# 7 Tips To Save You Money With Your Pool

**Having a pool is great fun but it comes with some needs too.**

If you follow these 7 points your pool will be ready to dive in anytime and save your money at the same time.

- **Keep it looking clean**
- **Test daily**
- **Keep it safe**
- **Keep it covered when not in use**
- **Don't take short cuts**
- **Don't put off doing stuff for your pool**
- **Do enjoy it often**

## 1. Keep it clean

Seems like a natural thing to do, but it can be a lot of work if you let it go.. and you can always find a reason for not keeping it clean, right? Pool water needs to be kept up to spec at all times. If you let it go off a bit health risks multiply quickly. Harmful bacteria and viruses need to be knocked out quickly to prevent infection. Sunscreen oils, body fats, skin and hair should be treated or removed. Algae, also needs to be controlled effectively. The warmer the water the more active some of these critters are. Contamination can come from birds, dogs, bats and of course us…oopps another little accident!

Contact with these microorganisms can lead to infections of eyes, ears, skin and stomach. Most such infections can be easily dealt with, but some can become serious or even fatal.

As the water in your pool will be there for many years, be aware of what goes into it and treat it correctly to stay clean and safe, with proper filtration and disinfection.

The filter system is part of this. The main filter types being sand, diatomaceous earth and cartridges. No matter the type they can't do their job if the pool water does not flow through them long enough. A pool pump should pass the whole pool water through the filter every 6 – 8 hours. (about 8 - 10,000 Litres per hour). While swimming make sure the system is on and for about an hour afterwards too. To remove the all the gunk, filters need to operate correctly. This means regular cleaning and if sand or diatomaceous earth, regular backwashing and disposal of this water into the sewer system. All filters need to operate efficiently, else they waste pump electricity and wear the pump out prematurely too.

## 2. Test Daily

Testing the waters before you leap in can be a good idea…not just the temperature.

By testing pH and chlorine levels daily you can get a good idea of how your pool is……and is it safe to submerge in. Other factors can be measured at least weekly. In hot weather or high usage loads such monitoring is even more important to maintain a healthy pool.

Use a testing kit from your pool shop or supermarket to find out. Also it's a good idea to write down the results so you can see if any trends happening.

As a general guide the results should be:

| | |
|---|---|
| **pH** | 7.2 – 7.6 (7.0 – 7.2 for Fibreglass Pools) |
| **Free Chlorine** | 1.0 – 3.0 ppm (2 is ideal) |
| **Stabiliser (Isocyanuric Acid)** | 30 – 50 mg / L |
| **Total Alkalinity (TA)** | 60 – 200 mg / L |
| **Calcium Hardness (CA)** | 150 – 400 mg /L |

To kill the bugs, chlorine is the most common disinfectant, but there are others including: bromine, ozone, UV irradiation and ionising systems may be used.

To keep the killing machine working there needs to be free chlorine in your pool, usually 1 – 3 ppm.

For non-chlorine or bromine pools, there needs to be some chlorine or hydrogen peroxide added to the pool to maintain residual disinfection. See your disinfection equipment manufacturers' literature for more details.

When the pool is not to be used, some means of keeping the chlorination active needs to be done, as with a floating basket and chlorine tablets.

After heavy usage, flooding or a period of poor maintenance, a shock treatment may be needed. This will bring the pool water back to "as new" and removes bacteria etc, but also filters out other wastes, such as cosmetics, sweat, urine and oils.

Shock treatment with chlorine requires:

- Add sufficient to get at least 10mg / L free chlorine.
- Keep this level for one hour at least.
- Operate pump and filter while shock dosing.

See your pool shop for full details about the process and products to use.

**Note:** **don't use your pool till the free chlorine is below 4 ppm. (Leave till next day)**

## Key Pool Measurements

**pH:** Measures how acidic or alkali your pool water is. 7 is neutral, whereas below 7 it's acidic and above 7 it's alkaline. Above 8 can cause skin rashes and below 7 can sting swimmers eyes.

The best range is between 7.2 – 7.6 and this is the most comfortable for bathers too.

**Stabiliser** (Isocyanuric Acid)**:** Is used to prevent the chlorine from rapidly breaking down in the sunlight. It's one's personal choice, so discuss with your pool shop, and if used correctly (30 – 50 mg / L) can reduce the amount of chlorine consumed by your pool.

**Total Alkalinity: (TA)** This should be checked weekly to prevent cloudy water or scale formation, metal corrosion and maintain comfortable swimming conditions. Normal range is 60 - 200 mg /L. This is a measure of bi-carbonates, carbonates and hydroxides in your water. If too low can affect the other pool water factors too, like pH.

**Calcium Hardness: (CA)** This should be checked weekly to prevent formation of calcium hardness and the ideal range is 150 – 400 mg / L. It's a simple measure of the amount of dissolved calcium in your pool water.

CA and TA need to be bought into balance as low levels lead to corrosion and high levels scaling. Generally yearly tests at a pool shop are enough unless you're using Calcium Hypochlorite in which case more frequent testing needed, to make sure CA levels are not rising.

**Algae Management:** These little organisms can make your pool life miserable. They form green slim on sides or surface and arrive uninvited on rain, wind, leaves, or people. If you see algae growing in a Chlorine pool it indicates not enough free chlorine present. You may use algaecide to kill it off. Persistent need to treat however should be raised with your pool shop. A worn cement or fibreglass surface often leads to ongoing algae issues and needs to be re surfaced often with an epoxy coating. (Provides a hard, easy clean surface).

**Topping up:** Use clean water and top up via skimmer box with pump - filter running. Check pH and disinfectant levels.

**Water temp:** We all like it hot including algae…however if your pool is heated or just hot, more regular monitoring and treatments will be necessary.

# 3. Keep it Safe

Pools (and Spas) are fun places for all the family. To keep it that way:

- Make sure all fences and gates comply with current council (state) regulations.
- Keep the gate shut when not passing through.
- Keep the area around the pool free of obstacles so accidents don't happen.
- Make sure there are no means for young explorers to manoeuvre tall items over to the pool fence so they can climb over.
- Keep pets out.
- Don't allow running around or diving into the pool.
- Make sure you and other family members know CPR and how to call for help if needed.
- And you NEED to be watching if the young ones in the pool.

**Remember pool safety is no accident.**

## 4. Keep it covered when not in use

Your pool is a great big opening in your yard into which more than just bodies fall into.

Leaves, seeds, flowers, insects and bird poo all add to the biological attack on your pool and it's never ending. Your (expensive) water is going to make rain clouds far away too. Then there's some of the heat escaping and chemicals as well. So look at putting a cover on your pool.

These come in all sorts from the lightweight bubble type through to more heavy duty, as well as the supported tent variety. Seek information from your pool shop or internet.

An 8 x 4 M pool can lose 40,000 L of water per year through evaporation and you will save chlorine being lost through UV degradation not to mention reducing leaf and dust build up in the pool, by having a good cover.

## 5. Don't Take Short Cuts

New pool, you have lots of energy…….older pool, older body and its getting too hard and besides it's only the grandkids that come by some times to use. If you have a pool, then you have the responsibly to look after it well. If you don't want it, consider filling it in or turning into a "proper" pond. Leaving it to become a natural frog and mosquito breeding ground is not a good option.

Good Pool Maintenance is a necessary part of pool ownership.

- Remove litter, rubbish, leaves and vacuum the bottom to remove dirt and debris (the ones your pool cleaner misses)
- Scrub walls and surrounding areas to remove stuff (see above)
- Check pool water chemistry as appropriate and rebalance as needed.
- Clean the pump filters, traps and baskets and make sure functioning correctly with no leaks.
- Have pool equipment serviced in accord with manufacturer's recommendations to keep operating effectively.
- Make sure all electrical equipment is functioning well and any servicing carried out by licensed electrical contractors.
- Use pool cover when not in use to keep dirt, leaves, animals and insects etc out and to keep chemicals and water in the pool.
- Keep all pool chemicals safely locked away from prying hands. When using wear correct protective glasses and gloves etc.
- Always correctly dilute chemicals, don't just pour in and expect the pump to send them around. (With acid add acid to water not the other way around).
- If the pool surface is worn and becoming hard to keep clean then have it resurfaced. (See web site: poolpaint.com.au)

## 6. Don’t put off doing stuff for your pool

Your pool is an asset to your property and its overall value. Keep it that way.

Sure we can always find a reason for not doing some needed service or maintenance: like it’s too hot, too cold, I’m going to do it next weekend. We’ll fix it up when we sell the house.

More often than not deferred maintenance results in much bigger bills. It’s better to keep your pool in a clean, swimmable condition throughout the summer and then winterise it when not being used in the other half of the year.

Poorly operating equipment usually means longer running times to get the desired results, higher energy bills and more chemicals as well. So if you need a new pump or filter, do it sooner than later. Also as the pool ages the surface becomes worn, porous and harbours more little critters you spend money on trying to control.

Better to get it resurfaced and save the time and money. See poolpaint.com.au for what can be the up graded result of: concrete, fibreglass, Marblesheen or Pebblecrete pools. A new lease of life is achievable for a very reasonable investment.

## 7. Do enjoy your pool

Now you have read all this it’s time to down tools, forget work, mowing the lawn and washing the car. It’s time to get into your pool and enjoy some relaxing time. Off you go now.

If you still have some pool water management questions, then call your local pool shop and ask for the best economic solution. They should have the resources to assist you.

If you enjoyed this, please pass it on. If not let us know.

Should you feel or see your pool is getting worn, no matter fibreglass or concrete, Pebble or Marblesheen, then get in touch.
If it’s hard to keep clean, requiring lots of expensive chemicals to keep algae under control, then let us know.
It’s most likely in need of resurfacing. This will solve your pools issues and it will become an attractive feature of your home again. One you’ll want to make good use of.
We have great solutions for you and a list of independent professionals who can carry out the project to provide a proven long-term result.

# Paint for Pools

# 1300 88 79 20

## poolpaint.com.au

**info@poolpaint.com.au**

Hitchins 1932 TECHNOLOGIES

## We cover all of Australia.