours per day

Winter 6 to 10 hours per day

"Most filter manufacturers recommend cleaning cartridges when filter has built up 5-10 PSI of pressure as indicated on the pressure gauge". Clean filter cartridges every 4-8 weeks, depending on dirt accumulation and filter size (The day before scheduled chemical service).

For those of you with cartridge filters, you can improve your filtering efficiency up to 50% by adding 2 coffee cans worth of Diatomaceous Earth to your filter. Adding the DE through the skimmer with the pump on, and stirring it in the skimmer until it is totally dissolved accomplish this. Each time you hose down the filter cartridges, you'll have to replenish the DE. Even with DE coating the cartridges, it's perfectly safe to hose down the filter elements on your lawn. DE is safe for grass and plants.

STAINING - WHY IS IT HAPPENING AND CAN I PREVENT IT?

"The mineral content of your water increases every day. This is due to evaporation, which removes

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only distilled water and leaves the minerals behind. In time, these minerals begin depositing on the walls of the pool and we call this gradual buildup "staining"." excerpt from the "Swimming Pools Water Treatment Professionals" Educational series on Water Hardness

Unfortunately it is not possible to prevent staining completely, but here are some tips to help minimize it.

TOTAL HARDNESS

One of the ways to determine amount of minerals in your pool is to perform a total hardness test. This test determines the amount of minerals like calcium and magnesium that have built up in your pool. You experience these minerals in other household areas like the crusty build up on you faucets or the water spots on your car.

Hardness makes it necessary for you to drain and refill your swimming pool periodically every 3-5 years to reduce the risk of stains and swimmer irritation. Water exchanges should only be performed during cool winter months (October through March) and non-drought times.

During the hot summer months, partial draining or long backwash cycles can lead to algae problems due to depletion of important water sanitizers and stabilizing compounds. Our Service Technicians will explain the process and the cost associated in the draining of your swimming pool. Fresh water keeps your pool healthy!

STAINING

Minerals like calcium and magnesium leave behind white deposits. You may notice white deposits at your water line but not much when you look at the surface of your pool. Although pools with dark surfaces may occasionally show signs of calcium or magnesium deposits, the real culprit to staining is dissolved metals. Dissolved metals like copper and iron can discolor a swimming pools surface and combine with calcium, magnesium and each other to leave various colorations. With higher hardness, more discolorations can occur.

One way to prevent metals from staining your pools surface between draining is to use a sequestering agent on a regular basis. Sequestering agents keep metals dissolved "in solution" so they have less tendency to deposit on your pools surface. Call our office. Our customer service representatives can offer additional information about stain preventing sequestering agents.
