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Regular Backwashing Frequency and Contact a Professional If you have any questions or concerns about maintaining your pool. Benefits of Regular Backwashing is an essential part of pool maintenance that can provide a range of benefits for both the pool and its users. Here are some of the benefits of regular backwashing. Environmental factors: Pools located near trees, gardens, or construction sites may accumulate more debris and require more frequent backwashing. Chemical levels: Properly balanced chemical levels can reduce debris accumulation and extend the time between backwashing. General Guidelines for Backwashing Frequency While the frequency of backwashing will depend on several factors, some general guidelines can help you determine when its time to perform the process. The most important factor is the size of your pool and how often its used. If your pool sees heavy use, it will require more frequent backwashing. Similarly, the size of your filter will also determine how often you need to backwash. If your filter is too small for your pool, it will require more frequent backwashing. The environment around your pool can also impact how often you should backwash. If you live in an area with high levels of dust, pollen, or debris, you may need to backwash more often as these conditions can increase the workload on your filter. As a general rule of thumb, its recommended to backwash your pool every 4-6 weeks, although this can vary depending on the factors discussed above. To determine the optimal frequency for your pool, you should consult with a pool professional or refer to the manufacturers recommendations for your specific filter system. Steps to Properly Backwash Your Pool Step 1: Turn off the pool pump Before starting the backwashing process, turn off the pool pump to ensure it doesnt get damaged during the procedure. 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Your pool is only as clean as your filter is. The good news is, when you backwash, cleaning the filter doesnt always entail taking it apart and washing it by hand. Heres a step-by-step guide on how to backwash a pool filter. You can watch the walkthrough video or keep reading for our complete guide. Top Pick The Pool Care Video Course Stop wasting time and money with confusing water chemistry and maintenance. Our effortless system guarantees to keep your pool balanced, sanitized, and crystal clear all year. Works for all pools including saltwater. Buy Now Whether youve heard the term backwash a pool filter or just backwash a pool, both are the process of reversing the flow of water in your filter to remove the buildup of contaminants. As pool water passes through your D.E. filter or sand filter, it leaves behind dirt, oils, and other debris, which are collected in the filter medium/ether D.E. powder or sand. Over time, as water continues to pass in just one direction, the filter medium will become clogged, which will reduce your filters effectiveness. When you backwash a pool, you send water backward through the filter, and out the waste or drain port. This forces all the debris caught in the filter to dislodge so you can easily remove it and restore your filtration system back to its normal functioning level. While backwashing generally works the same way regardless of the type of pool filter, the procedures do vary a bit. When you learn how to backwash a sand filter, the sand never leaves the filter. Water flows backward through the filter system and out your filters waste port. Before you get started, the only extra equipment youll need is a backwash hose. Attach the backwash hose to the waste or backwash port. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to backwash. Turn the filter system back on. Let the water flow out about a minute. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Rinse. Rinse the filter for about 30 seconds. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Filter. Important: Never turn the multiport valve handle while the pool filter is on and running. This could cause the rubber diverter gasket inside the valve to come loose or break, which will in turn cause water to leak out of the wrong ports while its running. Before you get started, youll need a few supplies. Its a white powder composed of fossilized skeletons of one-celled organisms called diatoms. The powder is added to the filter and attaches itself to the grids inside creating a D.E. cake. This cake, along with the filter grids inside, helps to filter out very fine particles. This will vary depending on the type and size of filter you have. Always refer to your owners manual for specific information. In any case, D.E. powder is measured in pounds, so use a one-pound D.E. scoop to make measuring easy. In a pinch, you can also use an empty one-pound coffee can. Youll want to set aside a little time to do this, but dont worry. Its not an arduous task thats going to take all day. Turn off the filter system. Connect the backwash hose to the filters waste port. Turn the multiport valve to Backwash. If you have a push-pull valve, open the backwash gate. Turn the filter system back on, and let it run for about two minutes. This will allow pool water to flow out of the backwash valve or port. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Rinse, turn the system back on, and let it run for about another minute. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve back to Filter. Add D.E. powder to the filter. Refer to your filter owners manual to determine how much D.E. powder youll need to add. Prime the pool pump. Remove the strainer basket lid. Fill the basket with water, and allow some water to run through the incoming line. Turn on the pool pump. Mix the appropriate amount of D.E powder with enough water to make a slurry, which is a thin, creamy solution. Make sure the pump is running. Pour the slurry directly into the pool skimmer. Turn the pool pump for at least 30 minutes to allow the D.E. to distribute evenly over the filter grids. When you first set up your filter, whether its sand or D.E., take note of the pressure gauge reading. Thats your normal operating filter pressure. Over time, as the filter starts to accumulate dirt and debris, pressure will begin to build up because the water cant flow as freely through it. When the pressure gauge reads 10 pounds per square inch (psi) above the normal operating level, its time to backwash. If it reads more than 10 psi over the normal level, its really time to backwash. While you could backwash before the pressure reaches the 10 psi over normal mark, we recommend waiting. Yes, your filter functions better when its not clogged. But before it gets to the fully clogged point, the presence of small dirt and debris actually helps your sand or D.E. filter work a little better. Those tiny bits of debris help to catch and stop other tiny bits of debris from getting through the filter medium, and making it back into the pool water. So, a clean filter is good. A slightly dirty filter is better. A clogged filter is bad, and needs a backwashing. Every time you backwash your pool filter, you could be pulling hundreds of gallons of water from your pool. Where is all that water going to go? Into your yard? The street? The creek behind your house? None of these are good options, and in fact, may even be illegal, depending on where you live. The water that comes out of your pool is chemically treated, and can damage plant life, grass, water, and aquatic life. Disposing of backwash water properly is essential, not just to avoid potential fines, but to keep your community and the environment safe from illness and damage. Some cities do allow pool water to be released into storm drains. But they may also require that you apply for a permit first. You may also need to reduce or eliminate chemicals or salt levels in the water before youve allowed to dispose of it in your communitys sewer system. Check with your local water authority. You may be able to dispose of backwash water by directing it into one or more of your homes plumbing cleanouts. Again, its best to check with your local water/sewer authority to ensure this is allowed, find out whether you need to treat the water in any way before disposing, and to obtain any necessary permits. Its unlikely any municipality will allow you to release pool water into a septic system. You wouldnt want to do that anyway. Septic systems rely on the existence of active enzymes to dispose of waste. Pouring chemically treated water into the tankespecially water with chlorine in it would likely kill those enzymes, leaving you with quite a mess. These can be a life (or property) saver if you live in an area that sees a high level of rainfall, or experiences tropical storms. They can help prevent flooding and erosion. While a dry well could work for disposing of pool water, thats not usually its purpose. Regardless of how many levels of gravel, sand, or other media the water may pass through, it will still end up in the ground, which means it can be a problem if you live in an area that doesnt allow the disposal of pool water into the ground. Aside from the issue of permission, a dry well must be constructed by a professional, and its a project that can easily cost thousands of dollars. You can definitely find an easier, safer, and less expensive way to dispose of your filter backwash water. Your local water authority can help you. Or maybe just some dirty pool water. But keeping a kraken in your pool is all the more reason to keep your pool clean. Anyway, when the time comes to backwash your pool, youll be ready with the right equipment and procedures. Take comfort in knowing youll be able to help your filter keep your pool clean, which will also help you relax and enjoy your pool. You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. Alternatively, restrict your pool to the same license as the original. No additional restrictions. You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not need to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Proper pool maintenance is crucial for any pool owner, and backwashing is one essential step in the process. In this complete guide, well walk you through everything you need to know about when to backwash your pool to keep it in top condition all season long. Whether youre a new pool owner or an experienced one, understanding the importance of backwashing and knowing how to do it properly is essential. Neglecting this important step can lead to a range of issues, including algae growth and cloudy water. In this guide, well cover everything from the basics of backwashing to more advanced tips and tricks. So, if youre ready to take your pool maintenance game to the next level, keep reading to learn more! If you own a pool, youve probably heard the term backwash before. But do you know what it actually means? Essentially, backwashing is the process of cleaning out your pools filtration system. When you run your pool pump, the water flows through your filter and traps debris like dirt, leaves, and even small particles like algae. Over time, this debris builds up in the filter, making it less effective. This is where backwashing comes in. By reversing the flow of water, you can flush out all the built-up debris and get your filter working like new again. So why is backwashing important? Well, for starters, it helps keep your pool water clean and safe for swimming. A dirty filter can lead to cloudy, unbalanced water thats not only unpleasant to look at but can also be harmful to your health. Additionally, a clogged filter can put extra strain on your pool pump, potentially leading to costly repairs down the line. By regularly backwashing your pool, you can prevent these issues and enjoy crystal-clear water all season long. But how do you know when its time to backwash? Theres no one-size-fits-all answer to this question, as the frequency of backwashing will depend on a variety of factors such as the size of your pool, the number of swimmers, and the type of filter you have. As a general rule of thumb, however, its a good idea to backwash your pool at least once a month during the swimming season, and more frequently if you notice any of the signs well discuss later in this article. See also How Long Do Pool Pump Motors Last? Find Out Here Now that you know what backwashing is and why its important, lets dive into the specifics of how to do it. In the next section, well walk you through the steps you need to take to properly backwash your pool and get it running like new again. Definition of Backwashing Backwashing is a process that involves cleaning a swimming pools filter by reversing the flow of water. Instead of drawing water through the filter, the water is sent in the opposite direction to flush out any debris and contaminants that have accumulated in the filter media. This is an essential part of pool maintenance that helps keep the water clean and clear. The frequency at which you need to backwash your pool depends on a variety of factors, such as the size of your pool, how often it is used, and the type of filter you have. A good rule of thumb is to backwash your filter once every 1-2 weeks during peak swimming season, and less frequently during the off-season. Backwashing is an important part of keeping your pool clean and healthy for swimming. Over time, debris and contaminants can build up in your pools filter, reducing its effectiveness and potentially leading to poor water quality. By regularly backwashing your pool, you can ensure that the filter is working optimally and that your pool water is safe and clear. 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Step 4: Monitor the waste water During the backwashing process, its important to monitor the waste water flowing out of the pool. Once the water runs clear, the backwashing process is complete. Step 5: Rinse and return to filter mode After backwashing, turn the multiport valve to the rinse setting to flush out any remaining debris, then return it to the filter setting to resume normal pool filtration. Safety First: Before starting the backwashing process, turn off the pool pump to prevent any accidents. Safety is paramount when working with pool equipment. Locate the Multiport Valve: The next step is to locate the multiport valve, which is typically located on the top or side of the pool filter. Once you have located the valve, turn it to the backwash position. Open the Backwash Port: Next, open the backwash port or valve. This port is typically located at the bottom of the filter, and it allows water to flow out of the filter and into the waste line. After turning off the pool pump, locate the multiport valve and set it to the Backwash position. This will redirect the flow of water through the filter in reverse, flushing out any trapped debris and contaminants. Make sure the valve is securely in place and properly labeled to avoid confusion in the future. This step is crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of the backwashing process. Note that some pools may have a slide valve or a push-pull valve instead of a multiport valve. Consult your pools manual or a professional if you are unsure how to operate these types of valves. Run the pump for about 2-3 minutes: Once the valve is set to Backwash, turn on the pool pump and let it run for 2-3 minutes. This will flush out the dirty water from the filter and send it out of the backwash line. Check the backwash sight glass: After running the pump for a few minutes, check the backwash sight glass or discharge pipe to see if the water is running clear. If it is still cloudy or dirty, continue to run the pump until the water is clear. Turn off the pump: Once the water runs clear, turn off the pump and return the valve to its original position. After completing Step 3, the backwashing process is complete. Its important to remember to rinse the filter for about 30 seconds after backwashing to remove any remaining dirt from the filter before returning to the filters normal operating mode. By following these simple steps, you can keep your pool filter clean and functioning properly. Not checking the pressure gauge: One of the most common mistakes people make when backwashing their pool is not checking the pressure gauge. It is important to monitor the pressure and only backwash when the pressure rises 8-10 psi above the starting pressure. Not properly preparing the pool: Another mistake people make is not properly preparing the pool before backwashing. This can include not removing any large debris from the pool or not adjusting the water level to the appropriate level. Not running the pump long enough: When backwashing, it is important to run the pump long enough to ensure all debris is removed. Running the pump for at least two minutes or until the water in the sight glass is clear is recommended. Forgetting to rinse the filter: After backwashing, it is important to rinse the filter for 1-2 minutes to remove any remaining debris. Forgetting to rinse the filter can result in debris being pushed back into the pool. Backwashing too frequently: Backwashing too frequently can waste water and harm the environment. Make sure to only backwash when necessary based on the pressure gauge and the overall cleanliness of the pool. Skipping the Rinse Cycle When backwashing your pool, one common mistake is skipping the rinse cycle. After you have completed the backwash, it is essential to rinse the filter thoroughly with clean water. This process removes any remaining debris and helps to ensure the longevity of your filter system. If you skip the rinse cycle, the debris and dirty water will remain in your filter system and eventually re-enter your pool. This can cause problems with water clarity and filtration efficiency, and may even lead to damage to your pool equipment. Make sure to always include the rinse cycle in your backwashing process to keep your pool water clean and clear, and to prolong the life of your filter system. Conclusion Backwashing is an essential part of maintaining a clean and healthy swimming pool. Regular backwashing can help prevent clogging and extend the lifespan of your pool equipment. By following the proper steps, such as turning off the pool pump and setting the filter valve to backwash, you can effectively clean your pool and avoid common mistakes like skipping the rinse cycle. Remember to always refer to your pool manufacturers guidelines for recommended backwashing frequency and contact a professional if you have any questions or concerns about maintaining your pool. Benefits of Regular Backwashing is an essential part of pool maintenance that can provide a range of benefits for both the pool and its users. Here are some of the benefits of regular backwashing. Environmental factors: Pools located near trees, gardens, or construction sites may accumulate more debris and require more frequent backwashing. Chemical levels: Properly balanced chemical levels can reduce debris accumulation and extend the time between backwashing. General Guidelines for Backwashing Frequency While the frequency of backwashing will depend on several factors, some general guidelines can help you determine when its time to perform the process. The most important factor is the size of your pool and how often its used. 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For Pool Care Video Course Stop wasting time and money with confusing water chemistry and maintenance. Our effortless system guarantees to keep your pool balanced, sanitized, and crystal clear all year. Works for all pools including saltwater. Buy Now Whether you heard the term backwash a pool filter or just backwash a pool, both are the process of reversing the flow of water in your filter to remove the buildup of contaminants. As pool water passes through your D.E. filter or sand filter, it leaves behind dirt, oils, and other debris, which are collected on the filter medium. Over time, as water continues to pass in just one direction, the filter medium will become clogged, which will reduce your filter's effectiveness. When you backwash a pool, you send water backward through the filter, and out the waste or drain port. This forces all the debris caught in the filter to dislodge so you can easily remove it and restore your filtration system back to its normal functioning level. While backwashing generally works the same way regardless of the type of pool filter, the procedures do vary a bit. When you learn how to backwash a sand filter, the sand never leaves the filter. Water flows backward through the filter system and out your filters waste port. Before you get started, the only extra equipment you'll need is a backwash hose. Attach the backwash hose to the waste or backwash port. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Backwash. Turn the filter system back on. Let the water run out of the backwash port and through the backwash hose for about a minute, or until the water runs clear Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Rinse. Turn the filter system back on. Rinse the filter for about 30 seconds. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Filter. Important: Never turn the multiport valve handle while the pool filter is on and running. This could cause the rubber diverter gasket inside the valve to come loose or break, which will in turn cause water to leak out of the wrong ports while its running. Before you get started, you'll need a few supplies. Its a white powder composed of fossilized skeletons of one-celled organisms called diatoms. The powder is added to the filter and attaches itself to the grids inside creating a D.E. cake. This cake, along with the filter grids inside, helps to filter out very fine particles. This will vary depending on the type and size of filter you have. Always refer to your owners manual for specific information. In any case, D.E. powder is measured in pounds, so use a one-pound D.E. scoop to make measuring easy. In a pinch, you can also use an empty one-pound coffee can. You'll want to set aside a little time to do this, but dont worry. Its not an anxious task thats going to take all day. Turn off the filter system. Connect the backwash hose to the filters waste port. Turn the multiport valve to Backwash. If you have a push/pull valve, open the backwash gate. Turn the filter system back on, and let it run for about two minutes. This will allow pool water to flow out of the backwash valve or port. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve to Rinse, turn the system back on, and let it run for about another minute. Turn the filter system off. Turn the multiport valve back to Filter. Add D.E. powder to the filter.Refer to your filter owners manual to determine how much D.E. powder you'll need to add. Prime the pool pump. Remove the strainer basket lid.Fill the basket with water, and allow some water to run through the incoming line. Turn on the pool pump. Mix the appropriate amount of D.E powder with enough water to make a slurry, which is a thin, creamy solution. Make sure the pump is running. Pour the slurry directly into the pool skimmer. Run the pool pump for at least 30 minutes to allow the D.E. to distribute evenly over the filter grids. Important: Never turn the multiport valve handle while the pool filter is on and running. This could cause the rubber diverter gasket inside the valve to come loose or break, which will in turn cause water to leak out of the wrong ports while its running. This procedure differs only slightly from the multiport valve process. Turn off the filter system. Connect the backwash hose to the filters backwash port. Open the backwash gate. Turn the filter system back on, and let it run for about three minutes. This will allow pool water to flow out of the backwash port. Turn the filter system off. Close the push/pull valve. Add D.E. powder to the filter.Refer to your filter owners manual to determine how much D.E. powder you'll need to add. Prime the pool pump. Remove the strainer basket lid. Fill the basket with water, and allow some water to run through the incoming line. Turn on the pool pump. Mix the appropriate amount of D.E powder with enough water to make a slurry, which is a thin, creamy solution. Make sure the pump is running. Pour the slurry directly into the pool skimmer. Run the pool pump for at least 30 minutes to allow the D.E. to distribute evenly over the filter grids. When you first set up your filter, whether its sand or D.E., take note of the pressure gauge reading. Thats your normal operating filter pressure. Over time, as the filter starts to accumulate dirt and debris, pressure will begin to build up because the water cant flow as freely through it. When the pressure gauge reads 10 pounds per square inch (psi) above the normal operating level, its time to backwash. If it reads more than 10 psi over the normal level, its really time to backwash. While you are backwash before the pressure reaches the 10 psi over normal mark, we recommend waiting. Yes, your filter functions better when its not clogged. But before it gets to the fully clogged point, the presence of small dirt and debris actually helps your sand or D.E. filter work a little better. Those tiny bits of debris help to catch and stop other tiny bits of debris from getting through the filter medium, and making it back into the pool water. So, a clean filter is good. A slightly dirty filter is better. A clogged filter is bad, and needs a backwashing. Every time you backwash your pool filter, you could be pulling hundreds of gallons of water from your pool. Where is all that water going to go? Into your yard? The street? The creek behind your house? None of those are good options, and in fact, may even be illegal, depending on where you live. The water that comes out of your pool is chemically treated, and can damage plant life, groundwater, and aquatic life. Disposing of backwash water properly is essential, not just to avoid potential fines, but to keep your community and the environment safe from illness and damage. Some cities do allow pool water to be released into storm drains. But they may also require that you apply for a permit first. You may also need to reduce or eliminate chemicals or salt levels in the water before youre allowed to dispose of it in your communities sewer system. Check with your local water authority. You may be able to dispose of backwash water by directing it into one or more of your homes plumbing cleanouts. Again, its best to check with your local water/sewer authority to ensure this is allowed, find out whether you need to treat the water in any way before disposing, and to obtain any necessary permits. Its unlikely any municipality will allow you to release pool water into a septic system. You wouldnt want to do that anyway. Septic systems rely on the existence of active enzymes to dispose of waste. Pouring chemically treated water into the tankspecially water with chlorine in itwould likely kill those enzymes, leaving you with quite a mess. These enzymes are a life (or property) saver if you live in an area that sees a high level of rainfall, or experiences tropical storms. They can help prevent flooding and erosion. While a dry well could work for disposing of pool water, thats not usually its purpose. Regardless of how many levels of gravel, sand, or other media the water may pass through, it will still end up in the ground, which means it can be a problem if you live in an area that doesnt allow the disposal of pool water into the ground. Aside from the issue of permission, a dry well must be constructed by a professional, and its a project that can easily cost thousands of dollars. You can definitely find an easier, safer, and less expensive way to dispose of your filter backwash water. Your local water authority can help you. Or maybe just some dirty pool water. But keeping a kraken in your pool is all the more reason to keep the water clean. Anyway, when the time comes to backwash your pool, you'll be ready with the right equipment and procedures. Take comfort in knowing you'll be able to help your filter keep your pool clean, which will also help your filter live a longer life, which can save you money. Then you'll be able to afford that cute little kraken youve been wanting to adopt. Happy Swimming! 4 Ways We Can Help With Your Pool Pool Care Cheat Sheets (Free): Easy-to-use downloadable guides to help you keep track of taking care of your pool this year. The Pool Care Handbook: An illustrated guide to DIY pool care, including water chemistry, maintenance, troubleshooting, and more. The Pool Care Video Course: Youll get 30+ step-by-step videos and a downloadable guide with everything you need to know about pool maintenance. The Pool Care App: Enter your water test results. Get a custom treatment plan. Know exactly what chemicals to add to keep your pool clear. If you have a swimming pool in your backyard, then you probably know how important it is to have certain chemicals added to your pool. These chemicals, such as cyanuric acid, help to protect your pool from the suns harmful rays. Summer months. But what happens when your pool turns yellow? Can you still swim? Yellow pool Read more Pools are an investment of time and money. Many steps go into taking care of a pool. There are chemicals to add, filters to clean, water quality to check, and Read more Balancing your pool water pH and alkalinity can seem like a full-time job. But theres arent the only two aspects of the water you need to take the time to Read more A high pH level in your pool is never good news. Not only can it harm your health, but it can also damage your pool. So, what causes pH levels Read more Anyone who misses surfing when they are not near the beach can be satisfied with a wave pool. These are not new phenomena. Wave pools have been in existence since Read more Sometimes, your pools filtration system wont suffice to keep the water clean. So, if your pool looks cloudy, it might be time to use a chemical commonly known as pool Read more Owning a hot tub or pool likely means you know all about chlorine. It is the most common product used for water sanitization. However, have you heard about bromine? Bromine Read more If your hot tub is constantly tripping the breaker, or it tripped and wont turn back on, there are a number of possible causes. Most of them are fixable, but Read more pH and alkalinity in any treated water go hand in hand. When one rises, the other will almost always follow, so it can be tricky if you are looking to Read more Turn off the filter system.Connect the backwash hose to the filter's waste port.Turn the valve to "Backwash."Turn the filter system back on and let it run for about two minutes.Turn the system off, switch the valve to "Rinse," and run for a minute.Turn the system off again and restore the valve to "Filter."Open the backwash gate.Turn the filter system on and let it run for about three minutes.Turn the system off and close the push/pull valve.Dispose of backwash water responsibly according to local regulations. If you have a D.E. filter, refill it by mixing D.E. powder with water and pouring it into the pool's skimmer while the pump is running. Sounds Gross! What is Backwashing Your Pool Filter?Dont worrythis has nothing to do with sharing drinks, ick! Backwashing your pool filter, also commonly referred to as just backwashing the pool, is the act of cleaning out your filter by flushing out all the gunk its accumulated. Simply put, when you backwash your pool filter, you reverse the direction of the water flow, and water moves back through the pool filter and out the waste or drain port. Just make sure youre disposing of it properlyand well get to that soon. All in good time, my friend.If youre filter is cleaned out but weak on its circulation, the problem is your pumps strength. This Blue Torrent 2 HP Variable-Speed Pump allows for a larger horsepower, but never uses more energy than you actually need; it pays itself off in energy saved in under six months and is eligible for energy rebates. Customer Bill Britton says, Runs great. Super quiet.Why Do I Need to Backwash My Pool Filter?First of all, make sure that you have the right pool filter for you. Cartridge users, youre on the wrong pagethough you still have to routinely clean your filter. Backwashing only works filters of sand and diatomaceous earth (from now on, Ill call this D.E.), which collect contaminants with the help of sharp edges. But once those contaminants build, your filter becomes increasingly less efficienteven if those edges havent yet smoothed downand the pressure of your filter ramps up.Backwashing cleans out your filter without requiring you to pick through sand, which would be messy, and D.E., which would be dangerous. It also extends the life of your media by keeping your sand and D.E. clean without total replacementthough you'll need to replace them eventually.When Do I Need to Backwash Your Pool Filter?Pool filters usually come with a pressure gauge, and its important when you first install yours to take note of itwhatever that number is, thats your normal operating filter pressure. As time goes on and your pool filter is continuously used, those pounds per square inch (psi) will increase thats a good thing. Think of it like a snowball rolling down a hill: as your filter gets dirty, the contaminants it traps help it trap even more. But something this convenient cant last forevereventually itll get so crammed in your filter that it wont be able to catch much of anything. Generally, you want to backwash your filter once its 10 psi over your normal operating pressure.Yuck! Where Do I Put All that Gunk?Dont worry if youre not sure where to put the end of that backwashing hosesits a major debate. But are you about to toss the product of your backwashing into the storm drain? Let me stop you there. This is not exactly the Wild West, and your local government most likely has an opinion (and some persuasive fines) on where you should put the contaminated water you just backwashed. And chances are: your storm and storm drain are a no go. And what about your septic system? Well, its totally off limitsunless you want a systemic failure. Thats a nightmare Im choosing not to imagine.Most local authorities are going to recommend that backwash water is collected, contained, and discharged to a sanitary sewerwhich is different from a storm drain or septic systemor to a vegetated area contained within your property. If at some point, you switch over to a cartridge filter (you know, the ones you dont need to backwash), theyll probably want them rinsed in a sink, bathtub, or over your own lawn or vegetation. In either case, dont just take my word for itall these regulations vary based on where you live. Your local authorities should be able to let you know, and probably have a convenient (if clunky) website with the answers. Dont you just love government dot coms?Want to know how to clean the bottom of your pool? Read more here.Look, I Have a D.E. Filter. How Do I Refill It?When you backwash your D.E. filter, you'll need to replace the powder, which is much more effective to do through the pools skimmer. To do this, you want to mix the manufacturers recommended amount of D.E. with water to form a wet sludge, and then pour the solution directly into the skimmer. Make sure the pump is running properly so it circulates through your system. Ill take some time for the mixture to properly disperse across the filter, so youll want to wait at least eight hours until you swim again. Its okaydays take makes the heart grow fonder.Keep your pool and any add ons in top shape with the 1.5 HP Variable Speed Blue Torrent Thunder Pump. This robust and thorough pump is the most reasonable decision any pool owner can make: comes with a lifetime warranty, is eligible for rebates, and pays itself off in under one year. Plus, variable-speed filters will soon be virtually mandatory by federal law. Backwash Done. Now Its Time for a BackstrokeThat was all youand you never had to call in an expert. That procedure was about as easy as they come, especially since you did your research. Now that youve learned how to backwash your filter, you have a future of clear water ahead of you. So take a moment under the sun to congratulate yourself for a job well donejust make sure youve got on some SPF. Enjoy.For additional information on how to get rid of mustard algae, check out this article. Having problems getting rid of white water mold in your pool? Read more here. Key Takeaways:Backwashing your pool filter is essential for maintaining clean and clear pool water by flushing out accumulated debris and contaminants. It's primarily applicable to sand and diatomaceous earth (D.E.) filters, which your filter, slowing the flow of water entering your pool. You can feel the difference in circulation from the water jets that push the water back into your pool. If your pool looks cloudy, it could be because of a backed-up filter. Backwashing your filter can help keep your pool water crystal clear. While cloudy water may also be attributed to chemical imbalances, backwashing your filter is a quick and less costly way to clear your water up. Typically, you should backwash sand filters every two to four weeks, and DE filters require backwashing every four to six weeks. If you lose track, you can also check your filters pressure gauge or your pools water quality. Backwashing your filter after a heavy rainstorm will help to remove large objects that can get trapped in your filter during a storm. You should also backwash your filter when treating your pool for algae or trying to get rid of cloudy water. When choosing between a sand or a DE filter, you should consider your budget, the time you have to put into maintenance, and the cleaning power you will need depending on usage and location. Water flows into a pool sand filter tank and is pushed down through the sand. As the water moves through the sand, the filter purifies it before releasing it back into the pool. Sand filters excel at catching large dirt and debris, but may not capture all of the smaller particles that pass through the filter. Sand filters were the first to filter pool water and are still the most commonly used today. DIY pool maintenance is straightforward with a sand filter, and pool-grade sand is inexpensive to purchase and replace. There are three main types of pool sand. It is essential to always use pool-grade sand if you choose to run a sand filter: Silica is naturally mined quartz ground into fine sand that can easily trap particles in your pool water. It is inexpensive, making it the most popular option for pool filter sand today. Glass sand is made from recycled glass material. It is an environmentally-friendly way to maintain your pool. Glass has a negative charge, allowing it to capture manganese and iron particles efficiently, so glass pool sand is best for pools filled with hard water. Zeolite sand is created from minerals found in volcanic rock. Its unique honeycomb shape helps zeolite sand easily capture dirt and debris from your pool. If youre running a sand filter, read my guide on replacing filter sand and how to get rid of sand that leaks into your pool. DE, or diatomaceous earth, filters use the fossilized remains of microscopic diatoms. These diatoms are algae-like organisms that form sedimentary rock. The sedimentary rock cleans the water as it runs through a DE filter. If you want the cleanest pool possible, consider a DE filter. DE pool filters can filter out the smallest particles from your pool water, keeping your water crystal clear. However, they also require the most upkeep and are more costly to maintain. You will need to add more diatomaceous earth powder after backwashing your DE filter and ensure that it coats the sides of the filter. Backwashing a sand filter is easy to do on your own by following these easy steps. Completely turning off the pump will prevent any new water from entering the filter while you are working on it. Once the pump is off, you can change the setting on the pool filter valve to backwash. Position your hose over the backwash nozzle and secure it with a metal hose clamp. You may need a screwdriver to ensure the clamp is tightly secured. Then, position the backwash hose where you would like the water to discharge. If you dont have a backwash hose, check out my article on the best pool backwash hoses. Run your pump on the backwash setting for two minutes. While waiting two minutes on the backwash setting is standard, you can also determine if your filter is clean by watching the sight glass. Once the water flowing through the sight glass is clear, you will know your filter is clean. Once the backwash cycle is complete, turn the pump switch off again. Once the pump is entirely off, change it to the rinse setting, and rinse for one to two minutes. The rinse setting will flush out any dirty water that remains in the filter. After the filter has rinsed out, turn the pump off and return to the original filter setting. Once the filter has run for an hour or so, check the gauges to ensure nothing is leaking. If there are no problems, you can run the filter as you normally would until it is time to backwash again or change your filter sand. Below is a YouTube video that explains all the steps I covered, just in case youre a more visual learner. Backwashing a DE filter is different from backwashing a sand filter, but easy to do on your own. Switch off the pump motor before you start backwashing to prevent new pool water from entering the tank. Push down on the multiport valve handle and rotate it from filter to backwash. Attach a waste hose to your filter. Be sure you open the air bleeder assembly on the filter and watch for backpressure or hose kinks. If the pressure builds, you must turn the pump off immediately. If everything is running smoothly, run the backwash setting for two to three minutes or until the water becomes clear. Turn the pump motor off before moving the valve setting to rinse. Run the filter on the rinse setting for up to ten seconds before turning it off and switching back to the backwash setting. Continue alternating between backwash and rinse at least three more times. Shut everything off before returning to this setting. Add one pound of diatomaceous earth powder for every 10 square feet of filter area. Your filter tank should also tell you how much powder to add. I recommend using one-half cup less than what you are supposed to add because powder is always left. Too much extra powder could clog up your filter or cause other problems. Heres a good replacement DE powder if you dont already have some. And heres a video covering these DE filter backwashing steps, in case you want to follow along visually. Whether you choose to clean your pool with a sand or DE filter, you can easily backwash it on your own. All pool filters follow the same general steps for backwashing, but there may be slight variations depending on the model you own. The owners manual should have detailed instructions for backwashing your filter. If youre hesitating between a sand and DE pool filter, the backwashing process is one of the things to consider to make the best decision possible. DE filters tend to cost more, but you dont need to backwash them as frequently as sand filters. If you want to reduce pool maintenance as much as possible, a sand filter would be a better option for you. You can check out my specific model recommendations in my research on the best pool filters for inground pools. We all know what backwash is and thats great. When it comes to your pool filter, however, the term backwashing is actually a good (and sanitary) thing to do. If your pool uses a sand or D.E. filter then backwashing is the name of the game for keeping your pool water uncontaminated by debris, your pool filter clean, and actually extending the life of your filter in the process. Backwashing is like a flush or detox cleanse for your pool filter. Your pool filter is what keeps your pool water clean and free of debris so that you and your family can swim everyday carefree. But as your pool filter works, its constantly being bombarded by dirt, oils, and other nastiness that its drawing out of your pool water. So what happens when your pool filter gets overloaded with dirt and grim? Thats when backwashing comes in. Just as you periodically change the air filters in your air conditioning unit, your pool filter needs a bit of TLC every once in a while. If you have a sand or D.E. pool filter, however, changing a filter is not part of the deal. Rather than spending money on new filters, you simply have to rinse out the buildup, saving you money in the long run. Backwashing your pool filter is a process that cleans the gunk out of your pool filter to keep your system running at its best. How often does it make sense to backwash your sand or D.E. pool filter? You have a busy life and pool maintenance already may seem like a chore, so spending a day backwashing your pool filter more often than necessary is not a good use of your time. When you install a sand or D.E. pool filter, make sure to take note of the initial pressure reading that you see. This is the starting or normal pressure that means everything is free and clear. As that pressure starts increasing, you know that the filter is doing its job and is collecting all of the debris that you really dont want floating around in your pool water. Since everyone's pool, backyard, and swimming habits are different, theres no set time for checking or backwashing your filter. Its all going to depend on the pressure reading, which shows how much buildup is sitting in that filter. If you set a reminder to periodically glance at your filters pressure gauge, you can keep an eye on how quickly the pressure reading climbs. When it gets to 10 psi over the normal (starting) mark, you know its time to backwash your system. Although it might seem counterintuitive, you actually dont want to clean your filter before it reaches the point of 10 psi (over normal) reading. Your filter will function better when it has some residue in it to give it texture. Debris in your filter acts as a filter booster and helps to filter more waste out of your pool. Dont worry, you wont have to remove the sand from your sand filter and wash each grain by hand. In fact with this process, the sand actually never leaves the filter! And to make things even better, you only need one thing to get the job done: a backwash hose. A sand filter featuring a multiport valve is actually one of the simplest filters to clean. This is a super straightforward process that you can get done in no time at all. Attach the backwash hose to the waste or backwash port.Turn the filter system off.Turn the multiport valve to the Backwash setting.Turn the filter system back on.Let the water run out of the backwash port and through the backwash hose for about a minute, or until the water runs clear.Turn the filter system off.Turn the multiport valve to the Rinse setting.Turn the filter system back on.Rinse the filter for about 30 seconds.Turn the filter system off.Turn the multiport valve to Filter. Pro Tip: Theres a lot of turning your system on and off in this process but its important to never change the setting while the pool filter is on and running. This could loosen or break the rubber gasket, which can cause water leakage and all kinds of problems in the future. Wait, what is a D.E. filter anyway? For the pool filter newbies out there, lets clear up the confusion before we clear out the gunk. D.E. stands for Diatomaceous Earth which is a super weird (but also cool) name for a white powdery sedimentary rock made of fossilized single-celled organisms called diatoms. This fine powder is added to a filter and forms a D.E. cake on the grids inside. This substance is frequently used as a filtration aid and is especially good at filtering out very small particles from water. So now that we know what were working with, we can get started on the fun part. Take a minute to collect your supplies before you get started. If you dont have a D.E. scoop on-hand, you can always use a one-pound container from your kitchen or garage. Backwash hoseDiatomaceous earth powderOne-pound D.E. scoop The amount of D.E. powder that youll need will vary depending on what size filter you have. Make sure to read the manufacturers instructions thoroughly to determine how much you'll need. Turn off your filter. Connect the backwash hose to the filters port. Open the backwash gate.Turn your filter back on and let it run for about three minutes. You'll see the pool water start to flow out of the backwash port. Turn your filter system off again.Close the push/pull valve.Add D.E. powder to the filter.Check the manufacturers instructions to determine how much D.E. powder you'll need to add.Prime the pool pump.Remove the strainer basket lid.Fill the basket with water, and allow some water to run through the incoming line.Turn on the pool pump.Mix the correct quantity of D.E powder with enough water to make a semi-liquid batter called slurry.Double-check that the pump is running.Pour the slurry directly into the pool skimmer.Run the pool pump for at least 30 minutes to allow the D.E. to distribute evenly over the filter grids. Turn off the filter system.Connect the backwash hose to the filters waste port.Turn the multiport valve to Backwash. If you have a push/pull valve, open the backwash gate.Turn the filter system back on, and let it run for about two minutes. This will allow pool water to flow out of the backwash valve or port.Turn the filter system off.Turn the multiport valve to Rinse, turn the system back on, and let it run for about another minute.Turn the filter system off.Turn the multiport valve back to Filter.Add the correct amount of D.E. powder to the filter.Refer to your filter owners manual to determine how much D.E. powder you'll need to add.Prime the pool pump.Remove the strainer basket lid.Fill the basket with water, and allow some water to run through the incoming line.Turn on the pool pump.Mix the appropriate amount of D.E powder with enough water to make a slurry, which is a thin, creamy solution.Make sure the pump is running.Pour the slurry directly into the pool skimmer.Run the pool pump for at least 30 minutes to allow the D.E. to distribute evenly over the filter grids. Pro Tip: Theres a lot of turning your system on and off in this process but its important to never change the setting while the pool filter is on and running. This could loosen or break the rubber gasket, which can cause water leakage and all kinds of problems in the future. Whenever you backwash your filter, the wastewater is going to have to go somewhere. Even though it doesnt seem like much, it could actually be hundreds of gallons of water that are pulled from your pool and need to have somewhere to go. So, what are the best options for getting rid of backwashing waste? If youre not familiar with the term, a sewer cleanout is a place where your homes sewer line can be accessed for cleaning. In most cases, this is to prevent sewage backups. These can usually be found near the sidewalks in front of your house or near the homes foundation. Make sure to check with your local water/sewer authority to determine if there are any regulations regarding disposing of waste in this way or if you need to treat the water before dumping. Pro Tip: Never dispose of backwashing waste in a septic system. Doing so will kill all of the enzymes in the tank that are necessary for the breakdown of other types of waste. Every locality will have its own rules and regulations about if and when storm drains can be used to dispose of pool water. For some, it may be as simple as applying for a permit first. For others, you may need to dilute the water to lower the chemical and salt content. Either way, its important to check with your local water company to find out the lowdown before you start dumping. If neither of these options works for you, you can always get in touch with the water authority that governs your area. They will be able to tell you what your particular region allows and what steps you need to take before backwashing. Locate your regional watershed for more information on methods, permits, and treatment requirements. Backwashing your pool filter will help to keep your pool cleaner, your filter functional for a longer time, and will save you a ton of money in the long run. Now that youre a backwashing expert, get out there and go crazy!

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