

1300 SUMNER AVE. • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44115-2851
(216) 241-7333 • FAX (216) 241-0105
E-Mail: cffa@chemicalfabricsandfilm.com
URL: www.chemicalfabricsandfilm.com

PROPER CARE ENSURES LONG LIFE FOR VINYL POOL LINERS

Homeowners with backyard swimming pools depend on vinyl pool liners to keep their pools looking beautiful season after season. Nearly 70 percent of the residential pools in the United States rely on durable and easy to clean printed flexible vinyl to protect the interior pool surface from environmental elements and manmade conditions.

From sunlight and temperature fluctuation to chemicals and careless cleaning, this surface is exposed to numerous hazards. The most common causes of damage to vinyl pool liners are premature pattern wear due to abrasive cleaning tools and bleaching due to improper chemical balance. These two factors, exclusively or in combination, can attack the vinyl liner and cause premature aging.

If you're one of the five million North American homeowners fortunate enough to have a pool with a vinyl liner, follow these simple tips to lengthen its years of service:

Chemical Maintenance

- Prior to installation, read and follow the chemical manufacturers' directions. Many liner problems are a result of misuse of chemicals.
- When adding chemicals, add one chemical at a time.
- Add each dissolved chemical through the skimmer for best dispersion into the pool (through the filtration system).
- Maintain proper water balance: pH in the range of 7.2 to 7.6; total alkalinity at 80 to 100 ppm; and calcium hardness at 200 to 300 ppm.
- Keep free chlorine, the most common active ingredient that sanitizes the pool, at 1.5 to 2.5 ppm. If the concentration drifts below 1.5 ppm, algae and bacterial growth can take hold more easily and may cause staining of the vinyl liner. If the active chlorine concentration is maintained greater than 2.5 ppm, liner wrinkling may occur. This problem can be further aggravated if accompanied by pH levels that fall below 7.0.

Seasonal Care

- Avoid the use of any abrasive cleaning agents or cleaning aids.
- Vacuum and clean the pool with a cleaner designed for vinyl lined pools.
- Never use sharp objects in or around the pool as they can puncture the liner.
- After the chemicals have dissipated, cover your pool when it's not in use. This will decrease its exposure to damaging ultraviolet rays. Less chemicals are required if your pool is covered and/or not used. To avoid high concentrations of airborne chemicals building up between the water and the cover, open or vent the cover every 24 hours.

- Do not drain the pool completely for any reason without consulting a pool professional. The older the liner, the higher the risk that it will shrink and not stretch back into its original shape.
- Never close a pool without circulating the pool water for several hours after the addition of chemicals.

For more information or a copy of these tips, visit the Chemical Fabrics and Film Association at www.chemicalfabricsandfilm.com.



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