# Pool Care 101

Customers should expect to perform routine maintenance on their pool at least one day a week during the summertime.

**How long do I run my pump?** During the hot months, pumps should be running at least 12 hours a day during the hottest parts of the day (8am – 8 pm). During the cooler months 4-6 hours is suggested as a minimum during the coldest parts of the day (night time, usually 12am-6am). During freezing weather, if your pool is not winterized, run the pump until the weather warms back up. Filtration is one of the most important keys to maintaining healthy pool water and electricity is the cheapest chemical that you can put in your pool. If you are willing to run the pump for 24 hours, then please feel free to do so. People with variable speed pumps can run at a high rpm during the day and then scale down to a lower rpm at night if they choose a 24-hour schedule.

**Maintenance that should be done on a weekly basis is:**

1. Brushing the pool walls and tile line.
2. Vacuuming the bottom of the pool and skimming the surface.
    - **a.** If the customer has a Prowler, steps 1 and 2 are performed by that, except if dead algae is present. **If algae is present, the pool needs to be manually vacuumed.**
3. Empty skimmer and pump baskets.
4. (If a sand filter) Backwashing and rinsing the filter.
    a. How to backwash:
        i. Switch the pool pump off and disconnect the automatic pool cleaner (if applicable)
        ii. Clear both the skimmer and pump baskets of any debris like leaves or grass.
        iii. Turning clockwise, Set the multiport valve onto the "backwash" position.
        iv. Switch the pump back on for 2 minutes or until the water in the sight glass runs clear. Then turn the pump off.
        v. Turning clockwise, Set the multiport valve onto the "rinse" position.
        vi. Switch the pump back on of 20 seconds to recompact the sand in the filter. Then turn the pump off.
        vii. Turning clockwise, set the multiport valve onto the "filter" position and turn the pump back on.
    b. If the customer has a cartridge filter the filters need to be cleaned every 3-6 months.
5. A chemical check should be done. (An at-home strip test is sufficient, but at least once a month a sample should be brought into the store for a more accurate reading.)
    a. If the customer has a chlorine pool, shock and tablets should be added weekly.
    b. If the customer has a salt pool and the chlorine is reading low on the strip, the output % needs to be adjusted. (i.e.: if the pool is running at 20% and the chlorine is low, try moving it to 40% or 60%.) After moving it up, proceed to hold the “less” and “more” button at the same time to BOOST the cell for 24 hours. The boost option bumps the cell up to 100% for 24 hours then the cell will return to the last setting. I advise checking the chlorine level after 3 days to make sure the chlorine is sufficient. An alternative to boosting the cell, you could add in some granular chlorine or shock.

**Maintenance that should be done at other points in time:**

3-5 years: Change sand in sand filter or replace cartridges in cartridge filter.

3 months: Chemically clean sand/cartridge filters.

3 months: Check salt cell for scale and clean if needed.

**Quick chemical rundown 101:**

**Total Chlorine:** The total amount of chlorine in the pool. Raised by adding shock or boosting salt cell.

**Free Chlorine:** The amount of chlorine that is free to fight germs and bacteria.

**Combined Chlorine:** Total chlorine – Free Chlorine = Combined chlorine. This is the amount of chlorine that has combined with germs and is no longer usable. A high combined chlorine could indicate that the pool is fighting off algae growth. If you have a high combined chlorine, you need to oxidize the water using shock to burn off the waste. Non chlorine shocks are available for salt pools.

**Alkalinity:** This is what buffers the PH to keep it from fluctuating dramatically. To increase alkalinity, you need to add Sodium Bicarbonate (Balance Pak 100 or Alkalinity increaser). To decrease alkalinity, you need to add granular acid (Lo n Slo or PH-) or Muriatic Acid in small quantities over a span of a few days.

**PH:** It is important to maintain a proper PH for swimmer comfort and to ensure that the other chemicals can work appropriately. If PH and alkalinity are low, you can add alkalinity increaser which will raise both levels. If Alkalinity is in range, but PH is low, you will need to add PH+ or Balance Pak 200. If PH is high, you need to add Granular acid (Lo n Slo or PH-) or Muriatic Acid to get it in range.

**Hardness:** this measures the calcium in the water, which prevents pool surfaces from becoming brittle. To raise calcium hardness, you will need to add Calcium Chloride, hardness increaser, or Balance Pak 300. If calcium is too high, a partial drain is recommended to lower the levels. If you do not wish to partial drain, then some sequestering agents can be used to prevent scale from forming.

**Salt Levels:** Salt should be between 3000-3500ppm. If the salt is too low, salt generators will not produce chlorine. The cell has a light that advises of low salt levels. On an average sized pool, you should not be adding more than 1 bag a week.

**CYA / Stabilizer:** this is what keeps the chemicals from evaporating out with the sun. To increase this, you will add cyanuric acid or stabilizer 100. If this is too high, the only way to get it out is to do partial drain and refill. It is important to never mix shock and stabilizer or to pour shock over chlorine tablets. An explosion could occur.

**If you know your pool gallons, you can visit: https://www.aquachek.com/calculators/water-balance/ for advice on what chemicals to add to the pool. For the chlorine, select "generic calcium hypochlorite shock". We also offer water testing in store, free with a chemical purchase.**

**Phosphates:** Phosphates are accumulated by a breakdown of organic matter. These are tested with a special kind of test. In some cases, phosphates can create a high chlorine demand. If you have continuous water clarity issues or problems keeping an adequate chlorine level, it is recommended you test for phosphates and treat if you have high levels.

**Preventative Algaecides:** There is a broad spectrum of algaecides available. Algaecides are not just used when the water is green but can also be used as a preventative (kind of like taking a multivitamin to keep your immune system up). Your pool size and features your pool has will determine what kind of algaecide is right for your pool. If you are not sure which one to use, please consult with your local pool professional on what kind of algaecide may be right for you.

**IF PLASTER IS LESS THAN 30 DAYS OLD DO NOT ADD IN ANYTHING BESIDES MURIACTIC ACID, SHOCK, TABLETS AND ALKALINITY. ADDING IN CALCIUM OR SALT CAN CREATE SCALE ON THE PLASTER.**