

How to winterize an above-ground pool.

The main purpose in winterizing your pool is to protect it from damage due to freezing water. Another is to keep it as clean as possible for the next season. Closing your pool properly can save you a lot of work when it comes time to open the pool for the summer.

- The first step in the winterization procedure is to make sure your water chemistry is balanced. By balancing your water chemistry you are protecting the surface of the pool from staining and etching.
- Adding a winterizing chemical kit to your water will help keep it blue and clear for the next season. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the kit.
- Do not use a floater that contains a strong oxidizer (chlorine or bromine) as the floater will stick against the wall and stain and/or bleach your wall. For the same reasons DO NOT throw chlorine or bromine tablets into the pool. They will sink to the bottom and damage your pool's surface.
- When water freezes, it expands. This can cause great damage to your pool, pool plumbing, and its filter system. If you are closing up your pool for the winter, you should always take precautions to protect from freeze damage no matter where you live. You can never be sure that it will not drop below freezing.
- The next step is to figure out what you would like to do to protect your skimmer. Below are a few options.

1: Lower the water below the mouth of your skimmer. This will get the water out of the throat of the skimmer which can be easily damaged if water were to freeze there.

2: You can also use a Gizzmo or Blow Out Extension to seal the line. This device is a hollow tube which will collapse if water should get into the skimmer and freeze. Be sure to put Teflon tape on the threads of the Gizzmo or Blow Out Extension to make a seal and to ease removal in the spring. There is also a Gizzmo with a rubber plug end if needed.

3: There is also an Aquador that you can put over the mouth of the skimmer. This is a plastic dam which holds out the water from the skimmer, allowing you to leave the water level up for the winter.

- Drain all the water from your filter equipment and hoses.
 - Start by putting a plug in your return fitting (where water returns to above ground pool).
 - Disconnect your hoses from the return and skimmer or at the filter system and drain them.
 - The filter should have a plug at the bottom that will allow it to drain.
 - Put the multiport valve in the closed or "winterize" position and remove the pressure gauge.
 - Drain the pump by removing the drain plug(s). There may be two plugs to remove here.
 - After draining the pump, turn it on for a brief second to get the water out of the veins of the impeller. Do not run the pump more than a second or two because you can burn out the seal very quickly.
 - If possible take the pump inside to protect it for the winter.
 - If you have a chemical feeder, you should have let the chemicals (chlorine/bromine tablets) run out of your feeder so that no chemicals are left in it. Leaving chemicals in your feeder over the winter can cause damage to it and other equipment.
 - You will now be able to drain your chemical feeder.
 - Put all the plugs that you have removed into the pump strainer basket so they will be easily found in the spring.
 - Do not put the plugs back on the equipment. If the equipment should get water in it, the plugs will prevent proper drainage.
- An air pillow (air bubble) is an optional item that can be put under your cover. It will allow easier placement of a cover pump to remove water from the sides of the cover. However, air pillows do have a tendency to deflate over the winter and are unfortunately never a warranted item. If you do decide to use a pillow only fill it up 75% to allow for expansion/contraction and the weight of the cover.
- Cover your above ground swim pool to keep out the debris. I recommend a solid cover that keeps out all debris and sunlight. This will keep the pool totally clean and prevent most algae growth.
- The final step is to take care of the pool over the winter. Do not allow water and debris to collect on the cover for an extended period of time as this will pull the weave of the cover apart and allow dirt/debris to get into the pool water.