

Winter Pool Tasks

Now that you've finished with the pool for the winter, you should take steps to ensure it doesn't present you with major headaches in the Spring by 'Winterising' it. If you have not Winterised your own pool before, and you are in any doubt as what to do, our advice is to call in your local pool centre/service engineer to do the job for you.

If you want to do the work yourself, this is what you do.

Allow the residual chlorine level to drop off in the days preceding Winterising but maintain the pH at 7.4. Clean the pump pre-filter, thoroughly backwash and rinse the sand-filter. Check and adjust pH. Drop the water level to below the skimmers, bearing in mind the pool installers' recommendations. Add winterising fluid, available as 'Invernador' from your pool-shop.

Winterising can be carried when the chlorine level is normal but you will need to use more winterising fluid as the residual chlorine will neutralise some of it before it has a chance to work.

Drain the water from the filter, pump, heater and pipe-work, grease any exposed metal surfaces with silicone grease or Vaseline. Valves above the water level should be left open, those below should be closed. If frost is a possibility, float one or two weighted and lidless plastic mineral water bottles on the pool surface to absorb expansion of ice. Remove ladders, diving boards and summer covers, toys, floats etc. and store them away. Switch off the electrics. Fit the winter cover, if you have one. Check the pH monthly during the winter, adjust as required.

Before Winterising, take a good, long, sober look at the pool and decide if it needs to be worked on whilst out-of-use. Winter is the ideal time to re-tile (or replace missing tiles), renew the grout, check and/or change the contents of the sand-filter, service the pump, install lighting or carry out a host of other works large and small. It's much better to do these things in the cool of winter than to interrupt your swimming season - when you may have to make costly repairs on an emergency basis.

This is a good time to take on an important routine task – cleaning the mineral deposits (lime-scale) from the tiles above the waterline. Mix hydrochloric acid with water in a 50:50 ratio. **Add the acid to the water, not the other way round.**

Using the head of a soft broom, apply the mixture to the tiles to dissolve deposits of lime scale. There is no need to scrub the tiles with the broom head - while the limescale is present the acid will cause it to 'fizz' and when the fizzing stops the limescale is gone! Rinse with water from the pool. Remember also to wear old clothes for this operation and to use rubber gloves, goggles and a hat as protection. The same acid/water mixture can also be used to clean the white-stone pool surround, but this is best left until you are ready to open the pool in the spring.

Remember that an empty pool, whilst no longer a drowning hazard, is still a hazard. A fall from the edge into the deep end of your pool can be like falling from the roof onto your patio.

Make your pool totally safe, all year round, by fitting a Katchakid Safety Net or a similarly efficient safety system.

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