



PRESS RELEASE

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EnergyWiseSM Tip: Swimming Pools

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There is something pretty cool about having your own backyard swimming pool. But your personal “pond” could leave you hot under the collar when it comes to the increase in utility bills. Full-sized residential swimming pools can use as much energy during the summer months as the rest of your home over that same period.

Here are a few ways you can reduce the cost of maintaining your pool this season.

Use a pool cover. Swimming pools lose energy in a variety of ways, but evaporation is by far the largest source of energy loss, whether you’re trying to naturally heat your pool or you’re using a pool heater. Covering your pool when it is not in use is the single most effective means of reducing pool heating costs that will yield savings of 50 to 70 percent.

It is best to use a cover specifically designed for swimming pools. One of the lowest-cost covers made specifically for swimming pools is the bubble (or solar) cover. Bubble covers are similar to bubble packing material except they use a thicker grade plastic. Vinyl covers are made from heavier material and have a longer life expectancy than bubble covers.

Pool covers should be used throughout the swimming season. Take the cover off just before swimming, and replace it as soon as you are done using the pool.

Turn down the temperature. 78°F is great! In fact, the American Red Cross recommends 78°F for competitive swimming. You will use about 40 percent less energy than if you were to set it at 82°F. Turn the temperature down or turn off the heater whenever the pool will not be used for several days.

It is a myth that it takes more energy to heat a pool back to a desired temperature than what is saved by lowering the temperature.

Right-size the pump. You can save energy and maintain a safe and sanitary swimming pool temperature by using a smaller, higher efficiency pump and by operating it only as much as necessary. For most residential pools, a ¾-horsepower or smaller pump is usually sufficient unless your pool rivals most others in size.

Operate the pump wisely. Pool pumps often run much longer than necessary. Many believe it's necessary to keep their pool's water circulating to keep the chemicals mixed and debris removed through the filtration system.

However, as long as water circulates while chemicals are added, they should not separate even in still water. Some feel continuous pumping is easier than using a skimmer or vacuum to remove large debris. Along with oversizing, homeowners can unnecessarily add another \$100 to the monthly summer electric bill by not reducing pump use to when it's really needed.

Most pool professionals suggest reducing your pumping and filtration to six to eight hours per day. If the water does not appear clean, increase the time in half-hour increments until it does. Install a timer to control the pump's cycling. If debris is a problem, use a timer that can activate the pump for several short periods throughout the day to keep the pool cleaner.

Keep the intake grates clear. Clogged drains require the pump to run longer to sufficiently filter your pool. Remember to backwash your filter appropriately. While backwashing too frequently wastes water, not backwashing often enough wastes energy by requiring the pump to operate longer due to clogging debris.

For additional information on how to make your home, business or school EnergyWiseSM, contact Loup Power District, Cornhusker Public Power District, Nebraska Public Power District, or your local public power utility. While you're at it, check out the EnergyWiseSM programs designed to help you save money. Find energy efficiency information online at www.loup.com, www.cornhusker-power.com, and www.nppd.com/save-energy.

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