

SEASONAL GUIDE

Simple Steps to Opening & Closing Your Pool



There are certain rituals we do every year. In the summer we have Fourth of July fireworks, fall means Thanksgiving feast, and in the winter, we have Christmas traditions.

When you own a pool, your spring and autumn rituals include pool care.

In the spring, it's time to welcome in warm weather and outdoor activities by opening your pool, and in the fall you'll need to close it for winter. Luckily, it's fairly easy to do as long as you're confident in your abilities. Simply follow our guide and you'll be ready for your pool care come spring or fall.

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Opening your pool for the summer is certainly an exciting time! While you might be ready to dive right in, there are some things you have to do first.

Nobody wants to swim in algae water, and it will take you a couple days to get your pool back to the crystal clear quality you need. Luckily, it's not that difficult to open your pool.

Drain and clean your pool cover

If you have a winter cover or safety cover, you'll want to drain as much of that water as possible.

With an inground pool drain using a submersible pump, or if you have an above ground pool use a simple siphon. Once water is drained, you'll need to brush all leaves and debris off the cover. Don't use anything even remotely sharp! If you want an easier way to do this, after draining the water off the cover wait a couple hours and blow the leaves off.

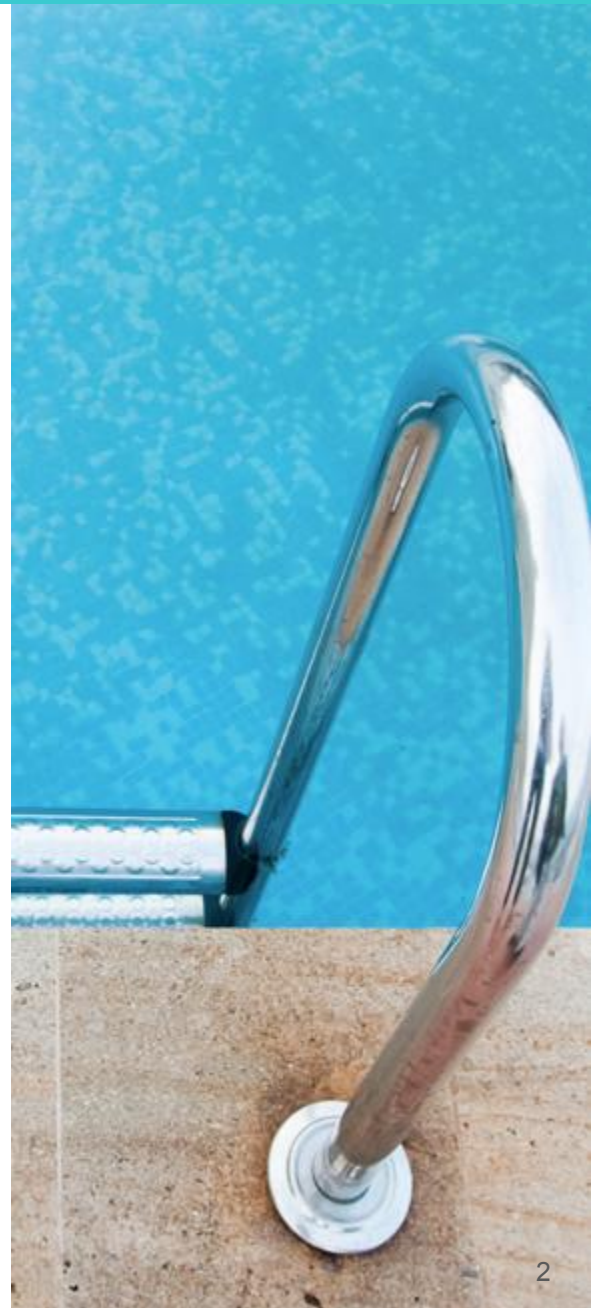
Take off the pool cover

Next, you're going to remove the cover, trying not to get dirt in your pool. If you get any debris in the pool you'll clean it all out later. Depending on the pool size, it may be best to use two people. No matter the size, two people will definitely make it easier.

Clean the cover and put it away for the season

After it's removed, you'll lay your cover out flat and brush any additional dirt off it, and clean it with soap and water or a cover cleaner. Lay it flat out to dry. You can then sprinkle the cover with talcum powder to prevent mold and then fold loosely to store. It's a good idea to get a heavy, durable plastic container to store the cover in, so no bugs or rodents decide your pool cover is a great home.

Tip -- If it's hot out, occasionally move the cover to a different part of the lawn. This makes sure you're not roasting your lawn and killing it.



Winter plugs and skimmer ice compensators need to be removed

There are typically two or three winter plugs used in a pool. You'll need to walk around your pool, locate and then remove them. If they bubble that's a great sign. It means your lines were blown out right last winter. Next, replace return lines with their regular eyeball or jet fittings. You're also going to take out the ice compensator from skimmer buckets and take out the winter plug in the bucket. Put the skimmer basket back in.

Re-install deck equipment

You can now re-install all of your deck equipment, like pool ladders, the diving board, and step rails. You'll also want to lube all of your bolts so they don't rust.

Fill the pool to normal depth

If your pool was partially drained for the winter or water is lower than it needs to be, it's time to fill it back up. Just use your garden hose to fill the pool so it's in the middle of the skimmer opening.

Set filter and pump up

Reconnect all equipment that may have been unplugged for winter. Next, you're going to replace drain plugs and the other parts of your filter with their regular drain plug. This includes your filter and pump. The filter should have a major drain plug while your pump could have one to two plugs. Remember to turn your multiport valve to filter. It's also a good practice to check the lids o-ring. Bend it, looking for cracks or dryness. To make sure you have a good seal, apply a little bit of lubricant

Turn it on

What an exciting time! You're ready to turn on the pool equipment. Turn your pool filter and pump on, making sure it starts up properly and that there are no leaks or drips. If no water is being pulled through the pump, you'll need to prime it. Turn it off, remove pump lid and add water to the housing, either using your garden hose or a bucket of water from your pool. Replace lid and turn the filter back on. Viola!

Have an air release valve? Open it to bleed air from the system.

Clean that pool

Now for the hard work. Begin cleaning the pool by using a leaf net to clear out any large debris, removing as much as possible. Then, using a pool brush, clean to sides and bottom of the pool. This way your filter can clean the pool thoroughly. Make sure to turn valve so they are pulling water.

Add your chemicals

Now it's time to shock the pool. The easiest way to know the right chemicals you need for your pool involves a trip to your pool store. Grab a water sample and take it in so they can test the water for you. This is important because your pH and alkalinity need to be balanced before you add in any more chemicals. The employees can help you buy the right chemicals. Once the pool is balanced you'll add in your sanitizer. Once all your chemicals are added, let your pool filter run for a day or two. Clean out any remaining debris and retest the water with a home kit. If it comes out good, it's time to jump in!



6 simple steps to close your pool

The end of the season is a bittersweet time. The warm weather is fading, which means winter time is near. Winter, of course, means Christmas and all sorts of fun holidays, but it also means it's time to put away summer activities and close up the pool. Instead of paying someone to close your pool for you, follow our guide to preparing your pool for the winter weather.

Pick up and put away poolside equipment

The first thing to start with is removing all of your pool equipment. This means the diving board, ladders and rails, safety ropes, and other equipment you may have (leave filtering equipment).

Next, remove eyeball fittings from your pool's return lines and the skimmer baskets from skimmers. Have a dedicated line for a cleaner? Remove the plastic adapter.

The same sized rubber plugs and wing-nuts will fit all of your return lines, which are large threaded openings.

Clean the pool and test the water

You'll want to make sure your water is balanced before you close it. You can either take a sample to your local pool store, or test yourself. It's important to make sure the water pH is between 7.4 and 7.6, with alkalinity between 80 ppm and 150 ppm. Make sure your sanitizer is also at the proper level. Chemicals can be a little on the high side; they will drop over time.

Clean your pool thoroughly before adding any chemicals. Vacuum the floor, brush the walls and steps, and skim the surface.

Tip -- If you want you can add a phosphate remover, which will help keep algae out of your pool water. Just make sure you add it a week before you start closing the pool.

Add your chemicals

After the cleaning is done, it's time to add the winterizing chemicals to your pool. Follow the instructions on your kit, and make sure you read thoroughly before continuing. Some kits don't require pumping and filtering, which means you can skip this step until you're ready to put the cover on. If your kit does need you to pump and filter, add the chemicals while your filter and pump are still on.

Clean filter and pump

Before you move on to blowing out the lines, it's important to clean your pump and filter. Let it run for a full cycle, then backwash and clean the filter. Once that's done open up the pump lid and clean it out, then replace lid and close it up.

Before blowing out the lines, turn the filter back to the "filter" setting on the multi-port valve. Not using a winter skimmer plate? Drain the pool six inches below the skimmer.





In an inground pool, there is no choice but to blow out the pipes. If you don't want to do it or if you're unsure you can do it, hire a professional. Plug the return jets and install a gizmo in the skimmer to protect it from cracking. This way you don't need to drain the pool unless you have a tile border, in which case drain the pool four inches or more below the tile.

Tip -- Everyone has a different opinion on the draining of pools. While some pool owners swear that having their pool drained is helpful, there are also some factors to consider. Exposing the pool liner to air can cause stress, drying it out and reducing its life. There is also a risk that water will build up on the top of the cover, which could potentially cause it to fall in.

Blow out the lines (In-ground Only)

Before we say anything, we want to say again if you are uncomfortable doing this or unsure of what you're doing, please hire a professional. Read through our guide and then determine if you are okay with proceeding. This is an important step and if done incorrectly can lead to pipes cracking underground, which is costly to fix. You'll also need an air compressor.

You'll want to begin by turning your valves so skimmers and the main drain are open. If your pool does not have a bottom main drain it means you only have one opening to worry about.

Unscrew the drain plug on the pump housing and thread your air compressor to the opening (may require an adapter). Then, use the air compressor to blow air into your lines. You'll begin to see bubbles from return lines and skimmer. Run the air compressor for two minutes.

Figure out which line is blowing first. In this example, we'll assume the bubbles came out from the skimmer first.

You'll need a gizmo or a rubber plug. Where the air and bubbles are coming from, you're going to plug that the hole in the bottom of the skimmer. If using a gizmo, thread it through the hole. The gizmo will prevent the skimmer from cracking in the winter. An ice compensator, a gizmo will protect your skimmer from water and ice. Instead of the skimmer absorbing the expansion from ice, the gizmo will. No gizmo? In the case that you are using a rubber plug, throw a plastic soda bottle (leave the cap) in. Repeat step on all skimmers.



Plug up return lines that are blowing bubbles. Make sure it's tight and that there are no more bubbles coming out. Once you put the plugs in there should be no more bubbles. The last drain to blow will be the main drain at the bottom of your pool. Don't worry about plugging that, though. You can now turn off the air compressor.

If you have a heater you have an extra step. You'll also have to blow all the water out of it. Take off the drain plugs on the heater and turn on the air compressor. Direct all the air into the heater. This means you have to close off all valves, except of course your heater valve. Water should start draining. Run the air compressor until there is not more water coming out. Once that happens, replace drain plugs and remove drain plugs from filter and chlorinator.

You can now turn off the air compressor and put it away. The best place to store drain plugs is in the pump housing.

Put the cover on

Congratulations, you made it! It's time to put the cover on. If you're using a safety cover refer to the manual. Otherwise, take out your plastic cover and check for tears or other issues. If you find a rip, it's an easy fix. Simply put duct tape on both sides of the cover.

Use water tubes to secure the cover, remember to leave space for expansion once the water freezes. Water tubes are the best option, as they won't damage the pool if they fall in, unlike cement blocks or bricks. Now you're all set for winter!



1945 Elida Rd. ~ Lima OH 45805

CALL US: 419.221.3494