

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

“Preventive Maintenance” is testing the pool water daily and brushing the pool floor and walls at least three times a day for the first ten days. Thereafter, brush at least three times a week and after each dust storm. Pool water maintenance can be easy once you have learned and established a program for routinely caring for your pool.

Proper test and care insure years of pool pleasure, however, neglect can cause serious problems and needless expense. Algae, stains, and scaling can all be prevented. The constant control of chlorine, pH, alkalinity, and hardness are essential to the prevention of bacteria, scale, and corrosion.

Your pool will differ from your neighbors. Difference in size, water, temperature, and usage make each pool unique. Do not compare your pool to your neighbors.

CHLORINE

Chlorine maintenance is necessary for the control of bacteria and algae. Chlorine is measured on a scale of 0.6 to 3.0. To prevent the growth of algae and bacteria, your pool water should be maintained with a reading of 1.0 in cooler months and 1.5 for the hottest time of year. The most commonly used chlorine compound is Tri-chlor jumbo tabs. You'll find these at your local pool store. Chlorine should always be added in the evening as it then has all night to kill bacteria and algae. The daylight hours drain the pool of chlorine rapidly, not allowing it to be as effective. Pool standards recommend shocking pool water twice monthly to maintain a minimum of 1.5 free chlorine. Unless you have a very high hardness content (over 400 PPM), we recommend shocking with liquid chlorine.

CALCIUM HARDNESS

Calcium hardness is the amount of dissolved calcium in the water, with recommended levels ranging from 200-400 PPM (parts per million). As pool water evaporates the calcium and other minerals remain. It is not uncommon for the calcium hardness in the water to double every year due to evaporation, calcium contained in pool chemicals, and calcium commonly found in tap water. Frequent backwashing or partially draining and refilling may be required to effectively manage the calcium level. Above 600 PPM is considered unmanageable and could possibly require corrective measures.

When necessary to partially drain and refill the pool, DO NOT expose the interior surface to direct sunlight when air temperatures are over 90 degrees. Exposing a white plaster pool to direct sunlight with temperatures over 90 degrees can result in cracking and popping. Temperatures under 90 degrees should be safe enough to completely drain the pool, unless the existing surface has experienced degradation and wear.

PH, total alkalinity, calcium hardness, dissolved solids, and temperature are the key factors that determine water balance. Water that is neither corrosive nor scaling and is in a state of equilibrium with maintained specific levels of mineral constituents is considered in balance.

When pool water is deficient in its mineral levels, it will corrode, etch, or dissolve any metals, plaster, or grout it contacts in an effort to balance itself. Excessive levels of minerals are relieved by releasing particles either as scale, residues, or cloudiness, also in an effort to balance itself.

HARDNESS

As water evaporates and tap water is added, calcium remains and builds. The tendency of pool water is to increase in hardness (calcium and magnesium in suspension) caused by the constant evaporation of water. Do not attempt to lower calcium hardness without strict supervision. Acceptable readings for hardness are between 200-300 PPM. Hardness can be raised quickly by adding calcium directly to the pool water.

**The two most important factors in maintaining water balance are
Total Alkalinity and pH.**

TOTAL ALKALINITY AND PH

Total alkalinity is the key to water balance. When the alkalinity level is low, corrosion of equipment and interior surfaces such as plaster and tile grout may occur. This results in spot etching, roughness, and streaks. It is recommended that you adjust alkalinity before adjusting the pH level of the pool. The ideal alkalinity level of the pool is based on the type of chlorination used:

1. Acidic-Trichlor: Contains chlorine gas and bromine, used in tabs or sticks 100-120 PPM
2. Neutral-Sodium Di-Chlor: Contains a 2 part bromine base, calcium hypochlorite, lithium hypochlorite, used in liquid chlorine 100-120 PPM

PH is a value expressing the relative acidity or alkalinity of pool water. IT is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 14, with 0 being the most acidic and 14 the most alkaline. When the pH values are low or acidic, corrosion of equipment and interior surfaces such as plaster and tile grout may occur. This results in spot etching, roughness, and streaks. High pH values will result in the plaster absorbing whatever is present in the pool, such as dust or calcium which leaves brown or tan stains on the plaster or pebble surface. The ideal pH level is between 7.4-7.6 PPM.

STABILIZER

Stabilizer, also referred to as conditioner, is cyanuric acid. The purpose of cyanuric acid is to reduce the loss of chlorine through evaporation and sunlight. Chlorine combined with cyanuric acid is referred to as stabilized chlorine. We recommend a 25 to 40 PPM cyanuric acid reading in your pool water. Adding cyanuric acid will cause the pH to drop. Do not confuse this with muriatic or sulphuric acid which is used for controlling the pH.

ACID

As mentioned previously, pH control is an absolute necessity. The pool's pH is measured on a scale of 0 to 14, with 7 being the neutral point. Pool water is best when maintained in a slightly base condition to prevent staining and so as not to cause excessive corrosion to the plaster surface or metal parts in the pool. A proper pH reading should be between 7.4-7.6 PPM. If pH adjustment is required, muriatic acid can be used to lower and soda ash to raise. When adding acid or soda ash, do so directly to the pool water in the deepest part of the pool. Do this away from return outlets, lights, and skimmers. CAUTION: *Handle all acids with the greatest care. Always add acid in the morning and never at the same time you add chlorine.*

ADJUSTING ALKALINITY

Your pool water may be too high or too low in alkalinity. A low alkalinity reading can result in a build up on the plaster called "scale." Scale is seen as a hard white formation on the plaster and at the waterline on the tile. The ideal alkalinity range is 90-120 PPM. Alkalinity can be raised 10 PPM by adding 3 lbs. of baking soda to every 20,000 gallons of pool water. Arizona water will change in alkalinity throughout the year and it must be adjusted after filling or even with the addition of water to keep the pool at the proper level.

Important information for Plaster or 3M Colorquartz customers...

Your new pool interior surface is a combination of natural materials – sand, cement, and sometimes quartz – smoothed and finished by hand under varying weather conditions. Slight surface, color, or material variations are normal. Be patient, your “beautiful new pool” will emerge, but only after the water clears and balances giving sunlight and sparkling water a chance to reflect your new surface’s true beauty.

When our plaster crew left they places your garden hose in the pool to begin filling it. **Do not turn the water off until the pool is completely full.** *Completely full* means when the pool water reaches the middle of the waterline tile or when the surface skimmer is half full of water.

If you turn your water off before the pool is full, a permanent ring may form around the pool.

If you feel your pool may overflow at night or when you’re at work, simply slow the water flow or have a neighbor check. **But don’t turn the water off!** Also, do not wash down or spray the sides. Sudden cooling may damage the plaster.

Do not enter your pool until it is completely full of water. If you have a pet that loves the water, keep it inside. You can damage your new surface if the pool is entered too soon.

After the pool is full you may notice the plaster dust at the bottom. This is a normal reaction. However, it’s important that you brush your pool regularly until the filter has a chance to pull the dust out of the water. Adjusting your pump to draw water from the bottom drain will only help clear the water faster.

Brush your pool at least three to four times daily until your filter has cleared all of the plaster dust from the water.

Run your filter pump 24 hours a day until the water has cleared, checking the pool pressure regularly and backwashing when necessary (when your filter pressure rises 5 to 10 pounds over your normal, clean running pressure).

Begin testing and adding chemicals to balance the water chemistry immediately after your pool is full. Some people prefer to wait to add conditioner until the plaster dust has cleared; it’s up to you. Consult your pool service professional or have your water tested at your local pool store.

Important information for Baja Pebble customers...

Your pebble surface is a combination of natural materials – sand, cement, pebbles, and sometimes quartz – smoothed and finished by hand under varying weather conditions. Slight surface, color, or material variations are normal. Be patient, your "beautiful new pool" will emerge, but only after the water clears and balances giving sunlight and sparkling water a chance to reflect your new surface's true beauty.

If you have our standard or mini pebble finish, our crew will be back to acid wash your pool's interior surface to remove the excess material and reveal the pebbles.

If you have our smooth pebble finish, our crew will be back to smooth and polish your pool's interior surface.

When our crew leaves for the final time they will place your garden hose in the pool and begin filling it. **Do not turn the water off until the pool is completely full.** *Completely full* means when the pool water reaches the middle of the waterline tile or when your surface skimmer is half full of water.

If you turn your water off before the pool is full, a permanent ring may form around the pool.

If you feel your pool may overflow at night or when you're at work, simply slow the water flow or have a neighbor check. **But don't turn the water off!** Also, do not wash down or spray the sides. Sudden cooling may damage the pebble surface.

Do not enter your pool until it is completely full of water. If you have a pet that loves the water, keep it inside. You can damage your new surface if the pool is entered too soon.

After the pool is full, Baja Smooth surfaces sometimes produce a "cream" that settles on the bottom. This is a normal reaction. However, it is important that you brush your pool often until the filter has chance to pull this material out of the water. Adjusting your pump to draw water from the bottom drain will only help clear the water faster.

Brush your pool often to keep the "cream" suspended in the water until your filter has cleared the material from the water. Baja Smooth surfaces may need to be brushed more often. Surface may also show a slight variation in color as they cure. This is normal.

Run your filter pump 24 hours a day until the water has cleared, checking the pool pressure regularly and backwashing when necessary (when your filter pressure rises 5 to 10 pounds over your normal, clean running pressure).

Begin testing and adding chemicals to balance the water chemistry immediately after your pool is full. Some people prefer to wait to add conditioner until the plaster dust has cleared; it's up to you. Consult your pool service professional or have your water tested at your local pool store.