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## How to Open Your Swimming Pool This Spring

By Gregory Fort

Soon spring will be here and so will the annual chore of opening your swimming pool. Planning ahead can make the job much easier. There's nothing worse than realizing your short one bag of shock when you're in the middle of prepping the pool. So let's first make a list of chemicals that you might need.

There will be different needs depending on the type of pool you own, so this list is general. Refer to your pool and pump instructions for additional information.

- Liquid or powdered Shock
- Chlorine powder or tablets
- Bromine
- pH increase or pH decrease
- Sanitizing cartridge for cartridge filters
- A test kit or bottle of test strips to test pH and chlorine levels

Before you run off to your local pool supply store for chemicals, now would be the time to check all of your hoses, clamps, skimmer baskets, gaskets and o-rings. If any of the parts look like they need replacing, take them with you to the pool supply store. It's a lot easier to match replacement parts if you have the old part with you.

Now that you have the easy part finished, it's time to get to work. The first thing required is to get the cover off. Enlist some help for this, as you want to avoid getting any top water into the pool water. If you have an above ground pool, siphon the water off with a hose. If you have an in-ground pool you will need to use a sump pump to remove the top water.

To get a good siphon started, hook up the hose to the spigot and put the other end of the hose into the top water. Turn the hose on for a minute or so to fill it. Next crimp the hose a foot or two away from the faucet, and with your other hand, disconnect the hose from the spigot. Position the hose at a downspout drain to discharge then let go of the crimp. The water will reverse and start to drain.

Once you have the water cleared, use a leaf rake to remove as many leaves and twigs as possible.

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Next, remove your cover weights or springs. At this time a few people positioned around the pool will help to keep the cover out of the water. Try to fold your cover like a blanket keeping the crud in the middle then remove the cover. You need to scrub the cover thoroughly and properly dry for summer storage.

Now it's time to attach all the pump hoses. Remember to lube plugs, fittings, valves and o-rings with petroleum jelly. Also be sure to remove any freeze plugs that were used to cover the hose openings. You will most likely need to add water to the pool. It should be filled to the skimmer half way point.

At this point you should start re-circulating the water and check for any leaks around the pump and hoses. Once your pool is leak and drip free, skim off as much floating debris as you can with your skimmer net. Open all your valves to flood the hoses and prime the pool pump. Most manufacturers

recommend constantly recirculating the pool water for at least three days. Any crud and debris on the sides and bottom of the pool will need to be scrubbed off. Use the broom attachment of your pool vacuum for this.

After all debris has been removed and the pool has been scrubbed, check your filter for cleaning. Some pumps have removable filters; others are back-flushed, so clean as directed. Once the filter is cleaned, you can now super shock the water as per your manufacturer's instructions. If you start with green water, you will need a lot more shock. It may take a few days of recirculation to clear the water. Once the water has cleared, test your water or take a sample to your pool supply store and have it analyzed. Adjust the water as required and keep recirculating. All that is left to do now is to wait for the water to warm up so you can start enjoying your pool.

Gregory Fort is a partner with the company Pool-Pockets – Your pool toy storage solution.

<http://www.pool-pockets.com>

## **5 Swimming Pool Cover Tips**

**By David Evermon**

### 5 Things to look for when choosing a swimming pool cover

Swimming pool covers come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and general types. There are solar swimming pool covers that work to keep the water warm as well as warm the water using the sun's heat. Safety pool covers do just what it says it does, it keeps the swimming pool safe from unwanted entry of the humans or animals. In ground and above ground winter swimming pool covers, keep dirt, debris, and animals out of your pool during the winter season. It also prevents growth on the inside of your swimming pool that can be caused by the winter elements.

Here are a few things you should look for when shopping for a pool cover for your above ground or in ground swimming pool.

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1. Find a swimming pool cover that is strong and sturdy. The cover should not only keep your swimming pool clean, it should add safety as well for humans and animals alike. It should prevent accidental drowning and dirt and debris from entering the pool.
2. Make sure the swimming pool cover conforms to state and local law requirements. Some areas require that a certain size and depth of pool be covered when not in use. There are specific requirements that these covers must meet. Check with your local authorities to ensure that your swimming pool cover meets the requirements needed.
3. Make sure your chosen swimming pool cover comes with a good manufacturer's warranty. In general, the swimming pool cover should come with a warranty of longer than 2 years. It should definitely have a full 2-year warranty for all defects and longer for limited warranties. You only want a pool cover that can be trusted and is safe with a full warranty for a lengthy amount of time. you also need to be sure the company stands behind their products.
4. Make sure the pool cover has a good overlap length. You should buy a size that is a little larger than your pool. This will enable you to securely anchor the swimming pool cover without having to worry about not being able to cover your pool completely.
5. Make sure the swimming pool cover comes with enough parts to securely anchor the cover without worry of slippage. Most larger swimming pool covers come with a strap or anchor for every four feet of cover. You definitely want a good amount of anchoring so the cover will continue to be secure each time you use it.

There you have it! The top 5 things you should look for when you are buying a swimming pool cover for any size pool and for any material type. You can purchase quality swimming pool covers at your local swimming pool supply store or at any department store that sells swimming pool gear and supplies. Carefully read all instructions provided by the manufacturer and ensure that the cover meets all requirements in your local area. Always think safety first when you own a swimming pool.

David Evermon has been involved in many swimming pool construction and maintenance projects, David writes articles about swimming pool cleaning and maintenance at

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