

The Pool Shoppe

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Opening Procedures for *Inground and Onground* Swimming Pools

There are six steps to Opening your pool:

1. Removal of the Winter Cover
2. Clean and Restore Pool Surfaces
3. Replace Pool & Deck Accessories
4. Reconnect Plumbing & Equipment
5. Start Circulation and Vacuum Pool
6. Test and Adjust Water Chemistry



*****Please read all instructions thoroughly before opening your Pool as certain conditions or circumstances may affect the order of which you perform these procedures.**

Please note that these instructions are to be used as a guideline.

Always refer to manufacturer's instructions and owner's manuals for further details.

Please refer to the last page of these instructions for your Opening Supply Checklist

1. Removal of Winter Cover

Before the winter cover can be removed, accumulated water and debris must be removed. The easiest method of removing water from the top of the cover is to use a submersible pump and a discharge hose - this hose could be a garden hose or backwash hose depending on the size or attachment on your submersible pump. Fasten your discharge hose to the discharge outlet on your submersible pump and place the pump on top of the cover into the water. If there is a large amount of leaves and debris on the cover, we suggest placing the pump into a small laundry basket. This will prevent leaves and debris from plugging the bottom intake of the pump. Consider using a mesh *Leaf Cover* next fall to help reduce the amount of leaves and large debris on the cover in the spring!

Using your vacuum pole and brush, work the water on the cover towards the pump. Keep in mind that if there are any holes in the cover, water can be pulled from below the cover upwards, thus draining the water level in the pool too low. Once all of the water has been removed from the cover, use a wall brush to push the leaves to the edge of the pool so they can be removed with a leaf scoop or bucket. Ensure that all water and debris are removed before attempting to remove the cover.

Fitted Vinyl and Polywoven Winter Covers

Prior to removing the cover's bead from the winter cover track, make sure all *Cover Wedgies* or *T-Bead* retainers are removed. Beginning at one end of the pool and moving down the length of the pool, unlock the cover by simply lifting up the wall material and pull away from the pool's edge. As the cover is removed, lay the wall material inward, on top of the floating cover. Carefully pull the cover towards the end of the pool to lift on top of the deck. Fold the cover on the deck so that it can be removed for cleaning.

Next, stretch out the cover and clean it with a proper cleaning solution. Our *Aqua Cover Cleaner* will effectively break down organic material and deodorize your cover. Follow manufacturer's instructions on the bottle then rinse the cover using a garden hose with spray nozzle. A pressure washer is also helpful. Allow the cover to dry and fold into a manageable size for storage. We recommend storing your cover in a plastic garbage can or tote with a lid to help prevent the cover from being damaged by insects or rodents.

If your fitted cover is solid blue vinyl, we recommend that your cover be stored “wet”. After cleaning, fold the cover small enough to fit comfortably inside of your storage barrel. Move your barrel with cover to your storage location and then fill the barrel with water to completely immerse the cover. Next, add 250ml of our *50% Concentrated Aqua-Guard Algaecide* (or equivalent measurement of our *5% or 10% Algaecide*) or *Aqua Cover Cleaner* to keep the cover from not only smelling of mildew, but to maintain it’s shape and minimize shrinkage.

It is recommended to store your plywood winter step cover upright to prevent water absorption. If your winter step cover is plastic, it can be cleaned with our *Aqua-Guard Vinyl Liner Cleaner* and also stored upright as not to collect water.

- Hint: 1)** If space is unavailable to clean and fold a vinyl lock-in cover, the cover can be cleaned and flushed on top of the pool. Make sure all water is removed before attempting to remove the cover.
- 2)** It is not recommended to spread the cover on the lawn and leave to dry on a sunny day as the cover may heat up and burn the grass. If possible, spread the cover out on top of your paved driveway or clean on a cool cloudy day.

Safety Covers

To remove the Safety Cover, you begin by removing the cover’s springs from the deck anchors. Thread all brass anchors into the deck using the supplied red handled allen key tool. Make sure they are flush into the deck. Next, standing on each side of the pool, pull the cover towards an end of the pool and carefully lifting the cover, fold the cover on top of itself into a manageable size and store into its storage bag.

- Hint: 1)** It is recommended to keep the springs attached to the safety cover’s straps.
- 2)** To protect brass anchors in your pool deck from dirt and organic build-up, ask about our *Deck Creations* – protective plastic caps that keep the brass anchors clean and free of debris that can accumulate over the summer months.

Polywoven Winter Covers using Water Bags

Begin draining all of the water bags around the perimeter of the pool. Carefully lift the bags off of the covers edge and set aside on the pool deck. Beginning at one end of the pool and moving down the length of the pool, pull the cover towards the opposite end of the pool to lift on top of the deck. Fold the cover on the deck so that it can be removed for cleaning.

Next, stretch out the cover and water bags and clean them with a proper cleaning solution. Our *Aqua Cover Cleaner* will effectively break down organic material and deodorize your cover. Follow manufacturer’s instructions on the bottle then rinse the cover and bags using a garden hose with spray nozzle. A pressure washer is also helpful. Allow to dry and fold into a manageable size for storage. We recommend storing your cover and bags in a plastic garbage can or tote with a lid to help prevent the cover from being damaged by insects or rodents.

2. Clean & Restore Pool Surfaces

Using our *Aqua-Guard Vinyl Liner Cleaner*, it is recommended to clean the “bathtub ring” at the water lines to remove any oil, dirt or grease contaminants that accumulated over the winter months. These organics, if left to sit, can combine with UV rays of the sun and sanitizers once the water level is raised, and destroy not only the pattern on your liner but the vinyl itself. Working with a 2’-3’ length of wall, spray the vinyl surface with water. Next, spray the vinyl cleaner onto the surface and carefully scrub the vinyl with a sponge. Rinse the area with water from the pool and proceed to the next section to be cleaned. It is also suggested to clean inside the pool’s skimmer, walk-in steps and ladder treads.

3. Replace Pool & Deck Accessories

Stored inside your skimmer basket, should be the accessories that were removed last fall for safe storage. Remove the winterizing plugs from each pool return fitting and thread the directional return fittings into each opening. Inside the skimmer of your inground pool, the black rubber plug is removed from the suction hole. The other opening (closest to the pool) has a green “Gizzmo” or black “Skimmer Guard” that is threaded into it and must be removed. Reach into the opening and pull out the length of foam rope that was installed during closing. Make sure all of the plugs and closing accessories are stored with the winter cover for safe keeping. The skimmer to an onground pool may not have a black rubber plug or foam rope installed at the time of closing. Instead, the “Gizzmo” or “Skimmer Guard” may have been used to plug the suction hole. Replace the basket into the skimmer.

To replace the ladder and/or handrail, wedge anchors must be installed into the deck anchors. Tighten each wedge anchor in order to secure the ladder from moving. It is very important to make sure the two rubber bumpers are securely installed onto the bottom of the ladder before the ladder is positioned into place as these bumpers protect the liner from any costly damage.

The last accessory inside the pool to be replaced is the underwater pool light(s) if equipped. Remove the weight that is anchoring the light below the water level. Carefully, coil the black light cord inside the white wall niche. Align the two openings on the light lens housing with the two prongs on the faceplate attached to the wall, push toward the wall and twist the lens clockwise slightly to lock into place.

Hint: 1) Store all winterizing accessories with the winter cover for safe storage.

2) Always make sure the GFCI is tested and working properly for all lights throughout the entire swimming season.

4. Connecting the Equipment

* Along with these basic instructions, always refer to your Equipment Owners Manuals for further details.

A) Pump and Filter

Inside the pump basket are the drain plugs and other accessories that were removed from the filtration equipment in the fall for safe storage.

Begin by ensuring all *Plumbers Tape* or rubber gaskets are secured to each drain plug and thread each plug into their appropriate drain hole. Hand tighten each plug only. The pool pump requires two drain plugs to be inserted. The filter has a drain cap and rubber gasket to be installed on the bottom side of the filter. The pressure gauge will require new plumbers tape wrapped around its threads before it is carefully threaded into the opening on the dial valve. Do not overtighten the pressure gauge as it could crack the plastic opening in the dial valve. Tighten only enough to stop any drips! The sight glass and thin rubber washer or gasket are threaded into the larger opening beside the pressure gauge.

Reattach any unions and valves that may have been disconnected for the closing and ensure all “o” rings are properly positioned inside the connections. Attach the backwash hose to the “waste” port of the dial valve. Secure all clamps as necessary.

Hint: 1) The proper way to install plumbers tape to a pressure gauge or fitting is to wrap approximately four layers of tape around the threads making sure it is wrapped in the same direction as the threads (usually clockwise rotation).

Hint: 2) Any fittings that appear loose should be removed and new plumbers tape applied before re-tightening fitting.

Hint: 3) Lubricate all o-rings with *Jack’s Lube* to reduce wear by 80% and protect them from salt or chlorine.

Sand Filters

It is recommended to clean the filter sand once a year to remove minerals and organic matter. If this was not done at the time of closing, *Filter Rinse* can be added once the filtration system is up and running. Follow instructions on the label to perform a filter rinse.

Along with an annual treatment of *Filter Rinse*, it is also recommended to perform a deep filter sand cleanse once every 3-5 years. During this process, the filter media is soaked overnight in a solution of *Filter Cleanse* with the system off. If performing the filter cleanse before completing your pool opening, this step can be performed during **Section 5** of these instructions.

For **Cartridge Filters** and **Diatomaceous Earth Filters** it is recommended to soak filter elements in a proper cleaning solution, such as *Cartridge Cleaner*, to prolong their life and efficiency. If this procedure was not done at the time of winterizing, it is a great idea to take the time to do this before starting up the system to avoid down time during the summer months.

Zeobrite Filter Media for Sand Filters

It is recommended to recharge Zeobrite filter media once a year to remove minerals, scale, oils and damaging ammonia build-up. If this was not done at the time of closing, it can be done at Start-up but will require the filter media to soak overnight in a solution of *Filter Cleanse* with the system off. If performing the filter cleanse before completing your pool opening, this step can be performed during **Section 5** of these instructions.

Dr. Dryden's Activate Glass Filter Media for Sand Filters

Activate Filter Media (AFM) has been engineered to be self-sterilizing and biofilm resistant. It does not need to be recharged or rinsed with *Filter Rinse* at any time.

B) Chlorinator

If your filtration equipment is equipped with an "Off-line" Chlorinator, the black tubes are connected to each saddle fitting that is drilled into the piping making sure the water flows in the proper direction. The black tube connected to the "out" opening of the chlorinator must be attached to the saddle fitting located after the heater. If no heater is equipped, then connect the tube to the saddle fitting located after the filter.

C) Hayward Gas Heaters (For all other brands of heater, please refer to your Owner's Manual)

It is very important to have your heater properly cleaned and serviced each Spring by a qualified licensed gas technician. Do realize that rodents and spiders look for a winter home and the Pool Heater offers a lot! A licensed Gas Technician will clean out the burner tray and pilot tube to prevent a gas back-up, resulting in an inefficient heater or flame roll-out.

On Hayward's Millivolt or Standing Pilot and Electronic Ignition heaters, remove the upper front panel to access the pressure switch that was disconnected during the winterization of the heater. Connect the two brass nuts and carefully tighten with two wrenches. Hayward's Forced Draft heaters do not require disconnection of the pressure switch tube. These pressure switches have been mounted vertically allowing them to self drain. Re-install the front access panel. Install and tighten any plugs that were removed from the heater's header during winterization. Connect and tighten the pipes to each union making sure that the "o"-rings are installed properly.

Hayward Heat Pro Heat Pump (For all other brands of heat pump, please refer to your Owner's Manual)

Insert and tighten the drain plug and gasket to the opening located on the bottom side of the "inlet" water connection. Make sure the unions are securely connected to each water connection and ensure "o"-rings are installed into the unions.

D) Hayward Aqua Rite Salt Chlorine Generator

Note: The Aqua Rite Turbo Cell should be cleaned using *Salt Cell Cleaner* at least once a year to remove calcium build-up. This procedure can be done at the time of winterizing the pool or before start-up to avoid delays or downtime during the summer months. Follow the *Salt Cell Cleaner* instructions or consult a Pool Shoppe representative. A *Cleaning Stand* can be purchased to keep the cell upright during the cleaning process.

Position the Turbo Cell between the two white unions and tighten each union ensuring the "o"-rings are placed properly. It does not matter which direction the water flows through the cell. Attach the Turbo Cell's white wire harness to the control panel and connect the grey wire from the Flow Switch to the small "jack" location on the bottom of the control panel. Do not turn the power on to the control panel until the pool is filled and ready for circulation.

E) Del Ozone “Eclipse” Ozonator

For optimal performance, it is not recommended to run the ozonator until the filter has been circulating for at least 24 hours and all water chemistry adjustments have been made. Remove the winterizing cap from the Ozone injector and store this cap with the other winterizing plugs. Reconnect the ¼” barbed adaptor and the green gas tube to the ozone injector. Once the pool water is circulating, verify that the ozonator's green indicator light is on and that ozone is being pulled into the injector by checking for bubbles at the return or in your Degas Mixing Chamber if equipped. **Note:** The manufacturer recommends that the green (or clear) gas tubing be inspected annually as this tubing will become brittle over time. Please inspect your ozonator tubing to ensure that it does not crackle as it bends. For those units with the Mixing Degas Chamber, it is also recommended to replace the Carbon Destruct Filter every 2 seasons.

F) Hayward P4 Automation Panel (if equipped)

Refer to Owner's Manual Switch on the main breaker feeding the panel and test the breaker if it is equipped with a GFCI. When your pool is ready for circulation, switch each breaker inside the panel to the “On” position. This will enable power to the control panel and each relay in order for the equipment to turn on. Please refer to your owner's manual for programming.

5. Start Circulation and Vacuum the Pool

A) Circulation

If your filtration equipment is *above* water level, you can now fill your pool with water to the top of the skimmer mouth opening. This will allow the extra water to be used for backwashing during or after vacuuming the pool. (If your filtration equipment is positioned *below* water level, like an Onground Pool, ensure all drain plugs, unions and lids are securely fastened before filling the pool to the top of the skimmer mouth opening).

Hint: If your pool is equipped with a cartridge filter and your pool is relatively clean, it is not necessary to fill your water level to the top of the skimmer mouth opening. Proper water level is half or 2/3 covering the skimmer opening.

Place water in the pool pump to cover the basket and re-install the pump lid and “o”-ring. The handle on the dial valve should be placed to the “filter position. Ensure that the valve at the front of the pump (if equipped) is in the open position. Turn the pump on. The circulation may take a few moments as the pump draws the water from the pool. This is normal. As the circulation begins, air bubbles will shoot out of the return fitting but will gradually subside. You should notice the pressure on the pressure gauge rising and begin to feel good water pressure coming out of each return fitting.

B) Vacuum the Pool

We recommend that your initial pool vacuum be performed using your manual vacuum equipment. This will allow the fine debris to be picked up by the vacuum head slowly as automatic cleaners move too quickly and may disturb the dirt in its path before it has a chance to be vacuumed up. After vacuuming, always backwash the filter to remove the debris and contaminants in your filter sand. After backwashing, remember to “rinse” for 20 - 30 seconds and then place the filter back to the “filter” position.

If your pool is equipped with a cartridge filter, ensure your cartridge is flushed well after your initial vacuum.

Hint: If your pool has excessive debris, you may want to consider vacuuming your pool on the waste position of your filter allowing fine debris to be discharged out the waste line. Unfortunately, this will drop your water level quickly.

Sand Filter Media Cleanse

Now that the pool pump and system have been primed, a filter cleanse can be performed if needed.

This procedure is recommended once per year for Sand Filters equipped with *Zeobrite* Filter Media, and once every 3-5 years for Sand Filters using *Silica Sand*. This procedure can be performed anytime during the season keeping in mind that the filter media must be soaked in a cleansing solution overnight with the system off. Please see a Pool Shoppe representative or visit our website for a copy of these instructions.

6. Test and Adjust Water Chemistry

Pools following our Aqua Guard Tablet or Granular Chlorine Program

For pools using our *Aqua Guard* Chlorine Products, we recommend using *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* and our *Aqua Guard Deluxe Opening Pool Kit*. Our kit contains *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, our *50% Concentrated Aqua Guard Algaecide*, and *Oxy Out*, a gentle non-chlorine shock treatment.

Day 1:

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

Day 2:

- 1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, broadcast 1kg of *Oxy-Out* across the surface of the water. This oxidizing product destroys organic waste that has accumulated over the winter, without bleaching surfaces.
- 2) One hour later, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustment required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours. *A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

Note: Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60° F.

- 3) A half hour after the last Alkalinity and pH adjustment, Shock the pool with *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock*, a gentle chlorine shock treatment that will eliminate organic wastes and debris that have accumulated in the water during the winter. Add 1 pouch of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.
Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

Day 3:

In the morning (or a minimum of 12 hours after shocking the pool), add the *50% Concentrated Aqua Guard Algaecide* as per bottle directions to kill potential algae spores as well as prevent the growth of new ones during the start-up process. If your pool required a stronger chlorine shock and the chlorine level is still high, it is recommended to wait 24 hours before adding the algaecide.

Hint: If your pool water is still cloudy, *Clear Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

Once the opening kit has been added and your pool water is clear, you are now ready to begin our chlorine maintenance program! Please see a Water Lab Technician for a copy of this Program.

Pools following our New Alliance Program

For pools using our Alliance Program, we recommend starting with *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, and *Soft Shock*.

Day 1:

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

Day 2:

- 1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustments required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours.

*A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

Note: Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. **We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60 °F.**

- 2) In the evening, we recommend shocking the pool with *Soft Shock*. *Soft Shock* is a gentle chlorine shock treatment that will eliminate organic wastes and debris that have accumulated in the water during the winter. It also contains clarifiers and buffers to compliment the Alliance program. Add 1 pouch of *Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.

Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

Hint: If your pool water is still cloudy, *Clear Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

Day 3: (Or when pool is clear)

With the pump and filter continuously running, add 2kg of Alliance ElaBORATE for every 10,000L of pool water. Apply ElaBORATE by slowly pouring directly into the pool skimmer. Do not backwash the filter for at least 48 hours to avoid losing any Initiator. Add the required number of *Alliance Ultra-Zinc Pucks* based on your pool's volume, to your chlorine feeder and be sure to shock the pool weekly hereafter, with *Soft Shock*. Please see a Water Lab Technician for a copy of our Alliance Maintenance Program.

Salt Water Pools

For Salt Water Pools, we recommend starting with *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, and *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock*.

Day 1:

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

Day 2:

1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustments required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours.

*A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

Note: Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. **We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60 °F.**

2) Because your Turbo Cell will not begin producing chlorine until the pool water reaches 50°F, we recommend an initial dose of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* - a gentle chlorine shock treatment to eliminate organic wastes that have accumulated over the winter. Add 1 pouch of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.

Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

Hint: If your pool water is cloudy, *Clear Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED.....

Check your supply at home to confirm your needs for the following items:

- Submersible Pump and Discharge hose (garden hose or backwash hose)
- Aqua Cover Cleaner
- Storage Tub or Bag for Winter Cover
- Aqua-Guard Vinyl Liner Cleaner
- Plumbers Tape
- Jack's Lube
- Filter Rinse or Filter Cleanse (if not done at winterizing)
- Start-up Chemicals
- Salt Cell Cleaner and Cleaning Stand if applicable
- New test kit reagents/refills if applicable