

Above Ground Swimming Pool Heaters

Extending the swimming season is a great way to enjoy more fun and recreation while getting the very most out of your pool. With the help of above ground swimming pool heaters, you can start swimming earlier in the season and close your pool later in the fall. Swimming pool heaters raise and maintain the temperature of pool water, providing greater swimmer comfort. While there are many different above ground pool heaters on the market, they all fall into three main categories -- gas pool heaters, electric pool heaters and solar pool heaters.

Although gas, electric and solar pool heaters all have the same purpose, they differ significantly in how they operate. Each type of above ground swimming pool heater also has its own advantages to consider. Prior to purchasing a pool heater, it's a good idea for pool owners to have a basic understanding of the differences between the various available models. The information below outlines the way in which each type of heater works and the pros and cons that go along with gas, electric and solar pool heaters.

Gas Pool Heaters



[Gas above ground swimming pool heaters](#) are powered either by propane or natural gas. As such, either a propane storage tank or natural gas hook-up is required to operate one of these heaters. The fuel, whether natural gas or propane, is burned in the heater's combustion chamber and the heat created from that process is then transferred into the pool water. Gas pool heaters heat water quickly and effectively, but it's important to ensure that your heater suits the size of your pool in order to get the best heating performance and results.

Pros and Cons

Gas pool heaters for above ground swimming pools can sell for anywhere in the range of \$875 to \$5500, with many quality models available at the lower end of that price range. That means that the initial cost of gas swimming pool heaters is typically lower than the initial cost of other types of pool heaters. However, gas heaters have the highest cost of operation. Yet, since they provide fast heating, gas above ground swimming pool heaters are ideal for pools that only need to be heated for short periods of time and for pools that often need to be heated up quickly on weekends, during vacations or in anticipation of arriving guests.

For pool owners who decide to purchase a gas pool heater for their swimming pool, it's important to pay attention to the efficiency ratings of available models. Most gas heaters have an efficiency rating of at least 60% but by choosing a model with a rating closer to 80% you can save on operating costs. While the lifespan of your heater will depend on its quality and durability, gas pool heaters should last for at least five years.

Heat Pump Pool Heaters

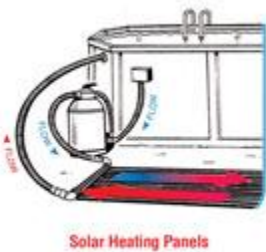


Electric or heat pump pool heaters require electricity to operate but also incorporate aspects of solar heating. [Heat pump above ground swimming pool heaters](#) take warmth from the surrounding air and upgrade that heat with a compressor before transferring it to the pool water. Since these pool heaters do not rely on direct sunlight, they can still function effectively during cloudy weather as long as the air temperature remains above 45°F. When that condition is met, heat pump pool heaters can easily maintain the temperature of pool water between 80° and 90°.

Pros and Cons

Heat pump pool heaters may require periodic maintenance in order to keep the electrical and moving parts in good shape. However, when properly maintained, electric pool heaters have an excellent lifespan, lasting for at least five to 10 years and, in many cases, much longer. Although these pool heaters require electricity to operate, they only require small amounts and therefore have a low cost of operation. This helps to balance out the fact that electric above ground swimming pool heaters generally cost between \$1600 and \$4600 to purchase. Heat pump pool heaters provide an excellent option for pool owners who want to use solar energy to heat their pool yet cannot accommodate a solar heater on their property or live in a region that experiences frequent cloudy weather.

Solar Pool Heaters



[Solar above ground swimming pool heaters](#) rely entirely on the sun's energy to heat pool water. As water circulates through the heating unit, heat from the sun's rays is transferred into the water. While some solar swimming pool heaters are designed to be set up on rooftops, other models can be installed on the ground. Since solar pool heaters are very environmentally friendly, they are rapidly growing in popularity with pool owners across the country.

Pros and Cons

In addition to providing pool heating in an environmentally friendly manner, solar pool heaters also have no cost of operation. Therefore, despite the fact that these pool heaters can cost as much as \$4800, they are an excellent long-term investment. Solar pool heaters also require little maintenance

and yet will typically last for at least 10 to 20 years. However, it's important to keep in mind that since these heaters rely on sunlight, stretches of bad weather can cause a drop in the pool's temperature. Although it only takes a few days of warm weather to restore a comfortable water temperature, solar pool heaters are best suited to warm, sunny climates.