



LUCAS FIRMIN
P O O L S

POOL MAINTENANCE
E-BOOK

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OVERVIEW

Your backyard oasis is a place where you, your friends, and family can make memories all summer long. You can relax, unwind, entertain, and enjoy all of the amenities and aesthetics that a pool provides. However, to safely use your pool and protect your investment, there is essential routine maintenance that needs to be done. Every aspect of your pool from the water to the structure to its equipment needs to be monitored and managed. Not only will knowing how to properly care for your pool keep it safe and clean for all to enjoy, but it will also increase the longevity and lower the cost of pool ownership.



WATER MAINTENANCE

Let's begin with the basics. The central ingredient of any pool is, of course, water. This essential element is what provides the refreshing swim on a summer afternoon, and a relaxing dip in the spa to unwind after a long day. But your pool is only as relaxing and refreshing as the water is clean.

When your pool's water is out of balance and unclean, it can create many issues for the safety of the water, the health of the pool's structure, and the operation of its equipment. Algae, corrosion, and buildup are all consequences that impact the appearance and usability of your pool. Fortunately, these problems are easy to avoid with some standard and simple maintenance. *Here are the four things to test/check:*

1

TESTING YOUR WATER:

Two or three times a week is a good rule of thumb. If there has been a lot of activity like a big pool party, you may want to check it more frequently; and likewise, if there is little to no activity, like during the winter, you can check it less often.

2

PH:

If you are testing the water yourself, you need a testing kit. Your kit should provide information on pH, calcium hardness, and alkalinity. pH: pH is the measurement of acid and base in the pool's water. You want your pool water to be balanced between the two. When the pH of your swimming pool water leans too far toward the acidic side of the scale, corrosion of pool surfaces and equipment can occur. If your pH is too far toward the basic side, your pool can experience scaling, deposits, and cloudy water. An ideal pH is around 7.5.

3

CALCIUM HARDNESS:

Calcium hardness indicates the amount of dissolved calcium in the pool water. A low calcium hardness level can cause plaster finish etching. High calcium levels can create calcium deposits on the pool surfaces and in equipment. Your calcium hardness level should be around 200- 250 parts per million (ppm) for concrete pools.

4

ALKALINITY:

Maintaining a total alkalinity of 120-150 ppm will help to ensure that you have a stable pH. Low total alkalinity can create pH fluctuations, as well as corrosion and staining. High total alkalinity also can cause the pH to fluctuate in addition to cloudy water and scaling.



POOL CHEMICALS

To keep your water clean, safe, and balanced, chemicals are needed, even if you have a saltwater pool. Here is a common chemical used in pools and an explanation of when and why you need it.

1

CHLORINE:

Chlorine is likely the first chemical you think of when it comes to pools. This pool cleaner chemical breaks down bacteria and sanitizes the water. Stabilized chlorine products are protected from sunlight degradation and are ideal for keeping your pool clear and clean. Most stabilized chlorine products are available in a variety of forms, including chlorinating tablets, skimmer sticks, and granules. A free chlorine level of 1-3 ppm should be maintained in the pool at all times.

STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE

Now that we have a handle on keeping the water well-maintained, we need to focus on what holds the water; the structure of your pool. Depending on the design and material of your pool, there will be different best practices. *Here are two things to help the structural maintenance of concrete or gunite pools:*

1

KEEP IT CLEAN:

The main task in keeping the structure of your pool safe and healthy is to keep it clean. This means keeping debris out of the water and off of the bottom of the pool floor. When leaves, sticks, and other common debris sink and stay against the pool's surfaces, they can stain. If you do notice stains, they can typically be easily removed with a little scrubbing.

2

CHECK FOR CRACKS:

Another thing to keep an eye out for is cracks. It's not uncommon for concrete pools to have cracks, and most of the time, they are superficial surface cracks. If you notice any, keep an eye on them for any changes.



EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Of course, there is more to your pool than water and concrete. The inner workings and mechanical operations also play a major role in keeping your pool clean and healthy. From your pump, which acts as the heart of your pool to the filtration system, which your water clean and clear, knowing how to take care of them and recognize potential issues can save you a lot of time and money.



1

PUMP

Your pool's pump and motor are vital to the operation of your pool. The pump draws water from the pool and pushes it through the filter, returning it, clean, back to the pool. While the pump and motor are two individual pieces of equipment, their relationship in your pool's circulation system is inseparable. A pool or spa pump consists of a housing, motor, impeller, and a strainer basket. Powered by the motor, the pump is a device that creates the movement of the water. Depending on the size of your pool, your pump should run for about 8 hours a day to adequately "turnover" the water.



2 FILTER

You have a few options when it comes to your pool's filtrations system. They each have different capabilities and characteristics; therefore, they need to be cared for in different ways.

Cleaning a cartridge filter is fairly simple. Basically, you remove the cartridge and hose off any visible dirt. If it is especially dirty, you may want to use a chemical filter cleaner.

3

CARTRIDGE FILTERS



4 SAND FILTER

For regular cleanings, you can backwash a sand filter to remove debris. You'll also need to use a chemical cleaner on your sand filter at least once a year.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE) filters can be cleaned with a filter cleaner or by turning the filter to "backwash," which changes the flow of water.

You can use a hose to rinse off the manifold and filter grids. (The manifold houses the filter grids, which catch the debris as the water passes through.) Then follow the appropriate process for adding DE powder, which is a clay-like substance that filters the water.

5

DIATOMACEOUS EARTH (DE) FILTERS



Routine maintenance, like keeping the water clean by skimming and removing debris, checking your skimmer baskets, and keeping the water properly balanced, will keep your filtration system and pump working correctly.

An automatic pool cleaner is a device that cleans your pool. Instead of using a telescoping pole and net to clean your pool manually, an automatic pool cleaner can be set to clean at certain times, ensuring your pool is consistently clean.

There are three types of automatic pool cleaners; pressure-side, suction-side, and robotic. A pressure-side pool cleaner uses the water from your pump and filter system to power the cleaner. This type of cleaner moves around the pool and creates a vortex to pick up debris as it's fueled by water pressure. Pressure-side cleaners can easily pick up large debris, require little maintenance, and are durable.

6

AUTOMATED CLEANER



A robotic pool cleaner does not use the pool's pump and filter system to clean. This type of cleaner uses a low-voltage transformer system for power. It has its own motor that moves the cleaner, and its own pump to lift debris off of the ground. Some robotic cleaners are equipped with a computer that can make it clean more efficiently. There are also remote-controlled robotic pool cleaners. With advances in technology, robotic pool cleaners are becoming more affordable and more efficient.

Robotic pool cleaners can clean up both large debris and small debris. They can scrub the tiles, walls, and stairs of your pool. Lastly, as a self-contained unit, this type of cleaner is not connected to your filtration system; however, as it cleans, it actually filters the water itself.

Suction-side pool cleaners require the pool's pump and filter system to run. This cleaner moves along the floor and walls of your pool, picking up debris and placing it into your pool's filtration system. Suction-side pool cleaners are the least expensive option.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

The end of the swimming season means a few extra steps. This maintenance will make opening your pool the next season easier.

1

ROUTINE CLEANING:

Again, cleaning the surface and skimming the water is essential. Give your pool's equipment a review. Make sure there is no buildup around the pump, and that the skimmer baskets are empty. This is also an excellent time to backwash your filter. Lastly, ensure that your water is balanced. As often as possible, continue with your regular maintenance routine.

2

TEST THE WATER:

After long last, the weather is warm enough to swim. Skimming, vacuuming, and scrubbing are essential. Test the water and add any necessary chemicals. Inspect your pump, filter, and skimmer baskets. Once the water is balanced and any debris is cleared, you are good to go.

3

BRING IN A PROFESSIONAL:

Maintenance is a critical process for keeping your pool in safe, healthy, efficient operation. While you can opt to handle it yourself by following the above guidelines, you can also hire a professional pool service company. Lucas Firmin Pools builds custom-designed pools in the Baton Rouge. They also offer residential and commercial pool maintenance services.





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