

# Winter Pool Options

There comes a time in the fall where the water is too cold for swimming. At that point, it is decision time; what are you going to do with your swimming pool? Depending on the situation, the number of trees, pool location, etc., there are basically five options for your pool for the winter. They are as follows:

## 1. Continue to Operate the Pool

This has been the most popular option for the past few years due to the mild winters we have experienced. In addition, pools have become more aesthetic and many pools are now the focal point of the landscaping – many pool owners are not covering their pool anymore because they are the centerpiece of the backyard. The advantage to not covering the pool is that you get to visually enjoy the pool over the winter. The disadvantage is you will still need to run the pump and chemically treat your pool, both of which cost money. In addition, if you have trees that drop leaves, you will have 4-6 weeks in the fall where maintaining the pool will be a job - it will be a daily chore to remove the leaves from the pool. Once the leaves have fallen, pool care again becomes manageable and pump run time can be cut back substantially. If this is the option that you choose, be sure that the pump is running when the air temperature is freezing. This will prevent freeze damage to the plumbing and the filtration system.

## 2. Purchase a Heater

If you desire to swim longer than the water temperature permits, purchasing a heater might be an option for you. Pool heaters allow you to swim approximately 10 months out of the year, as opposed to

approximately 6 months without a heater. Many of the pools now have attached hot tubs, which require a heater; swimming pool heaters are now more common than they used to be. When the weather is extremely cold, typically in January and February, even pool owners that have heaters surrender to the weather. Other than having a longer swim season, pool care during the winter will be the same as Option 1.

## 3. Cover Your Pool Using a Mesh Cover

Due to the number of trees that Denton is blessed with, this decision has become more popular in recent years than in the past. Mesh covers allow water to pass through and catch debris such as leaves. If the pool equipment is winterized (drained) and chemicals are not added periodically, the pool will be fairly dirty and green at the end of winter—this is due to the untreated water, which enters through the pool cover. If it is understood that it is best to run the equipment and add chemicals periodically, then this type of cover is an excellent choice, especially if leaves are a problem and safety is a concern.

## 4. Cover Your Pool With a Solid Cover

Solid covers allow you to winterize (drain) your pool equipment, put chemicals into the pool, and cover the pool for the winter. It is a very good method if you do not want utility or chemical costs over the winter, as the filtration equipment is drained and turned off for the winter. This cover catches water and debris, which must be periodically removed from the top of the cover. When the cover is removed in the spring, the pool is basically ready for swimming.

## 5. Drain the Equipment and not Cover the Pool

This is, in our opinion, the worst option. Draining the filtration equipment does protect the pool from freeze damage, but without any chemical treatment and allowing rain, leaves, and other contaminants to enter the pool, the pool turns into a swamp. The debris, if not cleaned out, can cause staining on the pool surface. In addition, this method usually calls for a big clean up in the spring.

Denton pool owners have used all of these winter pool care options, but the best method is the one that fits you and your pool. Should you have any other questions about winter pool care, please do not hesitate to let the staff of Gohlke Pools help you.

### **Note:**

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909 Dallas Drive • Denton, TX 76205

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