

Inground Pool Care

How to Shock a Swimming Pool

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 **Frequency:** Every 1-2 weeks

- 1. Learn your vocabulary. Before you get started, there are three types of chlorine measurements you need to be aware of:**
 - **Free Chlorine (FC)** — As you might recall from earlier, “free chlorine” measures the amount of chlorine that is available to sanitize the water. Critically, not all chlorine is “free,” as you’ll see in a moment. The ideal FC reading is 1 to 3 parts per million (ppm).
 - **Combined Chlorine (CC)** — Also called “chloramine,” combined chlorine (CC) is chlorine that has already been used. CC has much weaker sanitizing abilities than FC and should ideally be limited to 0.2 ppm or less.
 - **Total Chlorine (TC)** — Adding FC plus CC gives you your TC measurement.
- 2. Check your swimming pool’s chlorine levels. For this step, make sure to follow the instructions provided with your kit or test strips. If your CC reading is 0.5 ppm or higher, it’s time to shock your pool. It’s also a good idea to shock your swimming pool:**
 - After pool parties or heavy use
 - After heavy rains, high-speed winds, thunderstorms, or other extreme weather
 - If you notice visible algae or a strong chlorine smell
- 3. Check your swimming pool’s pH levels.** — Your shock treatment will be most effective when your pool’s pH level is **between 7.1 and 7.3**

4. **Determine how much pool shock you need.** To find out how much shock your pool needs, carefully follow the product measurement instructions. For example, the instructions may recommend that you use one pound of shock per 10,000 gallons of water.



CALCULATING POOL SHOCK

Some situations, such as an extreme algae bloom, may require a double or even triple dose of pool shock. You should consult an expert when calculating how much shock to use in your swimming pool.

5. **Mix the amount of shock you need.** It's not a good idea to pour powdered pool shock directly into the water due to the staining that can result, especially in a **vinyl liner pool**. Avoid unsightly stains by pre-mixing powdered shock in a large, clean bucket. For this step, make sure to wear gloves and eye protection.
6. **Turn on your pool pump.** This will help the shock treatment circulate.
7. **Carefully pour the pre-mixed shock treatment into your pool.** Aim for the edges of the water, and try to avoid splashing.
8. **Give the pool pump ample time to circulate the shock.** We recommend letting the pump run for at least six hours.

9. **Retest the water to determine the current chlorine level.** Again, refer to the instructions on your water testing kit or strips. After shocking your pool, the FC or free chlorine level will likely read somewhere between 5 and 10 ppm.



10. **Wait for the free chlorine to drop to a safe level again.** Once the FC level has dropped down to a range of 1 to 3 ppm, it's safe to go swimming again.



BEST TIME OF DAY TO SHOCK YOUR POOL

Shocking your pool at night gives chlorine and other chemicals time to work before they can be damaged or weakened by exposure to sunlight. This is especially important if you are using an unstabilized shock treatment, such as cal hypo, which does not contain UV-blocking CYA.

Professionals Are Here to Help

If any of these pool maintenance tasks seem a little too daunting, it is never a bad idea to call your trusted independent builder to provide these services for you.

[Speak to a Builder](#)