

HOMETOWN

POOLS & SPAS

Your Guide to Above Ground Pools

Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Insights for creating the perfect backyard oasis



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Yep... The Pool Decision-Making Process Can Be Daunting (But Don't Worry... We Got You!)

There are mainly reasons for wanting to be a pool owner... quality time with family and friends, a place to entertain and relax, keeping the kids (or grandkids) active, or maybe even a way to exercise – to name just a few.

So... where do you go next?

The thought of pool shopping can be overwhelming itself, so we created this guide to help you through the process and to help you make the right decision. Although there is a lot of information out there on purchasing swimming pools, much of it is 'spotty' at best... so we are hopeful that you will find this guide to be helpful and useful.

Pool Types

Understanding the pros and cons of each major type of pool will help you build confidence when it comes time to make a decision.

The sheer variety of swimming pools available today is incredible, which

can make the decision process more difficult. The great news is... with the various options available, we are confident that you will find one that fits your needs and your budget.



Understanding the pros and cons of each pool type will help you build confidence in your decision-making process.

TRADITIONAL ABOVE GROUND POOLS

These are pools you typically find in your specialty pool stores and are a great option for any age range. They consist of a steel or aluminum wall, resin or metal posts and top ledge to add support, a vinyl liner and a pump and filter system. They are round or oval in shape and vary in size from 12' to 33' in diameter. Most of these pools are between 48" – 54" deep.



Pros: 1-day install, can be re-located if you ever move, although not recommended you can complete install with a bit of 'tool know-how', warranty is offered on most components, long term solution – these pools can easily last 15 – 20 years if well maintained, price – pool kits start

around \$3,000 if you install it yourself, most ladders have a disconnect on the outside of the pool for child safety.

Cons: Install does require some prep work to the site location, a 110v electrical connection is needed where you install the pump and filter, the vinyl liner could leak if not properly maintained or if it gets a hole in it, doesn't allow for some of the water features you see with inground pools, no deep end = non- diving pool.

SEMI BURIED OR FULLY BURIED ABOVE GROUND POOL

These pools are similar to the traditional above ground pools discussed above, however... they will have fully insulated wall panels that are significantly stronger to combat the ground forces pushing in on the walls. These pools will come in a variety of sizes, even the more 'free form' look.



*The **Optimum Pool** offers a free-form option made of high-grade alloys that can be used as either an above ground, in ground, or semi buried option.*

Pros: More of the inground look and feel with a relatively quick install – about 3-5 days depending on size and site location, long-term solution, warranty.

Cons: Cannot be easily re-located if you move, price point for this option is fairly high due to installation, not conducive to a DIY install.

IN-GROUND POOL

There are 3 types of in-ground pools: vinyl, fiberglass and concrete. We're not going to spend a lot of time discussing them, as they are in a whole different category.

Pros: Aesthetic appeal, customization depending on type of pool selected, long term.

Cons: Price, installation time, maintenance costs (depending on type).

Planning for an Above Ground Pool

Assuming you have narrowed your choice to a traditional above ground pool, there are a few things to think about before heading out to shop. Taking some time up front to do a bit of initial planning for your above ground pool will help you begin narrowing down some of the options.

SIZE

You want to first make sure you have sufficient room for the pool in your backyard – make sure you understand any city easements that may be in place and if you have any utility lines running through your backyard. You need to avoid these areas, or in some cases, utility lines can be moved out of the way. You also want to ensure there are no overhead power lines. You should never install a pool under any overhead lines. Once you have determined an area that is clear, you can figure out the largest size pool that will fit. Generally, above ground pools come in the following sizes: 15', 18', 21', 24', 27', 30' & 33'. There are also a variety of oval sizes if your area will not allow for a round pool.



Stick with a round pool if possible.

Round pools are superior when it comes to the strength of the wall, as the water pressure is equal on all points of the pool; whereas an oval pool has unequal water pressure on the rounded ends (there's a more in-depth physics explanation about this, but we will save that for the mathematicians and engineers). Safe to say... due to the unequal water pressure oval pools will require additional bracing, which causes them to be more expensive than round pools.



A round pool will hold more water!

LOCATION

If you have a larger area and can be selective on location, we encourage you to consider the proximity to your electrical breaker box. You can't run your pump and filter on an extension cord, so you will need a permanent electrical service ran out to your pool location.

It's also a good idea to place the pool away from trees – this just aids in keeping the pool clean, as leaves won't be accumulating. And, to minimize the excavation, select the flattest area in your yard.



MATERIALS

The next consideration is the material you would like the pool constructed from. There are 3 options in above ground pools... metal (steel), resin, and hybrid. All three options will have a metal wall and vinyl liner. The steel option consists of metal top ledge, posts and caps, as does the resin pool. The hybrid option will be a combo of metal and resin – for example, the pool may have metal posts and resin top ledge and caps, or resin posts and top ledge and metal caps. Generally, the overall look of the pool is what the buying decision tends to be made on – some have cleaner, more modern lines and appearance, while others have a more traditional look.

How Much Does an Above Ground Pool Cost

It's one of our most commonly asked questions: *“What's the cost?”* Above ground pools are generally quoted as a 'kit' price. Most kits will include the actual pool (wall, bottom track, top ledge & posts), the liner, pump & filter, and a ladder. Some retailers will include general maintenance equipment and a starter kit of chemicals. If you are comparing prices between pool stores, make sure you know all the components they are including in their kit, so you are comparing apples to apples. (In most cases, you have the option to upgrade some of the items, or add on additional accessories such as automatic or robotic vacuums.)



Our pool kits include... liner, pump, sand, sand filter, A-frame ladder, maintenance kit, vacuum pole, vacuum hose, skimmer, winter cover

ABOVE GROUND POOL KIT PRICE

The actual cost of a pool can range from \$2,500 - \$7,800 depending upon the size and quality of pool you decide on. You will find the steel pools, generally speaking, to be the most

inexpensive option, while the resin pools tend to be the most expensive pool kit. If there is a hybrid pool option, it will be priced somewhere in between a metal and resin pool kit.

ABOVE GROUND POOL LINER PRICE

Above ground pool liners will range in pricing depending on their thickness and how they attach to the pool wall. Common liner thicknesses are 18 - 25 mil, and the liner will either 'overlap' the pool wall or will attach to the top track of the pool (referred to as a beaded liner). Pricing for the pool liner ranges from \$400 - \$1,500 depending on thickness, type (overlap or beaded), and the size of your pool. Entry level liners will be a plain blue overlap style. A step-up would be a printed bottom overlap liner, and then a full print overlap liner. Finally, you have beaded liners which fluctuate in price simply based on their thickness, as they come in full print options only.



ABOVE GROUND POOL PUMP & FILTER PRICE

Your above ground pool pump & sand filter will be the next component of the pricing and will depend on the size of pump and filter (commonly referred to as the 'system') needed. You will

find that both 1 speed and 2 speed pumps can be used, with 2 speed pumps being the more expensive option. The 2-speed pump simply allows for the flexibility of a high and low setting, allowing the pump to remain on 24 hours / day on low, and generates some energy efficiency. Additionally, you will see 0.5 hp pumps up to 2 hp pumps being offered. The sand filter size will be based on the size of your pool – common sizes in the industry are 100#, 300# and 400# sand filters.

Your pool retailer will generally have a standard option of pump that is put with their pool kit, but you can always ask to upgrade if you would like a different pump for your pool. There is no upgrade to the sand filter – it is strictly based on the size of your pool.

Depending on your retailer, you may have the option to upgrade the filter media that is used in your filter. Sand is common, but there are other options, such as glass filter media. The glass filter media is more expensive than the sand, but does have pros – the main one – it doesn't ever need to be replaced, whereas your sand will need to be replaced at some point over the life of your filter, generally every 3-5 years.

ABOVE GROUND POOL LADDER PRICE

The final component common to an above ground pool kit is the ladder or entry system. You will find an A-frame ladder will be the go-to option for most retailers. These are very cost effective and work great on above ground pools. If you would like something a bit more substantial, you can generally upgrade to an 'entry system', which will include steps that go down on the inside of the pool and additionally handrails to assist with entry and exit from the pool. If you plan to install a wood deck around your pool, there are also deck mount options for the ladders that allow for a seamless transition from the deck to the ladder or entry system.



If you need help with a deck for your pool, a concrete patio or slab, or any other construction related features, we can help with that too!

ABOVE GROUND POOL UPGRADES

Upgrade options on above ground pools will vary greatly by retailer and what product lines they carry. For the most part, you will have the option to add on a salt or ozone sanitizer to your pool, a hard bottom if you prefer, upgraded ladder & entry systems, and automatic or robotic vacuums. These are all a personal preference and generally make maintenance of the pool easier, but they are not required.

Above Ground Pool Accessories

Above ground pools have a wide variety of accessories – most commonly are the toys... basketball goals, floating coolers, etc. These fun accessories are self-explanatory, so we aren't going to spend a lot of time on them.



We offer a complete line of pool “toys” and accessories on our website



There are a lot of accessories that can make your life easier as far as maintaining your above ground pool (and most can help if you have an inground pool as well). In most cases, you will be provided with basic maintenance equipment (backwash hose, tele-pole, leaf net, & manual vacuum) when you purchase your pool, but it's important to know there are variations of this

equipment and differing levels of these tools. Once your pool is installed and you start to see what you need help with, then you can upgrade or add to your equipment. For example, if leaves are a problem in keeping your pool clean, there are specifically designed leaf vacuums and even a bracket & net you can install on your wall that will collect the leaves before they drop to the bottom. This will help prevent algae from having something to bloom on and you winding up with a bright green pool.

On the vacuum heads, you will discover there is a wide variety to choose from. There are different vacuum heads you can upgrade to that will cover more surface area as you vacuum, or ones that will brush the pool floor as you vacuum, helping you collect more of the fine dirt/dust from the bottom. If the thought of vacuuming anything else around your home makes you cringe, there are robotic vacuums that are essentially a self-contained unit. You simply plug them in and turn them on and they will vacuum the pool while you are at work or sleeping at night – very similar to a Roomba!

Lastly, there are a variety of options on chemical maintenance accessories, including floating chlorine dispensers, and even automated water testing units that constantly monitor your water chemistry and text you when you need to adjust. Some will even give you the exact measurements of the necessary chemical to be added.

The Installation Process

The installation of an above ground pool can generally be completed by an experienced pool installation crew in about 4-6 hours.



Our experienced crews are standing by!

ABOVE GROUND POOL INSTALLATION COST

Most pool companies will have either in-house installers or a list of contractors that you can contact to install your pool for you. Depending on the size of your pool, the extent of excavation work to be performed, and your location, installation will start around \$900 and go up from there.

ABOVE GROUND POOL INSTALLATION STEPS

- Excavation and leveling
- Preparing the bottom of the pool with sand or a hard bottom
- Laying out the bottom track of the pool
- Setting the wall of the pool
- Installing the liner and securing to the wall with the top track
- Attaching the pool posts to secure the wall and liner
- Attaching the top caps to cover the connection points of the liner, top track, wall and posts
- Using a vacuum to remove any air between the wall and liner
- Begin filling the pool
- Cutting out the skimmer and installing the skimmer plate
- Install and connect the pump/filter system
- Final steps to be completed by homeowner once pool is full, discussed below

BACKFILLING (IF APPLICABLE)

If your pool was installed on a slope and the installation crew excavated into a hill to prepare a level site, there will generally be a trench left between the pool wall and the hill. Once the pool is full, you will want to ensure the trench is filled back in and is compacted – this will also prevent your pool bottom from washing out. The water inside the pool is what gives the wall its strength, so you want to ensure your pool is full and the wall is solid before completing this step.

TESTING YOUR SAND BOTTOM

The weight of the water in the pool will help to compact the sand bottom underneath the liner. Generally it takes 5-10 days for the sand to be fully compacted and become hardened.

COMPACTING THE BERM

After the pool is filled, there will be a bit of work to be done before the pool is complete. You will want to ensure a layer of dirt is built up around the outer edge of the pool and is compacted (this is known as the pool 'berm'). This is achieved by simply walking around the edge of the pool once it is filled and 'stomping' the dirt down. A solid berm helps contain any grass or weeds, and keep them outside of the pool. It will also work to prevent washout underneath your pool in the case of heavy rains.



We have our own water delivery trucks and will fill your pool for you

COMPACTING THE BERM BACKFILLING THE POOL

The first time you get in the pool to swim, gently feel the bottom of the pool to ensure the sand is sufficiently compacted. If the bottom is still soft, give it a few more days before walking around on the bottom.



Leaving footprints in the bottom of the pool will make it extremely difficult to vacuum your pool – so please do not rush this step!

Water Care & General Maintenance

This seems to be the part of pool ownership that worries people the most. But, if you stick to a weekly routine, swimming pool water maintenance can be very easy.

You will want to test your water at least weekly. There are a variety of different test kits available. They include strips that you simply dunk in the water to get your water readings, drop kits, and even completely automated systems that will continuously monitor your water and alert you if anything needs to be added. Some pool retailers will have a water lab that can test your water for you as well. You will want to watch the following 3 readings weekly: pH, alkalinity and chlorine.

For a chlorine-based pool, you'll want to maintain your pH reading between 7.2 and 7.8, your alkalinity between 80 – 120 and your chlorine level at 1.5 – 3. These levels will ensure proper sanitization of your water and should keep it clear and clean. (It should be noted that some of these ranges will fluctuate based on the sanitizer you choose for your pool water care.)

On a monthly basis, you will want to test copper (only if you are using a copper based sanitizer like Pure 'N Blue or Pristine Blue), water hardness and cyanuric acid levels, and ensure these are within the appropriate range.

The most common water issues with above ground pools are green water and/or cloudy water. Green pool water indicates algae, and generally requires the water to be shocked with a high dose of sanitizer (chlorine or bromine). Cloudy water can be caused by many factors – commonly we see it after shocking a pool. The dead algae that is not caught by the filter tends to hang out in the water. In these cases, you will want to ‘floc’ the pool. This process causes the algae or other contaminants that are in suspension in the pool water to sink to the bottom, allowing you the ability to vacuum them out.

General maintenance on an above ground pool is fairly minimal, and if you spend a bit of time each week on these items, you can prevent a lot of the most common pool problems.

- Cleaning your skimmer basket
- Cleaning the trap basket on your pump
- Monitoring your pressure gauge on your filter
- Backwashing/cleaning the filter as necessary

A few other items to be familiar with are the pump and the multiport valve. If you have a 2 speed pump, you will note a low setting and a high setting. The low setting pulls 4.4 amps and can be run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Running your pump on low for continuous filtration will provide the best water conditions, as the filter is constantly cleaning the water. This will lead to less headaches for you, the homeowner, related to water care. The multiport valve on top of the sand filter has five to seven settings depending on the model and brand, and it is important to understand what each one does. Make sure you turn your pump OFF before moving the handle to change settings to avoid damage to your equipment.

1. Filter Setting – this is the most common setting. Filter helps remove any contaminants from your water by catching them in the sand filter tank.

2. Waste Setting – this is used to remove water from your pool by bypassing the sand filter. This is very useful when opening your pool or anytime the water becomes very dirty – you can vacuum the water/debris straight out of your pool without contaminating your sand filter.

3. Backwash Setting – this is the setting used to backwash your sand filter. This cleans out anything the sand has trapped while filtering your pool water and relieves built up pressure in your sand filter tank.

4. Rinse Setting – you will use the Rinse setting after you backwash your filter in order to clean out the multiport valve and reset the sand in your filter.

5. Closed Setting – this completely turns the multiport valve off, not allowing any water flow to your sand filter.

6. Winterize Setting – this is for use during the off season when the pool is not in use.

7. Recirculate Setting – this bypasses the sand filter and pushes the water back into the pool without filtering it.

Periodically you will need to change out the sand in your sand filter for the best filtration results.

The frequency of vacuuming really depends on your surroundings– some of you will need to vacuum more frequently than others. If you have no trees around your pool, you may be able to get away with only vacuuming 1 – 2x / month. On the other hand, if you have a lot of trees

around your pool, weekly vacuuming might be a necessity. You will have an automatic vacuum or a manual vacuum generally included with your above ground pool purchase. The automatic vacuums are handy and convenient, but manual vacuuming is best when you have a buildup of debris and/or sludge on the bottom of your pool (usually at opening). Vacuuming to 'waste' as discussed above, is the best option in these instances to keep the debris and sludge out of your sand filter.

Warranty & Service

Sometimes, above ground pool warranties can be a bit tricky and cumbersome. Let's break it down together part-by-part (literally).

Above ground pool warranties can be a bit tricky and cumbersome. This is simply because all the components do not come from the same manufacturer. You will have a manufacturer warranty related to the actual pool (this includes the wall, bottom track, top track, ledge, posts & top caps), a manufacturer warranty related to the above ground pool liner, and another warranty for the pump & filter system. Each of these warranties will have different warranty periods and they will all have items that will void the manufacturer warranty. Some retailers may even add additional warranty on the individual items that they honor internally as well – to simply back up the manufacturer warranty.

Some of the most common reasons warranties are voided are running the pump on an extension cord for a prolonged period (more than a week), and gophers or pool maintenance equipment tearing a hole in the liner.

When you are shopping for an above ground pool, ask your retailer if they will assist you with navigating the warranty. You can most definitely navigate the warranty on your own with the manufacturer, but sometimes the convenience and peace of mind that comes along with knowing the warranty will be upheld is worth paying a bit more for.

Retailers that have experience with the manufacturers' and how the warranty works will most generally resolve the issue up front and get reimbursement from the manufacturer, allowing you more useable time with your pool.

Common services related to above ground pools generally include opening your pool, closing your pool, cleaning & maintenance, patching a hole in your liner, changing out filter sand, reworking the bottom floor sand, and changing out pumps. These are all relatively straight forward and can either be handled as a weekend DIY project, or a service technician can take care of it while you are at work – whichever you prefer.



We have a complete suite of services to open/close and maintain your pool

Buying Process & Reputable Retailers

So, it's finally time to buy your beautiful new pool (HINT..., did you know you don't even have to go to a physical store, even though we would love to meet you.) Once you've made the decision to purchase an above ground pool, the process becomes fairly easy – even something that can be accomplished without ever visiting the store if you prefer. Your sales associate,

whether in person, via email, or via phone, will walk through any last questions you may have and then will simply get the information from you regarding the pool model and size you would like and any accessories or upgrades you would like to add on with the initial purchase. They will get information from you concerning your location and site for installation so they can add in installation costs and estimated excavation costs (if applicable) assuming you choose to have the pool installed by one of their installation crews. From this point, the next person you will most likely hear from is the individual responsible for scheduling the pool installation – they will either be calling to set up an installation date/time or to confirm the installation time if one was set at the time of your pool purchase.

Now you are in the hands of the installation crew. While that crew is on site doing the installation, they will walk through the pool and the steps you need to complete once the pool is full, and you can ask any questions that you may have.

Financing is a good option when purchasing an above ground pool– it's relatively easy to do. The application process is easy and most can be done online; there is even a pre-approval process that can be completed in most cases if you would like your application submitted to know what 'buying power' you currently have.

Our Pool Collection

Ready to pick the perfect above ground pool? Check out our models by visiting us at www.hometownpools.org



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RIO II 52"

STEEL: Excellent Value & Quality

Features:

- 6-inch G-9000 multi-ribbed steel top ledges
- G-9000 supportive steel uprights
- Resin decorator ledge cover won't chip, peel or splinter
- Tie-in support to the upright for greater stability
- Galeria wall pattern
- Heavy corrugated wall with superior coatings

Packages Starting at:

\$3,295

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 12' x 24'



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Impress 52"

STEEL: Beauty, Strength, and Design

Features:

- 7-inch multi-ribbed steel top ledges
- Steel uprights for superior protection
- Two-toned reinforced ledge cover
- bottom plate with integrated foot cover
- Dorado wall pattern
- Heavy corrugated wall coatings
-

Packages Starting at:

\$3,503

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 18' x 33'



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Nova STR 54"

STEEL: A Champagne Toast to Technology

Features:

- 9-inch multi-layered steel top ledge
- Multi-Layered steel uprights- protective finish
- Two-piece high impact resin ledge cover
- Avantgarde wall pattern
- Heavy corrugated frame with superior coatings
- Coated with Zinc Guard for corrosion resistance
- Double sided enamel coating system
- Stainless steel hardware

Packages Starting at:

\$3,683

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 18' x 33'



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Nakoma 54"

RESIN: Soaked with Superior Design

Features:

- Unique Synflex high impact resin top ledge
- Unique Synflex high impact resin uprights
- Trinity wall pattern triple coated for durability
- Heavy corrugated wall with superior coatings
- Stainless steel hardware
- Interlocking top and bottom system
- Patented snap together frame, no hardware

Packages Starting at:

\$3,929

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 18' x 33'



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Quantum 54"

RESIN: A Robust Classic Style

Features:

- 10-inch high-impact resin top ledges
- High-impact Resin uprights with printed pattern
- Resin bottom rails with integrated plates
- Breeze wall pattern covered with Resin-Kote
- Heavy corrugated frame with superior coatings
- Exclusive Dura-Lok resin bottom system
- Stainless steel hardware

Packages Starting at:

\$4,028

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 18' x 33'



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SuperNova 54"

HYBRID: Built for Outstanding Rigidity

Features:

- 9-inch Dura filled injection-molded resin top ledge.
- Double coated Zinc Guard steel uprights- Top Kote
- Two-piece resin ledge covers
- Injection-molded resin bottom plates for stability
- Elegant resin foot cover & poly-enamel protection
- Avantgarde wall pattern
- Heavy corrugated wall with superior coatings
- Stainless steel hardware & UV protected bottom

Packages Starting at:

\$4,090

Round 15' 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 15' x 30' & 18' x 33'



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Optimum 52"

HIGH-GRADE ALLOY: State of The Art to Fit Any Yard

Features:

- 9-inch Dura filled injection-molded resin top ledge.
- Double coated Zinc Guard steel uprights- Top Kote
- Two-piece resin ledge covers
- Injection-molded resin bottom plates for stability
- Elegant resin foot cover & poly-enamel protection
- Avantgarde wall pattern
- Heavy corrugated wall with superior coatings
- Stainless steel hardware & UV protected bottom

Packages Starting at:

\$6,446

Round 18' 21' 24' 27'
Oval 16'x24' 16'x28' 16'x32'
18'x30' 18'x34'
FreeForm 14'x23' 15'x28'
17'x30' 19'x32'



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INTEX 52"

GRAPHITE: Incredible Value DIY

Features:

- Easy to assemble.
- Natural wood-looking panel walls
- Puncture Resistant
- 2-Year Warranty
- Pump, Filter, and Ladder INCLUDED

Pools Starting at:

\$2,449

Round 18'



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FAQ

We hope the information provided throughout this above ground pool buying guide has helped you understand more about the options available to you and has answered your questions. We have compiled a few of our most frequently asked questions below just in case

WHAT'S A POPULAR SIZE POOL THAT IS BIG ENOUGH TO FEEL LIKE A 'BIG POOL', BUT NOT TOO EXPENSIVE?

A 24' pool is the most popular size we sell at our store. You can easily fit multiple families, or host birthday parties with floats and toys spread out without feeling too cramped. It is in the midrange of the pricing spectrum, so you get plenty of room without breaking the bank.

HOW MANY YEARS WILL AN ABOVE GROUND POOL TYPICALLY LAST WITH UPSTATE NEW YORK WEATHER?

If properly maintained, an above ground pool can easily last 15-20 years. With four very defined seasons, in Upstate New York season, there is always the threat of severe weather – for hail or strong winds, we can generally provide replacement parts or help re-establish your wall or liner if they sustain storm damage – with the exception of a tornado completely relocating your pool, most storm damage can be resolved without replacing the entire pool.

WILL YOU COME OUT AND HELP ME CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOT FOR MY POOL?

Yes, we offer site checks to help you find the best location for your new pool, as well as measuring your space so you know what size pools will fit in your yard. A site check will also help you understand any excavation that may be necessary if you have a heavily sloped yard.

HOW MUCH IS MAINTENANCE GOING TO COST EACH YEAR?

If you maintain your pool water, perform weekly water testing/balancing, and perform the suggested weekly cleaning routines, you can expect to pay between \$250 - \$500 for chemicals and maintenance each season (depending on the size of your pool – approximately \$250 for an 18' pool and \$500 for a 33' pool). This range assumes no major water issues, like a large algae bloom.



Call Today **(518) POOL FUN**