

A swimming pool can be a wonderful asset to your home, helping to keep you comfortable during our long, hot summer. However, running your own pool can be a significant cost not just in chemicals, but in electricity and water bills as well. How you manage your pool can have a big bearing on your total annual costs.

Here are some tips on keeping your running costs down.

Cost cutting tips!



Saving energy in your pool

Keep up the maintenance

Keeping your pool clean and well maintained is the best way to reduce your energy, water and chemical costs, as well as making your pool safer and more attractive. A pool free of debris will need less filtration and chemicals. In addition, a clean filter needs less energy to push water through it and will do a better job of cleaning in a shorter time.

Pool maintenance can take anywhere between four and eight hours a week, and it can be hard to make time for this consistently. If you are unable to allocate this amount of time each week, then consider hiring a professional to provide a regular maintenance visit to help keep your pool clean, energy efficient and hassle free.

Daily maintenance:

- Check that the filter pressure is within the normal range (get the pressure gauge replaced if it's not working).
- Clean/backwash your filter if the water pressure is high or pool water is not clear.
- Remove debris from the strainer basket.
- Test the water and add chemicals as recommended.
- Vacuum as required.

Weekly maintenance:

- Clean the pool surrounds, keeping debris and runoff away from the pool.
- Use a nylon brush to scrub the floor and walls of your pool as required.
- Check the walls or vinyl liner for cracks or tears, and repair with an appropriate kit for your pool.

End of season maintenance:

- Vacuum and clean your pool thoroughly.
- Consider doing a final super-chlorination.
- Fit your pool cover.
- Reduce your pool pump runtime (in most cases, a few hours per week should be sufficient if you use a pool cover).

Benefits of a pool cover

A pool cover will perform many useful functions. It will keep debris out of the water, reducing maintenance chores. It will reduce evaporation, therefore saving water. It will also reduce the breakdown of chlorine by sunlight, reducing the amount of time that your chlorinator needs to operate.

The sum of these effects reduces how long you need to run your pool pump for filtration (and chlorination of salt pools) – saving energy and reducing your electricity bills. Used correctly on a typical pool you could save 30% of energy costs (typical savings of \$150 to \$200 per annum) as well as sizeable savings on your water bills.

Another benefit of a pool cover is that by preventing evaporation and by trapping the sun's energy it can keep your pool warmer. Warmer water is a more attractive environment for the pathogens we want to control, but this is counteracted by the better chlorine control you get from using a pool cover. If you are using a pool heater, then a cover is an essential way of reducing energy costs.

Where a pool cover is used, care needs to be taken to avoid chlorine levels going too high. If you are adding stabiliser to your pool you will also need to adjust quantities to take into account the benefits of the pool cover.

The cover has to be on the pool to do the job. Consider fitting a roller to make applying and removing your pool cover a simple job.

 **Incentive available***

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Alice Solar City offers an incentive for registered customers of up to \$200 towards the cost of a quality pool cover roller.
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Install a variable speed pool pump

Your pool pump is a heavy consumer of electricity, and for a typical domestic pool this can cost from \$300 to \$600 per annum. Ideally, the pool pump needs to run long enough for all the pool water to pass through the filter at least once a day and, for a salt chlorinated pool, long enough to generate sufficient chlorine for effective sanitisation.

A pool pump motor is typically sized to provide sufficient power for tough tasks like priming, backwashing and vacuuming. The power required to move water around for day to day filtration is typically quite a bit less, but the typical pump doesn't provide the ability to reduce output – it's flat out or nothing! This results in energy being wasted forcing water through your system at higher pressure than is necessary.

A variable speed pump can help you make big savings on your pool running costs. A low speed (and therefore low energy setting) can be selected for day to day filtration, while still providing higher power modes when required. You may need to run the pump for more hours per day to get the required turnover of water, but you will still save energy overall due to the low speed of the pump.

In addition, by having the pump running for more hours of the day, the water will spend less time idle and the pool should be easier to maintain. Another benefit of a variable speed pump is that when operating on low speed it will run considerably quieter.

It's important to note that the savings of such a pump can only be achieved through correct use, and in conjunction with good pool maintenance. A variable speed pump could actually increase your running costs if you leave it on the highest speed setting.

 **Incentive available***

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Alice Solar City offers an incentive of up to \$400 towards the cost of purchasing an approved variable speed pump from one of our registered pool pump suppliers. To help ensure maximum energy savings, the pump installation needs to include training for you from the installer, to help you achieve and maintain energy savings from your new pump.
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Ensure good plumbing design

The pipework of your pool filtration system can also have an impact on the efficiency of your pool. Correct design of pipework will reduce the pressure required to move water through the system, thus reducing stress on the pump and reducing energy consumption. Using the correct size of filter is also important.

If you are having work done to your pool's plumbing, the key design points are to use the right diameter pipe, minimise the amount of pipework, and avoid excessive connectors and sharp bends.

Need more information?

Come and see us at the Smart Living Centre or phone us on **08 8950 4350**
email info@alicesolarcity.com.au or visit our website www.alicesolarcity.com.au

Location: 2/82 Todd Street (opposite Civic Centre)

Opening hours: 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday, 10.30am to 5pm, Friday



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