

How To Save Money On Your Pool Operating Costs

Electricity:

The biggest cost is the electricity you use to operate the pool filtration pump and the pool cleaner pump. If you have an inline chlorinator or chlorine generator these require electricity to function. The hotter the temperature the longer you have to run the main pump to generate the chlorine needed to keep the pool clean and properly sanitized. Here are a few tips that will save you money the very first day.

Use a floating chlorinator to reduce the time needed to run your main pump.

The floating chlorinator chlorinates 24 hours a day by letting the tablets dissolve directly into the pool water. The inline chlorinator needs the pump to circulate water through it to feed chlorine to the pool. A floater will run \$10 to \$30 dollars depending on if you want a plain one or one that looks like a duck or frog etc.

If you have a chlorine generator that uses salt to produce chlorine check your chlorine level and lower the amount of time you run your pump so you don't over chlorinate the pool. Most have a read out of the chlorine level but instead of moving the percentage of chlorine higher or lower adjust the amount of time you run the pump. You will save more money if you cut the amount of time you run the pump than lowering the chlorine generator setting and letting it run the same amount of time.

Adjust your timers to run according to the temperature and debris load. Think of it like an accelerator on your car. When you go up a hill you give your vehicle more gas to maintain your speed and when you go down hill you let off so you don't go too fast.

I usually set my timers on my pool route to run less time in the summer when there isn't much rain or leaves etc. When Fall and Winter comes I use more time on the timers to skim leaves from the surface and more time for

the filter to pick up small debris and dirt.

Don't run water features any more than necessary. If you have a booster pump that runs water features such as waterfalls, hot tub jets, etc. cut them off and use them only when needed. They are circulating pre filtered water so they only need to be used to enhance your poolside experience. You don't want them to set too long as pump motor have been known to lock up from lack of use but having them run every day is a waste of money.

Don't over run your pool cleaner. Most pools use a Polaris pool cleaner or some other type of system to help you keep your pool clean. Most will do the job in 3 to 4 hours. If your pool is fairly clean in the Summer months then cut the time back if you re running it more than 3 hours. In the Fall and Spring don't run it much longer as the bag or leaf\debris container will fill fairly rapidly and it will quit doing anything but costing you money as it runs around with a full bag.

If you don't have timers to operate your pool then spend the money to have them installed. They will pay for themselves in no time in savings on electricity.

Chemicals: One of the most confusing and frustrating parts of owning a pool is dealing with chemicals. If you go to a pool store and listen to the clerk try to explain things like saturation index, total dissolved solids, and the relation between pH and alkalinity etc. you will walk out confused and usually with a car full of chemicals and a big bill. Here are a few tips to save you money on your chemical costs.

The floating chlorinator is mentioned here also as it feeds chlorine 24 hours a day. Besides saving electricity is keeps the chlorine level at a more stable level. The best way to keep the cost of chemicals down is to keep them fluctuating up and down too much.

The stabilizer level (cyanuric acid) is used to shield the chlorine from the sun and hold it in the water longer. Too low and the chlorine level will drop in no time. Too high and it becomes locked with the stabilizer and won't sanitize. Your test will show high chlorine but it will not be effective. If your

pool has a high level of stabilizer then drain the pool completely and refill. The level should be around 40 ppm.

pH and alkalinity are important parts of water chemistry. Acid is used to lower pH and sodium carbonate is used to raise the pH. Sodium bicarbonate is used to raise the alkalinity.

These can be confusing to learn to adjust. The main thing to remember here is to **always** raise the alkalinity first then adjust your pH. If you don't the pH will test sky high then drop to over acid and back in just a few days.

I generally don't worry about getting the pH to ideal range (7.2-7.6) as much as making sure the alkalinity is 80-100. When it is in this range the pH will not fluctuate as much and it is easier and cheaper to maintain.

Algacides, clarifiers etc. aid in maintaining clear water and to prevent algae. First remember that most **algacides are preventatives**. If you have algae a preventative isn't going to be effective in getting rid of algae. Generally I use it as a back up in case the chlorine level drops due to heavy rain or swimmer load. Clarifiers are useful to clear foggy water but remember the two things that cause cloudy water are **chemical imbalance and suspended particles**. Make sure your chemicals are set up properly before you try water clarifiers.

After doing pools for the last 27 years I have noticed that there are a few simple rules to follow.

Don't get bogged down in the details of pool chemistry. You don't have to know water chemistry to keep your pool looking good.

Shock your pool every week whether you have a high chlorine reading or not.

Make sure the stabilizer level (cyanuric acid) is not too high or too low.

Keep enough tablets in your floating chlorinator to maintain a steady chlorine level at all times. I use this rule of thumb. If the chlorine level is

good but it is cold outside I use one tablet. If the temperature gets above 90 degrees I put in two. If it goes over a 100 degrees then I use 3 tablets. I have never had to use more than that but use the amount necessary to maintain a steady chlorine level.

Your biggest mistake is letting the chlorine level go from high to too low over and over. It just gives algae and other contaminants a chance to get a foothold.

Make sure the alkalinity level is correct for your type of pool. Don't get hung up on pH and total dissolved solids level or any of the other things that chemical retail stores test for. They are in business to sell you chemicals and use these tests as way to sell to you.

Contact Lon at Swim Smart if you have questions or want pool service

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