

Cleaning Your Swimming Pool

Cleaning procedures are a vital part of keeping a pool safe and beautiful. Cleaning the pool regularly and thoroughly will make the pool operate most efficiently and will lengthen the life of the pool structure and its filtration equipment. Following is a list of pool maintenance tools and how to use them to maintain a beautiful pool.

Basic Pool Maintenance

Poles-Poles are necessary to use most pool cleaning and maintenance tools. Most often the best pole to use is an 8' to 16' telescoping poles. Cleaning tools are attached in most cases by the use for a spring clip, which is usually part of the tool handle, which allows you to change tools quickly. These poles are all the same diameter and fit most accessories.

Brushes-Brushes are probably the most valuable cleaning tool that a pool owner has. They have several uses and can be in several different forms. Nylon brushes are used to brush the surface of gunite, fiberglass, and vinyl-lined pools. Brushing dirt to the main drain is a quick way to clean up a pool, but is not real effective if the pool is really dirty. Brushing the surface on a regular basis will help prevent algae and help keep the surface smooth. In fiberglass and vinyl-lined pools, a nylon bristle brush is also fairly effective on algae and dirt spots. For algae and dirt spots on gunite pools, a stainless steel brush is sometimes necessary, but they should not be used on fiberglass or vinyl-lined pools. In addition, brushes with nylon bristles are usually used for tile cleaning. Brushes are probably the most underused cleaning tool a pool owner has. Regular brushing can assist in providing a clean, efficient pool.

Skimmer Nets & Leaf Rakes-Skimmer nets and leaf rakes are used for getting big debris such as leaves, grass, trash, and other debris out of the pool. A skimmer net is normally round and has a very shallow net to remove debris from the surface of the water. A leaf rake is wide and has a deep-pocket net,

which can remove debris from the pool floor. A properly used leaf rake can sometimes prevent the pool owner from vacuuming the pool.

Vacuums-Vacuums use the pool's filtration system by way of a vacuum hose and vacuum head and are very effective in removing small particles that have settled on the floor of the pool. Vacuums are available in both wheel models and brush models. Wheel models are most often used in gunite and fiberglass pools while brush models are used in vinyl-lined pools. The vacuum head (either wheel model or brush model) is attached to a pole and vacuum hose (usually 1-1/2" diameter hose up to 50' long) attaches to the vacuum head. The hose is then connected to the pool's filter system either by way of a skimmer suction (under skimmer basket) or vacuum fitting on the pool wall. This creates a filterable vacuum system. The vacuum head pulls water and debris to the filter, which filters out the debris and returns clean water to the pool throughout the pool's return fittings. The most common error made in vacuuming is in hooking the vacuum up. All air must be eliminated from the hose before connecting it to the suction line. This prevents the pump from running dry and losing its prime. Use the following steps to prevent this from occurring:

1. Lower the vacuum head straight down, with vacuum hose and pole attached, to the bottom of the pool.
2. Feed the hose straight down; hand over hand, into the water. This forces the air out of the hose. When you get to the end of the hose it should be full of water.
3. Attach the hose immediately to the vacuum fitting usually the hole in the bottom of the skimmer.
4. When vacuuming, never remove the vacuum head from the water, as it will pull air and result in loss of prime.

Good suction is the key to vacuuming. It can best be attained by doing the following.

1. Use the skimmer suction line or vacuum fitting that is closest to the filtration equipment. Due to the fact that it is the shortest distance, it usually has the best suction.
2. Use a vacuum hose that is the correct length. The longer the hose, the less the suction, so use a hose that is the proper length.

3. Use a vacuum hose that has no holes in it. Small holes can be caused by handling the hose in a rough manner. These holes cause the vacuum hose to pull air resulting in loss of prime.
4. To maximize suction, other suction lines may have to be shut off. This is usually done by turning valves, or by putting a plug in the skimmer suction line that is not being used as the vacuum suction.
5. The filter must be operating efficiently in order to provide maximum suction. When a filter is dirty, water flow decreases and, therefore, suction decreases. This can be corrected by backwashing or cleaning the filter.

Leaf Baggers- Leaf baggers operate on water pressure via a water hose, and are very effective in removing larger particles such as leaves that have settled to the floor of the pool. Leaf baggers are excellent for leaves and other debris. It attaches to a water hose and a pole. The water pressure from the water hose creates a venturi and leaves and other debris are then sucked into a leaf bag that must be emptied periodically. A fine mesh bag is also available which traps smaller particles. A leaf bagger is used as an alternative to vacuuming for leaves and other debris.

Abrasion Products-Gunite pools sometimes have surface stains that a stainless steel brush cannot remove. These can usually be removed by the use of wet/dry sandpaper, a pumice stone, or a rust stone.

Our retail staff here at Gohlke Pools can help you in answering questions about cleaning your pool and getting it swim-ready!

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