

Acid Demand

A titration test used to determine proper amounts of acid needed to reach correct levels.

Air Relief Valve

A manually-operated brass or plastic valve located at the top of a filter tank for relieving the pressure inside the filter and removing the air inside the filter (bleeding the filter). Also known as a pressure-relief valve.

Above Ground Pool

An above ground pool is a typically round- or oval-shaped structure that houses water and sits on top of the ground; above ground pools do not require excavation and are generally quicker and cheaper than inground pool options

Algae

Microscopic plant-like organisms that contain chlorophyll. Algae is nourished by carbon dioxide (CO₂) and use sunlight to carry out photosynthesis. It can be introduced by rain or wind and grows in colonies, producing nuisance masses. Algae can harbor bacteria and can be slippery. There are thousands of known species of algae. The most common types of algae found in pools are black, blue-green, green and mustard (yellow or drawn).

Algaecides

Chemical compounds designed to kill, prevent and control algae.

Automatic Pool Cleaner

A pool maintenance system that will agitate and/or vacuum debris from the pool interior automatically.

Automatic Pool Cover

A heavy pool cover connected electronically or manually that extends over the pool, protecting the pool from debris and temperature changes as well as adding an important safety measure

Backfill

The repositioning of the soil after construction of a pool.

Backflow

The backing up of water through a pipe in the direction opposite to normal flow.

Backwash

The process of thoroughly cleaning the filter by reversing the flow of water through it with the dirt and rinse water going to waste.

Ball Valve

A device with a hollowed out ball inside which can be turned with an external handle to decrease or increase flow.

Baja Shelf

Also known as a sun shelf or tanning ledge, a baja shelf is a shallow, expansive shelf in the pool designed for lounging, tanning and more.

Balanced Water

Balanced water is the result when all of your chemical parameters are where they should be, and thus "balance" each other.

Balancers

Chemical compound designed to prevent corrosion and staining by balancing the pH, total alkalinity and calcium hardness in pool water.

Base Demand

A titration test used to determine proper amounts of base (pH increaser) needed to reach correct levels.

Base Plates

Base plates are parts of an above ground pool that sit beneath each upright, providing a connection point for the base track and the upright itself.

BreakPoint Chlorination

When you shock your pool, the goal is to reach a high enough level of free chlorine, measured in ppm, to break apart molecular bonds, specifically the combined chlorine molecules. When breakpoint is reached with sufficient additions of chlorine everything in the pool is oxidized.

Base Track

A part of an above ground swimming pool that stretches from base plate to base plate between the uprights of the swimming pool and forms the bottom rim of the pool structure. During installation, this track has a groove into which the wall of the swimming pool is rolled.

Beach Entry

Also known as a "zero entry pool," beach entries are slightly sloped gradual entrances that replace swimming pool steps, giving pools a natural, organic appearance.

Blower

Plumbed into the spa return line, air is injected to produce fun bubbles and a hydrotherapy effect in the spa.

Bromide

A common term for a bromide salt used to supply bromide ions to the water so they may be oxidized or changed into hypobromous acid, the killing form of bromine. Used as a disinfectant.

Bromine

A common name for a chemical compound containing bromine that is used as a disinfectant to destroy bacteria and algae in swimming pools and spas. Available as a tablet or as sodium bromide, a granular salt.

BTU

Abbreviation for British Thermal Unit. The amount of heat necessary to raise 1 lb. of water 1 degree Fahrenheit.

Bullnose Coping

Pool coping with rounded edges that extends over the side of the pool, used to finish exposed edges of decking

Booster Pump

Secondary to the filter pump, a booster pump is used to power an automatic pool cleaner, such as Polaris or Letro.

Cabana

A small tentlike poolside structure used as a changing room or lounge area.

Calcium Hardness

How much calcium carbonate is present in swimming pool water

Calcium Hypochlorite

Chlorine in powder form; used as pool shock

Cantilever Coping

Also known as "no coping," cantilevered coping is a style of coping where the pool deck extends to the edge of the pool and does not hang over like in bullnose coping styles

Centrifugal Pump

A pump consisting of an impeller fixed on a rotating shaft and enclosed in a casing or volute and having an inlet and a discharge connection. The rotating impeller creates pressure in the water by the velocity derived from the centrifugal force.

Check Valve

A mechanical device in a pipe that permits the flow of water or air in one direction only.

Chemical Feeder

A device that dispenses chemicals into pool or hot tub water at a predetermined rate. Some dispense chlorine or bromine while others dispense pH-adjusting chemicals.

Chloramine

Formed when chlorine and ammonia interact in pools due to sweat, biological substances, insects and more; can irritate skin and eyes

Chlorine

A term used to describe any type of chlorine compound used as a disinfectant in swimming pool and hot tub water or to kill, destroy or control bacteria and algae. In addition, chlorine oxidizes ammonia and nitrogen compounds caused by swimmers.

Chlorine Demand

The quantity of free available chlorine removed during the process of sanitizing. The amount of organic and non-organic material contained in the water will "demand" a certain level of oxidizer to be destroyed.

Chlorine Neutralizer

A chemical used to make chlorine harmless. Used in test kits to counteract the bleaching effect of the chlorine or bromine in order to increase the accuracy of pool water tests. Sold as chlorine and bromine neutralizer, it is used to destroy excessive amounts of chlorine or bromine so the high levels will not affect swimmers.

Circular Pool

Circular pools, also known as round pools, are swimming pools built in the shape of a circle, producing a classic contemporary look.

Composite Decking

A mixture of wood and plastic forming an ultra-durable building material that resembles real wood.

Conditioner

Also known as stabilizer, pool conditioner protects chlorine from loss due to the sun's UV rays (see Cyanuric Acid)

CONDUIT

A pipe, usually gray PVC or flexible PVC designed to carry wires from a source (i.e. time clock) to a load (i.e. pump motor).

Coping

The cap or top lip on the pool or hot tub wall that provides a finished edge around the pool or spa. It can be formed, cast in place or precast, or prefabricated of extruded aluminum or rigid vinyl. It may also be part of the system that secures a vinyl liner to the top of the pool wall.

Corrosion

The etching, pitting or eating away of the pool or hot tub or equipment. Can be caused by improper water balance, misuse of acid or acidic products or from soft water.

Cover

- ***Automatic covers:*** Solid, reinforced vinyl which rolls onto a reel on one end of the pool and attaches on the sides into small aluminum tracks. Can be motorized or hand crank. Some models may snap the sides into small anchors placed into the deck, providing more shape flexibility. Provides safety (with water pumped off), debris protection and heat/chemical/water retention.
- ***Hard Covers:*** A cover which rests on the edge or coping of the spa or small pool. Provides a barrier to debris and possibly people, while keeping the heat trapped in.
- ***Mesh Covers:*** These stretch tightly across the pool like a trampoline. The only covers which can be called safety covers in that the mesh polypropylene allows precipitation to pass through.

Solar Covers: Sometimes called a thermal blanket, this cover floats on the surface, magnifying the sun's rays to warm the water and also provide chemical/heat/water evaporation. A cover that, when placed on the water's surface of a pool, hot tub or hot tub, increases the water temperature by absorption and transmission of solar radiation; reduces evaporation and prevents windborne debris from entering the water.

- ***Solid Covers:*** These are usually made of some form of plastic or vinyl and are secured around the edges either by Aqua Bloks or similar weight or the edges attach to anchors set in the concrete or wood deck.
- ***Winter Covers:*** A barrier to sun and debris, winter covers secure the pool from contamination. These are subdivided below.

Cyanuric Acid

Also known as pool conditioner or stabilizer, cyanuric acid protects your pool's chlorine from degradation due to sun light.

D.E.

Diatomaceous Earth — a porous substance used in certain types of pool filters.

Decking

The area surrounding a pool, typically concrete, wood, composite or natural stone.

Dirt Demand

The demand that your pool has for dirt. If you remove the dirt from the pool, you have created a dirt deficit, and the pool will actually suck dirt out of the air to maintain its dirt demand.

Diverter Valve

A plumbing fitting used to change the direction or redirect the flow of water. Some diverter valves are used on pool/spa combinations to allow the use of the hot tub and then switch the flow back to the pool.

Drain

This term usually refers to a plumbing fitting installed on the suction side of the pump in pools, spas and hot tubs. Sometimes called the main drain, it is located in the deepest part of the pool, hot tub or hot tub. It does not function like a drain on a kitchen sink. Pool main drains do not allow the water to drain to waste but rather connect to the pump for circulation and filtration.

Effluent

The water that flows out of the pump, on its way through the filter, heating and treating equipment, and returning to the pool.

Excavation

The process of digging a hole in the backyard suitable for pool installation.

Exercise Pool

Exercise pools are small pools, also known as swim spas, typically built with jets to add resistance

Fiberglass

Finespun filaments of glass which are available in a rope or mat form. When used in a process with polyester resins, catalysts and hardeners, can be formed or molded into pools and spas.

Figure 8 Pool

A pool shaped like a figure 8

Filter

A device that removes dissolved or suspended particles from water by recirculating the water through a porous substance (a filter medium or element). The three types of filters used in pools and spas are sand, cartridge and D.E. (diatomaceous earth).

Filtration

The rate at which the water is traveling through the filter, expressed in U.S. gallons per minute (gpm) per square foot of filter area.

Fire Features

A category of additional swimming pool features that includes fire pits, fireplaces, fire bowls and other enhancements that use fire.

Flagstone

A flat, hard natural stone used for patios, walkways, decking, coping and more.

Flocculant

Chemical that clumps floating particles in cloudy water, causing them to sink to the bottom; clumps are then removed manually via vacuum

Flow Rate

The quantity of water flowing past a designated point within a specified time, such as the number of gallons flowing past a point in 1 minute — also known as gallons per minute or gpm.

Frame

The part of an above ground pool that secures the wall in place and provides much of the strength for the pool; generally made of coated steel, extruded aluminum, or resin.

Free Chlorine

Measures the amount of chlorine in a pool undisturbed by contaminants; contaminated chlorine is known as "combined chlorine"

Free Form Pool

Freeform pools do not follow a specific shape, rather are characterized by their free-flowing curves

Geometric Pool

Geometric pools are characterized by clean lines and sharp angles

Glass Pool Tile

Glass pool tile is specially designed to withstand temperature changes, chemical damage and being submerged in water; glass pool tiles are often transparent or opaque

Glossy Pool Tile

Glossy pool tile is water-, chemical- and frost resistant tile with a shiny exterior

Gas Valve

An electronic valve in the pool heater that directs gas flow from the meter to the pilot and the burner tray.

GPM

Abbreviation for "gallons per minute."

Grecian Pool

Grecian pools typically have diagonal corners rather than sharp squared corners like those found in rectangle pools

Grotto

A grotto is a swimming pool water feature made of large rocks build above and around a cavernous swimming area.

Grout

A paste-like mixture applied between tiles that dries solid, creating an insoluble surface.

Gunitite

A mixture of cement and sand sprayed onto contoured and supported surfaces to build a pool. Gunitite is mixed and pumped to the site dry, and water is added at the point of application. Plaster is usually applied over the gunitite.

Gutter

An overflow trough at the edge of the pool through which floating debris, oil and other "lighter-than-water" things flow. Pools with gutters usually do not have skimmers.

Hand Skimmer

A screen attached to a frame which is then attached to a telescopic pole used to remove large floating debris, such as leaves and bugs, from the water's surface.

Hardscapes

Hardscapes refer to any hard landscaping building material, for example, concrete and natural stone.

Heat Exchanger

A device located inside the heater providing for the transfer of heat from the heat source to the water. This is usually a series of metallic tubes with fins located just above the flames.

Heater

A fossil-fueled, electric or solar device used to heat the water of a pool, hot tub or hot tub.

Heat Pump

The antithesis of the air conditioner, the heat pump's cooling coil removes heat from the air while the condenser coil transfers it to water cycling through it.

Infinity Pool

An infinity pool creates the illusion of endlessness with a negative edge that spills over.

Inlet

The pool pump pushes filtered water back into the pool through inlets, also known as jets.

Ionizer

An ionizer is a device mounted on your return line, and through which water flowing will receive charged metal ions.

Kidney Pool

Kidney pools are characterized by its unique shape that resembles a bean

Jandy Valve

A brand name of a three way valve, which has simplified pool plumbing.

Jet Pump

Used in spas to provide additional thrust into the hydrotherapy jets.

Liner

Also called a vinyl liner. The vinyl membrane that acts as the container to hold or contain the water in some types of pools.

Liquid Cover

Liquid solar pool covers cover your pool with a thin film that protects water from evaporating.

L-Shaped Pool

L-shaped pools is created with two rectangular pools that form a 90 degree angle

Main Drain

A plumbing fitting installed on the suction side of the pump in pools, spas and hot tubs. Sometimes simply referred to as the drain, it is located in the deepest part of the pool, hot tub or hot tub. It does not function like the drain on a kitchen sink. Pool main drains do not allow the water to drain to waste but rather connect to the pump for circulation and filtration.

Multiport Valve

A 4 or 6 position valve combining the functionality of several valves into one unit, revolutionizing pool plumbing. The five common functions are described below:

- **Filter:** This is normal water flow through the filter, say, top to bottom. This is where the valve sits 99% of the time.
- **Backwash:** When the pressure gauge indicates, you will need to backwash the filter. When the handle is turned to backwash, the flow through the filter is reversed. The effluent water (out of the filter) is directed to the waste line.
- **Rinse:** After backwashing, it's a good idea to rinse for 15-20 seconds to remove any residual dirt that may "poof!" back into your pool after backwashing. Rinse flows through the water in filter fashion, say, top to bottom, but effluent is sent out the waste line.
- **Recirculate:** This setting bypasses the filter, water coming into the multiport does a U-turn and heads back towards the pool. Used only when the filter is broken (at least it's circulating), or when adding specialty chemicals which specify using this setting.
- **Drain / Vacuum to waste:** This useful setting allows you to vacuum up large volumes of debris that would either clog the filter or pass through it because of its small size. Dirt that is vacuumed passes right out the waste line. It is also the setting of choice when draining the pool or lowering the water level (if you didn't need to backwash, which also lowers the water level).

Mosaic Pool Tile

Mosaic pool tile is made of smaller pieces of tile that combine to create a larger design

Natural pool

A natural pool earns its name from its organic shape, materials and colors. Natural pools also may be self-cleaning and operating.

Neutralizer

A chemical used to make chlorine or bromine harmless. Used in test kits to counteract the bleaching effect of the chlorine or bromine in order to increase the accuracy of pool water tests. Sold as chlorine and bromine neutralizer, it is used to destroy excessive amounts of chlorine or bromine so the high levels will not affect swimmers.

Non-Chlorine Shock

Used to oxidize materials such as microorganisms, contaminants or chloramines.

Oval Pool

Oval-shaped swimming pool.

Oxidizer

A non-chlorine shocking compound that removes or destroys built-up contaminants and chloramines in pool water without raising chlorine levels.

Palapa

A palapa is an open-air structure with a thatched roof, popular for its breezy design.

Pavers

Pavers are small paving stones made of clay, brick, stone or concrete.

Pergola

A pergola is an open-air outdoor structure with four support beams and a lattice or crossbeam roof.

pH

Abbreviation for Potential Hydrogen. Indicates the level of acidity or alkalinity of water on a scale ranging from 0-15. A low pH can cause etched plaster, metal corrosion and eye irritation. A high pH can cause scale formation, chlorine inefficiency and eye irritation. The ideal range for pH in swimming pools is typically 7.4 to 7.6.

Pool Cover, Hard Top

A cover used on pools, spas and hot tubs that rests on the lip (coping) of the pool or hot tub deck ; not a flotation cover. Used as a barrier to swimmers and bathers and for maintenance and thermal protection.

Porcelain Pool Tile

Porcelain pool tile is a highly durable, richly colored product that is resistant to water-, chemical- and frost-damage.

ppm

Parts per million

Pump

A mechanical device, usually powered by an electric motor, which causes hydraulic flow and pressure for the purpose of filtration, heating and circulation of pool and hot tub water. Typically, a centrifugal pump is used for pools, spas and hot tubs.

Pump Capacity

The volume of liquid a pump is capable of moving during a specified period of time. This is usually listed in gallons per minute or gpm.

Pump Curve

Also called a pump performance curve. A graph that represents a pump's water flow capacity at any given resistance.

Raised Bond Beam

The pool's bond beam rises vertically in one part of the pool, creating a wall

Rectangular Pool

Pool shaped like a rectangle with clean lines and sharp corners

Retaining Wall

A retaining wall protects your backyard from erosion and landslides caused by hills and inclines.

Roman Pool

Roman-style swimming pools are recognizable for their rectangular shape bookended by two half-circles.

Sanitizers

Chemical compounds designed to kill bacteria, algae and other living organisms. Also protects water from the effects of the sun.

Scale

Buildup of calcium that forms a white-grey powdery stain on pools

Shock Treatment

The practice of adding significant amounts of an oxidizing chemical -- (usually non-chlorine oxidizers, such as sodium persulfate or potassium peroxydisulfate) -- to the water to destroy ammonia and nitrogen compounds caused by swimmers, the environment and/or weather.

Skimmer

A device installed through the wall of a pool or hot tub that is connected to the suction line of the pump that draws water and floating debris in the water flow from the surface without causing much flow restriction.

Skimmer Basket

A removable, slotted basket or strainer placed in the skimmer on the suction side of the pump, which is designed to trap floating debris in the water flow from the surface without causing flow restriction.

Solar Cover

A cover that, when placed on the water's surface of a pool, hot tub or hot tub, increases the water temperature by absorption and transmission of solar radiation; reduces evaporation and prevents windborne debris from entering the water.

Spa

A small, heated tub, often with built-in jets, designed for hydrotherapy and relaxation.

Spool

The combination of "small," and "pool," a spool is a small pool.

Stone Veneer

Stone veneer is a manufactured stone that simulates the look of natural stone and is applied to the exterior of outdoor structures, walls and buildings.

Swim-up Bar

A built-in swimming pool feature that includes a large horizontal shelf above the water for beverages and snacks and underwater bar stools.

Tanning Ledge

See "Baja Shelf"

Test Kit

An apparatus or device used to monitor specific chemical residuals, levels, constituents or demands in pool or hot tub water. The most common pool and hot tub water tests are: pH, total alkalinity, free available chlorine, water hardness, cyanuric acid, iron and copper.

Test Strips

Small plastic strips with pads attached that have been impregnated with reagents that can be used to test pool water for residuals, levels, constituents or demands. The strips are usually dipped in the water, and the resulting colors of the pads are compared to a standard set of colors to determine concentration.

Top Caps

Usually made of resin or other form of plastic, the top cap covers the top plate and help to give an above ground pool a more finished, attractive look.

Top Plates

You will find a top plate attached to the top of each upright of an above ground pool. They provide connection points for the top track and top rails that span between each post.

Top Rails

Top rails form the top ledge of the swimming pool. Ranging up to 12" in width, the rails connect between each post (see Uprights)

Top Track

Sometimes called a stabilizer bar, the top track rests over the top of the wall, but beneath the top rails. The top track interlocks from top plate to top plate, helps to keep the top of the wall straight, and helps to keep the pool liner securely in place.

Total Alkalinity

Measurement of the amount of alkaline substances in your pool water.

Total Dissolved Solids

Measures the amount of minerals, chemicals and other substances dissolved in your pool water

Turbidity

The cloudy condition of the water due to the presence of extremely fine particles in suspension that cannot be trapped by the filter because they are too small. Adding a clarifier, such as an organic polymer or alum, will coagulate the particles and make the filter more efficient.

Uprights

The uprights, or posts provide support for the wall and top frame of the pool. Uprights can range up to 12" wide depending on the pool model and the material they are made of.

Vacuum

Devices that use suction to collect dirt from the bottom and sides of a pool or spa. Most common is a vacuum head with wheels that attaches to a telepole and is connected to the suction line, usually via the opening in the skimmer. Pool vacuums must be operated by a person, and debris is collected in the filter.

Vanishing Edge

See "Infinity Pool"

Vinyl Liner

The vinyl membrane that acts as the container to hold or contain pool water.

Wall

The part of an above ground pool that houses the water, typically made of galvanized steel.

Water Clearer

Also called coagulant or flocculant . A chemical compound used to gather (coagulate or agglomerate) or to precipitate suspended particles so they may be removed by vacuuming or filtration. There are two types; inorganic salts of aluminum (alum) and other metals or water-soluble organic polyelectrolytes.

Water Features

A category of additional swimming pool features that includes waterfalls, water bowls, fountains, bubblers, deck jets and other features that incorporate water.

Waterline Tile

Tile that is installed at the pool's waterline, right below the coping and decking. Waterline tile must be extremely durable water resistant since it is constantly submerged in pool water.

Weir

The small floating "door" on the side of the skimmer that faces the water over which water flows on its way to the skimmer. Adjusts automatically to small changes in water level to assure a continuous flow of water to the skimmer. The weir also prevents debris from floating back into the pool after the pump shuts off. Also known as a skimmer weir.

Zero Edge Pool

The edges of a zero edge pool spill over, creating an illusion of boundlessness

Zero Entry Pool

Also known as a "beach entry pool," these pools have a slightly sloped entry that resembles a beach.