



### Swimming Pools

In-ground swimming pools can be found in many shapes and styles. Most modern pools are made of field-installed concrete or prefabricated fiberglass. Metal, plastic, masonry and even wood framing are also used to provide the framework for pools.

Concrete pools may be made of reinforced cast-in-place concrete or gunite, a concrete slurry sprayed over a skeletal frame of steel reinforcement. Steel is added for strength. The interior surfaces are usually finished with a smooth plaster-like finish called marcite, which can be painted in any color from white to black. Tile is often employed along the water line for appearance and maintenance purposes, but can be used throughout the pool as well.



Fiberglass pools are available either as a pre-formed solid shell or in a sectioned sidewall-panel design, with a concrete bottom. Fiberglass pools come in a variety of colors and offer low maintenance and a long service life. However, in areas of high water alkalinity, improperly treated pool water can chalk the finish necessitating repainting or lining to maintain a reasonable appearance.

Vinyl-liners are most often used with pools framed with metal, plastic, masonry, and even wood. The base may be

soft (sand, fibrous material, etc.) or hard (concrete). Liners are available in a variety of colors and designs. They can also be installed over concrete and even fiberglass if there is leakage of the original structure or as an alternate way of maintaining the pool interior.

#### POOL MAINTENANCE

The amount of enjoyment and longevity of your pool will depend largely on the care given to it. The key to attaining maximum enjoyment is a properly functioning filtration system that maintains water quality with minimal effort. Most filtration systems are comprised of a pump, filter (tank), and supply and return piping that function in combination with strainers, skimmers and drains. The pump, which is often water-cooled, pulls water through the drains and skimmers and into the filter, which traps fine particles of dirt and debris. Strainers are installed upstream of the pump to trap large particles. This filtration, along with chemical treatment (regulating chlorine and pH levels), helps maintain the water quality.

Many people are switching to automatic cleaners that operate in conjunction with filtration systems. These automatic vacuuming units will eliminate the tedium of daily vacuuming and can be used with most pools. Many pool owners also use heaters to extend the swimming season or to raise pool water temperature to desirable levels.

There are three basic types of pool filters. High-rate sand filters and diatomaceous earth (D.E.) filters are the traditional type filters for in-ground pools. Cartridge filters, however, have become increasingly more common. All of these filtration systems can be equally effective in most situations. All require periodic backwashing to

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clear the filtration media of accumulated dirt particles. Contaminants like tanning oils can quickly clog D.E. and cartridge filters.

## POOL USE AND ISSUES

Do not be misled, all pools require maintenance. Short of turning over absolutely all care of a pool to a service company, regular homeowner maintenance will be required. A properly maintained pool and water-treatment (chlorine and pH levels) program will assure long-term satisfaction.

Homebuyers should obtain the installation and operating directions for their particular pool and equipment. The following comments should also be considered:

- **Lighting and Electrical.** Pool lights and metal equipment must be grounded for safety-purposes. The use of low-voltage lighting in the pool area will help minimize the risk of shock. Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters (GFCI) should be installed where required and should be tested regularly for proper operation.

- **Diving Boards and Slides.** Boards and slides present inherent safety concerns. Consider the implication of their use and the feasibility in removing them. At the very least, safety instructions should be provided for their use, and activity on the equipment should be constantly monitored.
- **Pool covers.** Never allow anyone in the pool unless the cover is completely removed to avoid surfacing under the cover. To keep pool-heating costs within reason, it is suggested that a solar cover be placed on the pool when it is not being used (especially at night).
- **Fencing.** Most all municipalities require proper fencing and gate locks with all pool installations. Special child-resistant gates and water alarms are added safety measures.

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