

Home Swimming Pool

**MAINTENANCE
& SAFETY
GUIDE**

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Introduction

Having invested in a new swimming pool, or having acquired one as part of a new property, you deserve many years of fun and relaxation from it. Having a swimming pool at home is a luxurious way to relax in the summer and entertain guests. Grandchildren and family pets adore a swimming pool. Swimming pool owners get hours of fun watching their kids swim, jump and splash about in their pools, even if they don't go near it themselves!

And of course, swimming is one of the best forms of exercise there is. You can swim at any age, even if joint pain or mobility difficulties inhibit taking on other exercises such as running. Swimming is good for the heart, lowers stress levels and strengthens all major muscle groups, as well as improving breathing and flexibility. And then there is the enjoyment of a barbecue by the pool on a warm summer evening, or simply relaxing outside with a cocktail and a good book. Need we go on?

This e-book isn't about the perks of buying a swimming pool. We assume that if you've downloaded this guide you will already own a swimming pool, or at the very least are seriously considering it. Our job is to provide you with a range of specialist, affordable swimming pool services to keep your pool safe and in good condition, and to enhance your enjoyment of it.

We have written this guide as a brief introduction to pool safety and maintenance, with helpful hints on how you can save money and avoid some of the common issues swimming pool owners experience with their home pools.

Full contact details are provided at the end of this guide, but if you have any questions while reading, please give our JB Elite team a call on **01536 646 007**, or send an email to **info@jbeliteservices.co.uk**.

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Safety First: How To Make Your Pool Safe For Your Kids And Pets



Safety while swimming is your first priority. With no lifeguards or maintenance team on hand to assist, it is your responsibility to make sure the pool is safe for everyone who uses it, especially for children and pets. Most home swimming pools are relatively shallow and safe. Nevertheless, there are risks, and accidents can and do happen.

Following these simple guidelines will help keep everyone safe while having fun in your pool.

Write A List Of Swimming Pool Safety Rules

Just as a public swimming pool has safety rules, so should your pool at home. Make a short, simple list of rules and explain them carefully to children so that they remember them before using the pool. For adults these rules should all be common sense, but if you're having a party, it won't hurt to print off and laminate a copy of the safety guidelines and leave them in a place where people can read them.

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Safety First: How To Make Your Pool Safe For Your Kids And Pets

Here are some you could use:

- 1) Children under five and non-swimmers should be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.
- 2) No running around the edge of the pool.
- 3) No diving outside your designated diving area (not recommended at all if your pool deep end is less than 2.5 meters deep).
- 4) No pushing people into the pool.
- 5) No 'bombing' and look before you jump.
- 6) Don't bring glass bottles or food into the pool.
- 7) Don't use the pool after drinking alcohol – 70% of swimming pool drownings among adults occur after alcohol has been consumed.



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Safety Precautions

Despite your best intentions, it is not possible to completely regulate how people behave in and around your pool. You can however take certain safety precautions that will minimise the risk of an accident. For instance:

- **When people are using your pool, designate a responsible person to keep a lookout. This could be you, your spouse or a trusted guest – preferably someone who is a confident swimmer.**
- **Keep your pool area fenced off from the rest of your garden to avoid people accidentally falling in.**
- **Ensure your pool is secured with an appropriate pool cover while not in use.**
- **Make sure there is adequate access to the pool to prevent slips, such as steps and ladders.**
- **Keep the edge of your pool in good repair, replace damaged tiles and keep it as dry as possible.**
- **Remove algal growth from the bottom of the pool and the surrounding area. This is both a health risk and slip hazard.**
- **Keep your pool water clear and clean, maintaining adequate levels of chemicals and filtration.**

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Safety First: How To Make Your Pool Safe For Your Kids And Pets

- Be strict about enforcing your safety rules.
- Make sure you know how to respond in an emergency, and have basic first-aid supplies to hand.

Maintaining a safe pool environment is closely linked to regular maintenance and common sense safety precautions. Some of the most important points in this checklist, such as pool covers, maintaining chlorine levels and routine maintenance tasks, will be covered in the following sections.



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Swimming Pool Covers

Your swimming pool cover is one of the most important pieces of equipment you should invest in for your pool. It keeps children, animals and guests safe while the pool is not in use, furthermore it prevents your pool becoming the target of frogs, ducks, waterborne insects and other pests. It also reduces the chance of your pool becoming contaminated with falling leaves, wasps, twigs and algae. Swimming pool covers also reduce evaporation from your pool, reducing your water and heating bills.

It is important to choose the right swimming pool cover to meet your requirements. This will be different for indoor pools and outdoor pools. You should also take steps to protect your pool cover, and regularly clean and maintain it.

Safety Pool Covers

Safety pool covers prevent unwanted items getting into the pool, whether they be twigs, food scraps, local cats or intrepid grandchildren! Any quality safety pool cover will prevent accidents by stopping people falling into the pool. This is their main job. Beyond this, however, there are three types of safety cover you can choose from:



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Swimming Pool Covers

1

Winter Covers

Winter covers are used on outdoor pools during the winter while the pool is not in use. Winter covers capture debris and prevent it entering your pool, while allowing rain and snow to drain directly into the water. They are cheap and durable, with quality winter covers capable of doing 15 years of service or more with the right maintenance. Mesh pool covers tend to be water permeable, meaning they prevent unwanted waste water accumulating on top of the safety cover, which can go stagnant and pose a safety hazard.

A mesh cover is strong enough to prevent children and animals falling into the pool, but will still let through some fine particles. You may find that when you remove the cover there is a fine sediment at the bottom of your pool that needs to be removed. Finally, a mesh cover does nothing to prevent heat loss during the winter, and evaporation during the summer.

2

Traditional Safety Covers

A traditional safety pool cover presents an impermeable barrier to debris and sunlight. It prevents evaporation and stops dust / dirt accumulating at the bottom of your pool. It also helps to retain heat. The downside of a traditional safety cover is that water accumulates as a large puddle in the middle from rain and dew. This can be difficult to remove unless you invest in a simple pump that removes accreted water. Some of these pumps can be programmed to switch on automatically if the water reaches a certain level. These types of covers can require a fair amount of maintenance due to tracks becoming blocked or pulley ropes snapping.

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Swimming Pool Covers

3

Slatted Covers

Slatted pool covers are predominantly solid as they are constructed from PVC slats that inter lock with each other. Like a safety cover it prevents evaporation and stops dust / dirt accumulation at the bottom of the pool along with keeping children and pest out, keeping them safe. Slatted covers have the added advantage as they don't run on tracks or use pulley ropes so they are very reliable and require minimal maintenance.



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Swimming Pool Covers

Protecting Your Pool Cover

Pool covers need protecting from windy and cold weather to stop them degrading over time, especially during winter. If a cover is not secured, wind can get under the edges of a cover and flip it up like a parachute, risking damage to the pool itself.

Fortunately, there are several easy steps you can take to safeguard your pool cover and ensure it keeps your pool safe in even the worst conditions:

- **Consider using an ivernea on your slated cover to protect the slats and completely seal up the edges of your pool while it is not in use over the winter.**
- **If it is likely that tree branches could fall onto your pool cover in windy weather, you should keep on top of your tree maintenance at the end of the summer, before the risk of autumn / winter gales increases. Fallen branches are the biggest cause of damage to swimming pool covers.**
- **Animals can cause damage to swimming pool covers; whether it is gnawing damage from rodents, the corrosive effect of bird dung or even foraging from deer looking for a water source during the winter. Install a robust poolside fence around the area to keep out large animals, and make sure food debris is removed to deter rodents and other pests.**

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Cleaning, Maintenance & Refurbishment

Beyond safety, there are three tasks that will concern a swimming pool owner. The first is keeping your pool and its water clean and hygienic. This is extremely important as it prevents the build-up of waterborne pathogens that can cause sickness in people and animals. It also stops algal blooms, which are unsightly, unhealthy and attract animals to your swimming pool - not a good scenario!

Some swimming pool owners use salt water to maintain hygiene, although chlorine is the easiest and most cost-effective option. It is also less irritating to the eyes than salt water. You should also retain the correct pH level of your water. This involves regular testing and topping up the chemical levels.

Other maintenance checks should also be carried out on a weekly, monthly and annual basis, as we'll see below. Finally, your pool will need to be refurbished occasionally, to update the appearance of the pool as fashions change, and also to improve its energy efficiency, water retention and safety – by replacing cracked tiles and rusted ladder rungs.

Maintaining Chlorine & pH Levels

The key to a healthy, happy pool is to maintain a stable level of chlorine and pH. This is a balancing act that does not always come easily to new swimming pool owners, but is fairly simple when carried out as part of a regular maintenance cycle.

The rule to follow when using chemicals is: using fewer chemicals on a regular basis is preferable to using a lot of chemicals on a less frequent basis. You use less product this way, it takes less time and it is easier to hit the right balance.

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Needless to say, safety is paramount when handling pool chemicals, as many are corrosive in undiluted form. Wear gloves, a face mask and splash proof goggles when handling pool treatment chemicals.

The main chemical used for stabilising chlorine is CYA, also known as cyanuric acid. This prevents the chlorine in your pool being broken down by ultraviolet rays from the sun. You will also need to top up the chlorine itself occasionally. When you do so, test the pH level of your water, as the presence of chlorine will change the pH level, making the water more acidic or alkali. You should compensate for this by adding either pH plus or minus to the water as needed.

Please remember that CYA levels should be kept below 50 ppm in your water, while the levels of free chlorine should be between 2 and 4 ppm. However, this isn't a precise calculation. As a rule, the level of free chlorine should be 7.5% of your CYA level.

So, for example, say your CYA ppm is 40. You can calculate your target chlorine level using the following sum:

$\text{CYA ppm} \times 0.075 = \text{your optimum free chlorine level}$
 $40 \times 0.075 = 3 \text{ ppm}$



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Cleaning, Maintenance & Refurbishment

Maintaining Chlorine & pH Levels

It is easier to prevent a problem occurring than to fix it after the event. This is very true with home swimming pools, so the purpose of weekly, monthly and seasonal checks is to maintain a healthy balance of chemicals and to prevent issues before they become a big job.

These tasks require some care and attention to detail at the beginning, but once you have the procedures, equipment and chemicals in place, they won't take too much time to implement. The pool will require more maintenance over the summer when it is used regularly, although some special tasks should be carried out over the winter as well.

Daily Tasks:

Make sure your pool pump is switched on for a minimum of 10 to 12 hours but ideally 24 hours a day each day to maintain good water quality.



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Cleaning, Maintenance & Refurbishment

Weekly Tasks:

- Skim and brush your pool surface at least twice per week.
- Vacuum your pool manually once per week, or set up your automatic pool cleaner to vacuum the pool.
- Apply a simple three-part chemical check and treatment cycle twice per week.
- Shock your pool at least once per week. This involves adding an oxidising compound to your pool to neutralise chloramine – an undesirable compound formed as chlorine breaks down. Shock also cleanses your water of bacteria and other waterborne particles. It is useful to do this when you have had a lot of people using your pool such as after a children's party.

Monthly Tasks:

- Have your pool water quality professionally checked once per month, or use an accurate six way water test.
- Check your pumps, filters, pool cover, ladders and safety equipment.

Many households find it helpful to write their maintenance schedule down with a check sheet so that tasks can be marked off, with different jobs assigned to different members of the family.

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Cleaning, Maintenance & Refurbishment

Seasonal Pool Maintenance

The majority of outdoor home swimming pools are not used during the autumn and winter. Problems can easily accumulate while the swimming pool is covered over and forgotten about during the cold months, which can lead to big headaches in the spring. Among these are infestation with algae, water freezing (which can damage the pool structure itself) and accumulation of debris.

- Debris build-up can be prevented by using a suitable pool cover.
- Algae contamination can be avoided by treating your pool in early January with a slow acting algaecide solution, which kills algae, and an algaestat – a chemical that inhibits algal growth. If the pool remains out of use or the winter is particularly long, these can be reapplied at two monthly intervals.
- Check all your pipes and motorised equipment regularly to prevent freezing. Make sure pumps, pool heaters and filters are drained of all water before cold weather approaches.

Refurbishment

The biggest reason for having your pool regularly refurbished is to avoid leaks. These can occur as a result of frost and wind damage, or through damaged pipes, pumps or other equipment. While all the other tasks mentioned in this section can be carried out yourself if necessary, we strongly recommend turning to a professional service for regular refurbishment. Recommendations for refurbishment will be on a case-by-case basis. We are always happy to talk to customers about bespoke refurbishment plans. Call us to find out more on 01536 646007.

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Our Services

We offer a range of maintenance and refurbishment services for swimming pool owners across the West Midlands, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire and the surrounding areas.

- We can repair heat pumps, detect and fix leaks, test pipes, replace tiles, install new filters and more.
- We can set up bespoke maintenance plans that include cleaning, debris removal and maintaining your chemical balance.
- We can refurbish old pools, giving your swimming pool a new lease of life with a revamped pool enclosure, a slatted cover, new steps, tiles or a complete overhaul.

In fact, any assistance you need whatsoever with your pool, we can provide it. Our team are experienced swimming pool specialists and have worked with hundreds of pools of all different sizes across the country.

Our goal is to make swimming pool ownership easier, cheaper and less time-consuming! So chat to us if you would like to:

- Improve the safety of your swimming pool
- Update your pool with a more modern appearance
- Save time cleaning and maintaining your pool

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Our Services

Our services are sensibly priced and provide great value for money. So let's chat about what you need to make your pool safer and more enjoyable. We have a personalised approach to business. One of our engineers will arrange a time to come out and speak to you at your property at a time of your convenience to ascertain your needs. We can then set up a bespoke plan of action that fits in with your schedule, lifestyle and budget. It's as simple as that.

Contact Us

Please get in touch by any of the following means:

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