

Swimming Pool Supplies Buying Guide

Using the right swimming pool products and supplies will help you to maintain a clean, healthy and comfortable swimming environment. However, with so many different swimming pool supplies now available, knowing how to choose the right ones may seem like a daunting task. Fortunately, simply by familiarizing yourself with the various available products you will find it far easier to choose supplies and equipment that will work well for both you and your pool.

Pool Chemicals



Swimming pool chemicals are some of the most important supplies for both above ground and in-ground swimming pools. Proper swimming pool maintenance requires the use of several different chemicals and such chemicals can be purchased individually or in swimming pool chemical kits. Many pool owners find the latter choice to be far more convenient, particularly when the chemicals are pre-measured for specific pool sizes.

When shopping for [pool chemicals](#) there are certain chemicals that must be on your list if you are going to maintain clean, crystal-clear pool water. Whether purchasing chemicals individually or as kits, some of the most important products to look for include sanitizers, shocking chemicals, algaecides and balancing chemicals.

Sanitizers



Swimming pool sanitizers include [chlorine](#) and bromine. These chemicals kill bacteria and other contaminants, thereby creating a healthier and cleaner swimming environment. To ensure proper sanitization, these chemicals should be used on a regular basis throughout the swimming season, although chlorine sanitizers typically need to be used more frequently than bromine sanitizers. [Bromine](#) dissolves much more slowly than chlorine and requires the use of a chemical feeder. However, some pool owners prefer bromine over chlorine as it is less irritating to skin and eyes.

Pool Shock & Algaecides



Shocking chemicals can be either [chlorine-based pool shock](#) or [chlorine-free pool shock](#). These chemicals are used to burn off impurities and to give pool water an extra boost of contaminant-fighting power after heavy bather loads and heavy rain falls. As for algaecides, these swimming pool chemicals are formulated to kill algae blooms and to prevent algae growth. [Pool algaecides](#) are important because algae blooms can become very stubborn and difficult to deal with if not treated promptly and properly.

Balancing Chemicals



While it is necessary to use swimming pool chemicals to kill off algae, bacteria and other contaminants, it's also important to maintain balanced water chemistry. This involves the use of [pH increaser](#), [pH reducer](#), [alkalinity increaser](#) and [calcium hardness increaser](#). These chemicals can be used to correct and maintain water conditions. This is an important part of swimming pool maintenance as other chemicals, such as sanitizers, will only work effectively when the water is properly balanced.

Pumps & Filters



While swimming pool chemicals are vital to maintaining a clean swimming environment, so too are pool pumps and filters. [Pool pumps and filters](#) work together to remove debris particles from swimming pools to keep the water clean and clear. While pumps circulate the pool water through the filtration system, pool filters trap debris particles, preventing dirt and other contaminants from returning to the pool. Swimming pool pumps and filters are available in above ground and in-ground models and there are three basic types of swimming pool filters to choose from.

Sand Filters

Sand filters consist of a sand bed containing 20 grade silica sand. As the swimming pool pump propels water through the sand bed, debris particles become trapped in the sand beds. Sand filters are able to trap particles as small as 20 to 40 microns and require periodic backwashing to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

Cartridge Filters

Instead of sand, cartridge filters use fibrous paper cartridges to filter out dirt and other debris. Cartridge filters provide a greater surface area for filtration and can trap particles as small as 10 to 15 microns. Rather than requiring backwashing, cartridge filters can simply be cleaned with a regular garden hose.

D.E. Filters

Diatomaceous earth (DE) filters use DE powder to filter pool water. DE powder is a porous powder capable of filtering out bacteria and debris particles as small as 2 to 5 microns. As a result, DE filters provide the best pool water filtration currently available and are becoming more and more popular with pool owners. As is the case with sand filters, DE filters require periodic backwashing.

Pool Heaters



While clean water helps to ensure a healthy swimming environment, many pool owners wish to increase the comfort of their swimming environment by using a [pool heater](#) to raise the water temperature. With several different types of pool heaters available for above ground and in-ground swimming pools, pool owners need to consider which type of heater will best suit their pool and their personal preferences.

Gas Pool Heaters

[Gas swimming pool heaters](#) are powered either by propane or natural gas. These swimming pool heaters will heat water very quickly and will work effectively in all weather conditions. While more efficient models are becoming available, it's important to keep in mind that gas pool heaters have the highest operating cost of all three types of heaters.

Heat Pump Pool Heaters

[Heat pump pool heaters](#) require electricity to operate. These swimming pool heaters take warmth from the surrounding air and use it to raise the water temperature. Heat pump pool heaters have a very low cost of operation and will function effectively even when the sun is not shining, as long as the air temperature remains above 50°F.

Solar Pool Heaters

[Solar swimming pool heaters](#) provide the most environmentally friendly pool heating option. These pool heaters have no cost of operation as they use heat from the sun to raise the temperature of pool water as it circulates through the heating unit.

Solar Pool Covers



Swimming pool owners should seriously consider investing in a quality solar pool cover. Solar covers will help to maintain cleaner water and will also help to prevent heat and chemical loss through evaporation. [Solar pool covers](#) can even raise the pool temperature by transferring heat from the sun into the water, thereby creating a more comfortable environment for swimming while reducing reliance on swimming pool heaters. Swimming pool covers are available in a variety of standard shapes and sizes for above ground and in-ground pools and are also available in custom rectangular sizes.