

Pool Cleaning Tips

There are a few basic procedures that are efficient and save time which any one can follow. Determining the surface composition before starting the cleanup procedure.

Deck and Cover Cleaning

Remove as much debris as possible from the pool or spa deck and cover before removing it. A quick sweep or hosing can remove the debris near the pool. If the cover is a floating type without a roller system, be sure to fold or place it on a clean surface. Otherwise, when you put it back in place it will drag leaves, grass, or dirt into the pool. If it is a mechanized cover system, any small amount of standing water on top of the cover will slide off as you roll it up. If there is greater amount of water motor will be laboring, so you will need to use the water removal pump. Also be careful to avoid abrasive or sharp surfaces as you drag the cover off of the pool.

Surface Skimming

Dirt floating on the surface of the water is easier to remove than to remove it from the bottom. Remove floating debris off the surface, using a leaf rake and telepole. As the net fills, empty it into a trash can or plastic garbage bag. Do not empty your skimming debris into the garden or on the lawn for the debris is likely to blow right back into the pool as soon as it dries out.

There is no particular method to skim, but as you do, scrape the tile line, which acts as a magnet for small bits of leaves and dirt. The rubber-plastic edge gasket on the professional leaf rake will prevent scratching the tile.

If there is scum or general dirt on the water surface, squirt a quick shot of tile soap over the length of the pool. The soap will spread the scum toward the edges of the pool, making it more concentrated and easier to skim off.

Tiles

Always do the tiles first. Dirt falls from the tiles as they are being cleaned and settles to the bottom of the pool. If you need to remove stubborn stains with a pumice stone, the pumice itself breaks down as you scrub, depositing debris on the bottom.

Use the tile soap and tile brush to clean the tiles. Apply a squirt of tile soap directly to the brush and start scrubbing. To remove stubborn stains and oils, mix one part muriatic acid to five parts of soap. When cleaning tile, scrub

below the waterline as well as above. Evaporation and refilling can change the water line. Never use really abrasive brushes or scouring pads to clean tiles they may cause scratches.

Water Level

If you add an inch or so of water to the pool each time you service it, you will probably keep up with normal evaporation. If you wait a few weeks until the level is several inches low, it will take hours to fill. Never leave the water on to fill by itself for it may take longer and most likely you may forget to turn it off.

After rains you might need to lower the pool level. In this case, use your submersible pump and a backwash hose or spare vacuum hose for the discharge. Alternatively, you can run the pool circulation system and turn the valves to waste. If you use this method, remember to return the valves to normal circulation.

Equipment Check

Checking your equipment and maintaining your support system is best way to solve the small corrective problems.

Start by circulation system by following the path of the water. Clean out the pool's skimmer basket and Emptying the contents of the skimmer basket into your trash can or garbage bag.

Next, open the pump strainer basket and clean it. Check the pressure of the filter. There is no point in checking it before cleaning out the skimmer and strainer baskets, because if they are full the filter pressure will be low and will come back up after cleaning the baskets. If the pressure is high, the filter might need cleaning.

Now check the heater for leaves or debris. Turn the heater on and off a few times to make sure it is operating properly. While the heater is running, turn the pump off. The heater should shut off by itself when the pressure from the pump drops. This is an important safety check.

Now check the time clock for the time of the day ; setting for the daily filter runs; setting for the cleaner's clock. Always check the clocks because trippers come loose and power fluctuations or some service work on household items unrelated to the pool can also affect the clocks. Also, electromechanical time clocks are not exactly precision instruments. One might run slightly faster than another, so over a few weeks one might show a difference of an hour or more, upsetting your planned timing schedule.

After the equipment check, look for leaks or other early signs of equipment failure. Clean up the equipment area by removing leaves from around the motor vents and heater to prevent fires, and clear deck drains of debris that could prevent water from draining away from the equipment during rain.

Vacuuming

If the pool is not dirty, simply brush the walls and bottom, skipping the vacuuming completely. If the pool or spa is dirty, however, you have two ways to clean it: vacuuming to the filter or vacuuming with the leafmaster.

Vacuum to filter

Dirt collected from the pool or spa is sent to the filter of the circulation system. This is Vacuuming to filter.

1. Run the circulation system correctly and that all suction is concentrated at the skimmer port. Use your skimmer diverter for this process if dealing with a single port skimmer. If the system includes valves for diversion of suction between the main drain and the skimmer, close the main drain valve completely and turn the open skimmer valve completely. If there are two skimmers in the pool, close off one by covering the skimmer suction port with a tennis ball, thereby increasing the suction in the other one. On large pools, you might have to vacuum each half separately.
2. Attach your vacuum head to the telepole and attach the vacuum hose to the vacuum head. Slowly feed the hose straight down into the pool; water will fill the hose and displace the air. When you have fed all the hose into the pool, there is water at the other end.
3. To avoid draining the water from the hose keep it at water level, slide the hose through the skimmer opening and into the skimmer. Attach the hose to the diverter (with two-port skimmers, insert the hose cuff into the skimmer's suction port). The hose and vacuum head now have suction. The suction port might be in the side of the pool below the skimmer in older pools. In this case you might need to put tennis ball over the skimmer suction port to increase the suction at the wall port. Make sure the hose does not contain a significant amount of air for if air reaches the pump, you will lose prime. If this occurs, remove the vacuum hose, re-prime the pump, then try again.
4. To Vacuum a pool or spa, work your way around the bottom and sides of the pool. If the pool is dirty, vacuum slowly to pick all the dirt, for moving the vacuum head too quickly, will stir up the dirt rather than suck it into the vacuum. If the suction is strong it sucks the vacuum head to the pool surfaces, then you need to adjust the skimmer diverter or valves to reduce the flow. You might also need to lower the wheels on the vacuum head, raising the vacuum head itself. If the suction is weak, you might want to lower the vacuum head or you might need to move the head more slowly around the pool to vacuum it thoroughly.

If the pool is very dirty, strainer basket or filter may be filled. When suction becomes weak, stop vacuuming and empty the strainer basket or clean the filter.

If the pool contains both fine dirt and leaves, the leaves will clog the strainer basket. You can use a leaf canister, which is an inline strainer that collects the leaves and allows fine dirt to pass on to the filter.

If the spa operates on the same circulation system, as the swimming pool, simply lift the vacuum out of the pool and immediately place it into the spa. Do this quickly because while the vacuum is out of the water, air enters the hose, causing it temporarily to lose suction. There should be enough water in the line for it to re-prime itself.

5. When you are finished, remove the vacuum head from the water. The suction will rapidly pull the water from the hose so it is advisable to pull the vacuum head from the pool and the suction end of the hose from the skimmer simultaneously, remove the hose from the water, and drain it on the deck.
6. After removing the equipment from the pool, check the pump strainer basket and filter for any debris. Clean if needed. Replace the skimmer basket.

Vacuum to leafmaster

Leafmaster is used instead of the vacuum if the pool is littered with leaves or heavy debris, then allowing the fine dirt to settle and vacuuming to the filter.

1. A garden hose is attached to a water supply and then to the leafmaster. Clip the leafmaster onto the telepole.
2. Place the leafmaster in the pool. Turn on the water supply and vacuum, covering the pool floor and walls. Because the leafmaster is large, you can move it quickly and vacuum the pool, taking care not to stir up the debris either by the non floating type of hose or by moving the leafmaster too fast. Emptying the bag periodically may be needed if there is too much of dirt in the pool.
3. Lift and remove the leafmaster slowly by turning it slightly to one side from the water to the surface for pulling it straight up will force the debris back into the pool. Do not turn the water supply off before removing the leafmaster from the pool, the loss of vacuum action can dump the collected debris back into the pool. When the leafmaster is on the deck, turn off the water supply and clean out the collection bag.

Brushing

Brushing removes algae from surfaces of pools or spas. If they are not very dirty, you can skip vacuuming but brush the walls and bottom of the pool, starting from the shallow to the deep end. Directing the dirt toward the main drain so it is sucked to the filter.

SPA AND WATER FEATURE CLEANING

The steps outlined for pool cleaning will work just as well for spas and water features. Here are a few special tips about what you might encounter that is unique to these bodies of water.

- Many spas are made of fiberglass, so take care when vacuuming to avoid scratching the surfaces.
- Vacuum the corners of water features and small spas with the spa vacuum described earlier.
- Evaluate the spa or water feature when you arrive, before you invest a great deal of time in cleaning. Test the chemistry first, so you can determine if you are better advised to drain the unit rather than clean and treat it. If the water or surfaces are very dirty, if the water is extremely hard or cloudy, if the dirt is in among rocks and gravel where it might be very hard to reach, pump out the water and clean the unit that way.
- If you do drain a spa or water feature, be sure the equipment is turned off at the breaker so the time clock won't turn it on before you are ready. You might need to set up your submersible pump and go to another job while the unit is draining. Your submersible has a small hole in the bottom to re-circulate the last inch of water to avoid burning out it's seal, so you can let it run without worrying that it will run dry.
- Before you clean the spa or water feature, clean the filter and run some fresh water (from the garden hose) through the circulation system to purge any dirty water from the lines. Nothing is worse than draining, cleaning, and refilling a spa only to turn the circulation back on and watch dirty water contaminate your work.
- Be extra careful with chemical testing and application. Most spas and water features contain a tiny fraction of the volume of water in a pool, so they can't absorb a mistake the way a pool might. It is better to add chemicals more slowly and in less quantity than you think necessary. You can always add more, but it is a real problem to remove any excess.

Water Testing and Application

Follow the general testing guidelines needed, testing for chlorine residual, pH, total alkalinity, and acid (or base) demand, calcium hardness or total hardness and total dissolved solids should be conducted one a month.