

YOUR INDEPENDENT HOT TUB SOURCEBOOK

SpaSearch

SWIM SPA BUYERS GUIDE

POOLSPAFORUM SPECIAL EDITION



FIND THE SWIM SPA
THAT'S RIGHT FOR
YOU: SEE OUR
MANUFACTURER
COMPARISON



PoolSpaForum.com

PoolSpaForum Special Edition

Photo: Micahel Phelps Signataure
Swim Spas by Master Spas

**MICHAEL PHELPS
SIGNATURE SWIM SPAS**

by **MASTER SPAS**

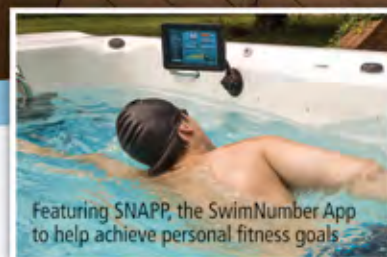
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year-round in
your backyard



MICHAEL PHELPS
18-Time Gold Medalist



Aquatic Fitness & Therapy



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SUFFERERS

ACHIEVING WEIGHT-LOSS
GOALS

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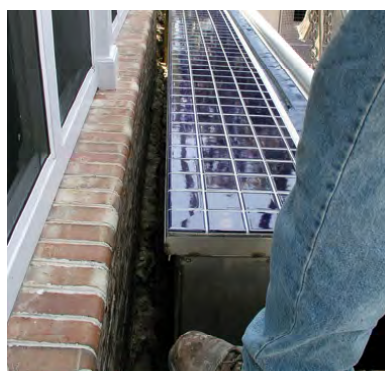


SCAN FOR BOOKLET



OFFICIAL SUPPLIER





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SWIM SPA SITE PREP

These monsters require the attention of an expert installer.



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A Swim Spa Guide Just for PoolSpaForum.

I would like to welcome you to a special edition of SPASEARCH, designed exclusively for the PoolSpaForum.com audience. This Swim Spa Buyer's Guide provides local and company-specific information and commentary that you won't find anywhere else.

In this guide, you will find secrets to healing and restoring the body through a swim spa (page 11), the basics of everything you should know prior to the purchase of a swim spa (page 15), using the full benefits of a swim spa for relaxing and exercising the body (page 23) and much, much more. PoolSpaForum.com seeks nothing but the best for its members, and this special guide goes a long way to prove it.

As always, I welcome your feedback and comments.

Warm regards,

David T. Wood
Editor in Chief
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SPASEARCH Accuracy

SPASEARCH has consolidated our buyer's guide to summarise the major players in the industry. Due to obvious logistics, we do not conduct individual independent product evaluations of each exercise pool or hot tub featured in our magazine; instead we rely on information provided by our editors, auditors, homeowners and other third parties to evaluate products before printing our magazine. Because of the inherent delay and risk of inadvertently omitting or misprinting information in our publication, we recommend each homeowner conduct a thorough evaluation of their manufacturer or retailer before purchasing.



Photo: Dimension One Spas



Photo: Endless Spas

SWIM SPA BASICS

IF HOT TUBS WERE ANIMALS, THE SWIM SPA WOULD BE KING OF THE JUNGLE. SO BEFORE YOU PUT ONE OF THESE BEASTS IN YOUR BACKYARD, YOU BETTER KNOW ITS INSTINCTS.



Photo: Master Spas



Photo: MAAX Spas

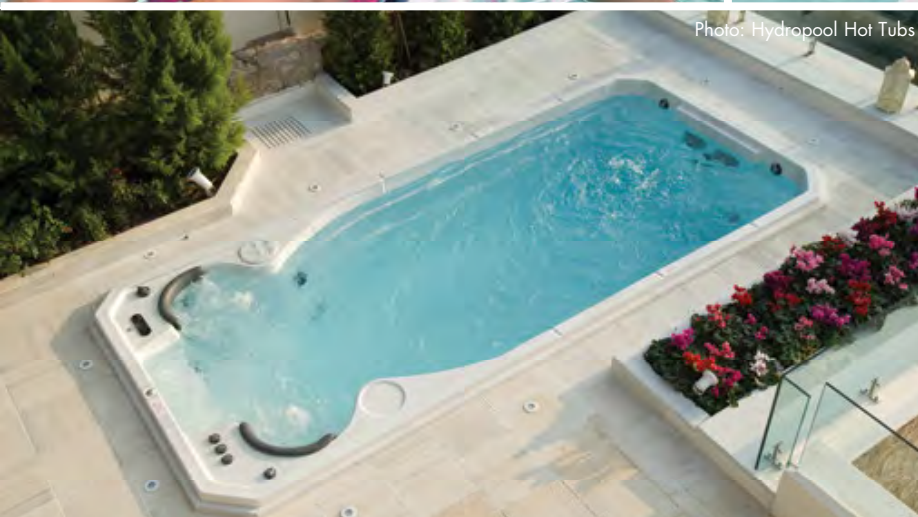


Photo: Hydromool Hot Tubs



Photo: Sunbelt Spas

THE SWIM SPA IS QUICKLY BECOMING THE NEW, ALL-PURPOSE HOME GYM.

Revered for centuries for its healing qualities, water can add significant value to any workout. Due to water's buoyant nature, the body's joints experience less straining and stress during a semi-submerged workout. This is a primary reason swim spas are used for therapy and rehabilitation. In addition, exercising in a swim spa can add variety to an otherwise monotonous routine. Certainly, swim spas are long enough to manage a swimmer extended at full length, but many swim spas are also deep enough to accommodate jogging or aerobics. According to the Aquatic Exercise Association, nearly 10 million people participate in water exercise, more than double the total just 10 years ago. "The pool makes a nice cross-training tool," says Julie See, president of the Florida-based AEA.

And swim spas are just that – excellent cross-trainers. Today's swim spas have come a long way from the water treadmills of the early '80s. Twenty years ago, pools could be fitted with a BADUjet or a powerful, recessed jet nozzle first introduced by Speck Pumps in Europe. Today, BADUjets are just one of the methods manufacturers of swim spas employ to create a counter-current. There are three main methods used to form a stream of water and many variations: the swim jet, the propeller and the paddlewheel.

CURRENT TECHNOLOGY

Swim jets come in many sizes and shapes. They work jointly with pumps to force a powerful stream of water

into the spa. Valves, nozzles and even computerized control systems can help regulate the water flow into the spa, increasing or decreasing the force of the current. A homeowner can therefore enjoy a nice relaxing backstroke or proceed ahead full-speed in a determined freestyle.

Jets can also be positioned to give the swimmer a buoyancy boost or clustered for further aquatic power.

In another method, a propeller at the head of the spa begins to rotate, forcing water through a grill that flattens the current into a smooth stream. Water flows down the center of the spa, using the bench seating along either side as a return channel. This allows a swimmer to drift to the side and rest for a minute in the calmer water along the perimeter.

A swim spa with a paddlewheel positions the wheel at the back of the spa, pulling close to 80 percent of the water into its paddles. This generates a stream nearly the entire width of the spa, simulating the feel of a river current. Like a propeller system, bench seats along either side double as a return channel for the water as it is fed to the front of the spa.

CURRENT FEATURES

When looking for a swim spa, it is important to isolate why you are purchasing one. If the swim spa will simply be used for resistance swimming, then a model with a powerful, variable stream will be important so you can adjust your workout as you improve. In addition, a more shallow vessel possibly without individual hydrotherapy seating will most likely be sufficient. Other features for the swimming enthusiast include a digital swim meter, a swim mirror or swim lane stripes to help you stay on track. If you wish to use your spa for fitness training, you might consider a deeper spa for water jogging or a spa that offers



athletic resistance training. Several swim spas offer optional detachable rowing or resistance equipment to integrate into your workout.

For those seeking to use their swim spa for therapy, hand rails, non-skid floors and underwater lights will be important in order to maintain safe rehabilitation.

Finally, for the user who is looking for the best of all worlds, many manufacturers combine the most valuable features of a pool and spa in one unit. Some models offer two distinct areas for swimming and soaking while other designs integrate individual seating right in the swim area with targeted hydrotherapy jets for soothing relief.

Manufacturers of swim spas offer models in varied lengths and depths. The majority of models range from 12 to 17 feet in length with some as short as 8 feet and others as long as 19 feet. Depths range from 3 to 6.5 feet of water. If a specific dimension is needed, many manufacturers will custom build your spa to your specifications. Additionally, swim spas usually come standard with a heater and a method of controlling the intensity of the water stream. However, be sure to ask your retailer if this is the case. The retailer can also inform you about additional safety products that are available, such as current lockout switches or lockable safety covers, to maintain a trouble-free swim spa while you are away from home.

CURRENT LOCATIONS

The second thing to keep in mind when choosing a swim spa is where you are going to put it. The good news is that the majority of models are suited to almost any applications inside or out. The tricky part is figuring out how the spa is going to get there.

Swim spas are broken into two basic installation categories: fully assembled or partially assembled units. Fully assembled units are already put together and require very little assembly on your part. Fully assembled swim spas tend to be made of acrylic, fiberglass or another kind of co-extruded thermoplastic material such as DuraTex or Centrex. Yet, others are made of custom tile or a combination of stainless steel and tile. While these units require very little setup, they will not fit into every location. Conversely, partially assembled units are more versatile and can fit through more narrow passageways. Sometimes referred to as a kit, these modular designs are

assembled much like an erector set and are suitable for installation in rooms that can handle a load of at least 200 pounds per square foot. Such units are often constructed of stainless steel walls with a vinyl or PVDF (polyvinylidene fluoride) liner.

Keep in mind that if you are planning to build an extra room to house your personal flume, your town or city may have special zoning regulations that could restrict installation. Also be aware that swim spas housed indoors will need adequate ventilation. Sometimes, a simple solution is as close as a firm-fitting safety cover to reduce evaporation. To learn more about installing a swim spa, see page 45.

CURRENT PRICES

Budget can often be a driving force in choosing a swim spa. In today's market, prices range from \$10,000 to \$37,000 with the average swim spa running about \$22,000. Factors that influence this number are added features and the degree of customization. Be sure to ask if the price you have been quoted includes shipping and installation.

The cost to operate a swim spa is greater than that of a spa, but not prohibitive. Courtney Salas, who works in public relations at Cal Spas, says that swim spas typically use a 240 volt system with a 50 amp breaker, but it depends on the model. "Swim spas use a little more electricity than your average spa (but not a lot) due to the magnitude of the spa."

While deciding on a specific swim spa seems like a daunting task, the benefits of ownership are crystal clear. Today's aquatic fitness machines consume less space than a pool and require less water and chemicals. They can be installed virtually anywhere and provide a year-long swimming venue. Some professional swimmers certainly appreciate the privacy of training in their own homes while never having to turn after each lap.

In short, it's a stroke, a stretch and a soak all in one place. ●

Spasearch

SWIM SPA COMPARISON

	AWARDS					SHELL & DESIGN				JETS AND CURRENT				WATER CARE		
	2015 TRACERTIFIED™	CONSECUTIVE YEARS WON	HYDROSEAT IN SWIM SPA SHELL	DUAL ZONE	BENCH SEATING	LENGTHS (IN INCHES)	WATER DEPTHS (IN INCHES)	MAX NO. OF HYDROTHERAPY JETS	MAX NO. OF PUMPS	WATER PUMP STRENGTHS	CURRENT STRENGTHS	ADJUSTABLE SPEEDS	SALT SANITIZER	UVC SANITIZER	OZONATOR	CHEMICAL FEEDER
ARTESIAN SPAS 702-307-5124 TIDALFIT.COM ARTESIANSPPAS.COM			●		●	168 180 192	44 52	30	4	4-5 HP	500-3500			●	●	
CAL SPAS 877-491-8108 CALSPAS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	144-204	45	77	5	6 HP	900 GPM	●	●	●	●	
COAST SPAS 604-514-8111 COASTSPAS.COM			●	●	●	151 207 229	48.5 51 52	75	5	4 HP	3000 GPM	●	●	●	●	
COLEMAN SPAS 877-331-7924 COLEMANSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144-204	45	70	5	6 HP	900 GPM	●	●	●	●	
D1 AQUAFIT 877-712-9039 AQUAFITSYSTEMS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	156 192 228	48 60	17	5	5 HP	600 GPM	●			●	
DYNASTY SPAS 800-951-6224 DYNASTYSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144-228	45	76	5	5BHP 7BHP	1050 GPM				●	
ENDLESS POOLS 800-732-8660 ENDLESSPOOLS.COM			●	●		120-228	49-51	6-55	1	5 HP	5000 GPM	●		●		
HYDROPOOL INC. 905-565-6810 HYDROPOOLSWIMSPAS.COM			●	●		176-226	48-52	61	6	3-5 HP	11 MPH	●	●		●	●
L.A. SPAS 877-267-5166 LASPAS.COM	●	8	●	●		228 192 156	47	14-67	5-6	7 BHP 3 HP	850 GPM	●	●		●	
LA-Z-BOY 877-296-6530 LAZBOYSPAS.COM			●	●		176-226	48-52	61	6	3-5 HP	11 MPH	●	●		●	●
POWERPOOL BY MAAK SPAS 866-835-9150 MAAXSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144 168 198	43	70	4	3-4 HP	600 GPM	●		●	●	
MARQUIS ATVS 877-271-2052 MARQUISSPAS.COM	●	10	●			168	48	32	3	6 HP	480 GPM	●			●	
H2X BY MASTER SPAS 877-278-1786 H2XSWIMSPA.COM	●	10	●	●	●	144-231	41 50	55	4	3-6 HP	600 GPM	●			●	
MICHAEL PHELPS SWIM SPAS BY MASTER SPAS MICHAELPHELPSWIMSPA.COM	●	10	●	●	●	174-231	41 50	51	3	3-6 HP	1:09/100Y - 0:49/100Y	●			●	
PREMIUM LEISURE LLC 727-573-9611 PREMIUMLEISURE.COM	●	1	●	●	●	216	48	39	7	5 HP	300-4000	●	●	●	●	

	WARRANTY					
	SPA CABINET	SPA INTERIOR SURFACE	SPA EQUIPMENT	SPA FRAME	PRICE (MSRP)	CURRENT AND SPECIAL FEATURES
ARTESIAN SPAS 702-307-5124 TIDALFIT.COM ARTESIANSPPAS.COM	5 YR	LIFE	5 YR	LIFE	\$12,900-\$35,000	Current Technology: Built in the USA and recently featured on ABC's <i>Extreme Makeover Weight Loss Edition</i> ; the TidalFit® features a powerful Quad Swim Jet System that produces resistance for intermediate to pro level swimmers, while providing a heightened experience with the DIRECTFLOW™ after-workout massage seat.
CAL SPAS 800-CAL-SPAS CALSPAS.COM	10 YR	7 YR	7 YR	7 YR	\$13,000-\$25,000	Current Technology: SwimJet Propulsion System; Shell Material: Acrylic with exclusive fiberglass reinforcement; Water Filtration Method: Cartridge filters; Insulation Method: high-density thermo-fill or thermo-layer blanket
COAST SPAS 604-514-8111 COASTSPAS.COM	5 YR	LIFE	5 YR	5 YR	\$11,895-\$39,895	Current Technology: powerful river jets, buoyancy simulating levitator jets; Special Features: detachable row bars, commercial-grade pressurized filtration, large/deep workout and swim area, hydrotherapy massage seats, ISO Certified quality construction with steel reinforced shell, pressure treated frame and durable slate cabinet finish
COLEMAN SPAS 888-672-3815 COLEMANSPAS.COM	10 YR	7 YR	7 YR	7 YR	\$13,000-\$25,000	Current Technology: SwimJet Propulsion System; Shell Material: Acrylic with exclusive fiberglass reinforcement; Water Filtration Method: Cartridge filters; Insulation Method: High-density thermo-fill or thermo-layer blanket
D1 AQUAFIT 800-345-7727 AQUAFITSYSTEMS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	5 YR	LIFE	\$27,995-\$41,595	Current Technology: High Volume Swim Jets; Special Features: AquaFit comes standard with a UV-resistant Duratex Shell, five stunning, woodlike Terracina skirt options, UltraPure Water Management, strong thru-wall OptiMounts for fitness attachments, LED lighting and a durable six-gauge steel frame.
DYNASTY SPAS 800-951-6224 DYNASTYSPAS.COM	3 YR	10 YR	5 YR	5 YR	\$15,999-\$40,999	Current Technology: River Jets; Special Features: Seven models available, LED lighting, dual temp zones, exercise and rowing system, Bluetooth stereo system
ENDLESS POOLS 800-732-8660 ENDLESSPOOLS.COM	2 YR	5 YR	2 YR	10 YR	\$15,900-\$31,900	Current Technology: Resistance jets; or variable-speed, laminar Endless Pool® swim current. The swim current is generated by a 16-inch propeller inside a protective stainless-steel housing and powered by hydraulic pumps. Special Features: Arrives preplumbed, prewired and ready to use. Includes lifetime toll-free support.
HYDROPOOL INC. 905-565-6810 HYDROPOOLSWIMSPAS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR	10 YR	\$19,999-\$40,000	Current Technology: AquaFlex Swim Current with adjustable speed 0-11MPH/0-18 KPH flow rate; AquaFlo Swim Jet Design provides a wide, deep and smooth current; Special Features: HydroPool's Self Cleaning Technology; Hydrowise Thermal Shield Technology keeps operating costs to a minimum
L.A. SPAS 877-267-5166 LASPAS.COM	1 YR	7 YR	5 YR	15 YR	\$12,495-\$34,995	Current technology: Designed to serve as a complete aquatic gym in addition to providing an excellent swim workout; full suite of exercise equipment included. Special Features: Swim lane enhanced with unique lit leveler jet, tile marker, multiple lane lights; suitable for everyone from novice to triathlete in training.
LAY-Z-BOY 800-465-2933 LAZBOYSPAS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR	10 YR	\$19,999-\$40,000	Current Technology: AquaFlo Swim Current with adjustable speed 0-11MPH/0-18 KPH flow rate; AquaFlo Swim Jet Design provides a wide, deep and smooth current; Special Features: HydroPool's Self-Cleaning Technology; Hydrowise Thermal Shield Technology keeps operating costs to a minimum
POWERPOOL BY MAAX SPAS 480-895-0598 MAAXSPAS.COM	2 YR	5 YR	5 YR	LIFE	\$14,999-\$29,999	Current Technology: TheraMAAX Current System; Special Features: Steel structure and green insulation, both with lifetime warranty
MARQUIS ATVS 877-271-2052 MARQUISSPAS.COM	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$24,999	Current Technology: Six turbo paired jets off of three two-speed pumps for personally customized flow design; Special Features: industry's toughest shell with high-tech polymer resins and unique colors; structural unibody gusseted frame for superior rigidity; six-time Ironman champion Dave Scott health and fitness program
H2X BY MASTER SPAS 877-278-1786 H2XSWIMSPA.COM	LIFE	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$24,500-\$35,900	Current Technology: Swim Jets; Special Features: Fiberglass and acrylic shell, EcoPur Filtration System, environmentally friendly icynene insulation, energy efficient
MICHAEL PHELPS SWIM SPAS BY MASTER SPAS MICHAELPHELPSWIMSPA.COM	LIFE	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$42,000-\$49,000	Current Technology: Patented Wave Propulsion Technology; Special Features: Fiberglass and acrylic shell, EcoPur Filtration System, environmentally friendly icynene insulation, Wi-Fi custom workout app: SwimNumber App for the iPad; energy efficient
PREMIUM LEISURE LLC 727-573-9611 PREMIUMLEISURE.COM	1 YR	5 YR	2-5 YR		\$10,995-\$35,000	Current Technology: Standard, River Stream, Turbine Driven; Special Features: Premium Leisure has entry-level to top-of-the-line swim spas. The AQ11, 12, 14 and Dual Zone16 models launched the company's line, the Swimmer's Edge has easily become its most well-known model.



Aquatic Rehab

FOR SOME PRO ATHLETES, GETTING BACK INTO THE GAME AFTER AN INJURY MEANS FIRST GETTING INTO A SWIM SPA.

Photo: Craig Price

SWIM SPAS ARE HELPING your favorite athletes get off the bench and back into the game, but what about those of us who don't have access to big league trainers or big league dollars? How can aquatic therapy help you get on the road to recovery?

As in any business, professional sports teams make a profit by promoting their products, which are the talents of their athletes. Unfortunately, when these products are damaged, they can't be stuffed away on a clearance rack. Teams look to all facets of technology to keep these athletes healthy. Swim spas provide aquatic therapy that allows the athletes to recover more quickly and swim spas help serve as a part of many security insurances for the team's investment.

Aquatic therapy is not a new phenomenon. Aaron Mattes, a kinesiotherapist, started his career as a pitching

coach at the University of Illinois and founded the Mattes Method. His company, Stretching USA, has used pools and spas for 30 years to treat professional and collegiate level athletes with baseball-, golf- or football-related injuries.

Therapy spas work in many ways to help athletes recover. The heat from being submerged in the warm water improves blood circulation and slows the heart rate down to help with relaxation. It also increases range of motion. Buoyancy reduces weight bearing down on the joints and muscles to improve the ability to stretch soft tissues and assist with motion in greater ways. The constant resistance of water helps to strengthen, equally working opposing muscle groups. Muscles strengthen more easily without the weight of the body as would be the case on dry land.

Professional athletes don't have the luxury to take as

much time as they want before they return. For baseball and basketball players, the clock gets punched three or four times a week. Football players clock in every Sunday. Their jobs are grueling and hard on the muscles, ligaments, cartilage and joints. Maximum recovery from an injury in the least amount of time is very important to the athlete's career and the owner's investment in the people who make up their team. Swim spas and the advanced technology package options that some of them come with limit the team's liabilities.

During the playoffs leading up to Super Bowl XL, Carson Palmer, the star quarterback of the Cincinnati Bengals, tore knee ligaments in the first playoff game the team had seen in over a decade in a match-up against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

A reporter for the website THERAPYTIMES.COM disclosed that Palmer's training had significant progress since the injury. To get him ready for the season opener he trained with a HydroWorx therapy spa equipped with an underwater treadmill. The website said the spa "allowed Palmer to begin walking and now jogging at a much earlier stage of rehab. Palmer is able to jog neck deep in water while taking most of the weight off of his knee."

While Palmer battled this knee injury and other injuries over the years, he is still the starting quarterback for the Bengals.

Many teams have used this method in helping get their players back on the field as fast as possible. Even the infamous Terrell Owens used a therapy spa to recover from injuries.

Professional teams spend anywhere from \$45,000 to \$100,000 for these spas, depending on options and amenities, which include motorized treadmills, different depths and underwater cameras to record athlete's progress. The reach of this technology stretches across the globe to the United Kingdom for some professional soccer teams.

Therapy spas are perfect for recuperation after surgery. When pitchers Aaron Sele, Ramon Martinez and Trevor Hoffman all had shoulder surgery, therapy spa exercise helped to re-educate muscles. Practicing a pitch against the swim spa current forces a number of muscles to work together to meet the challenge.

Collegiate athletes at Arizona State University, Texas A&M University, UCLA and others also benefit from having swim spas on their campuses.

Amateur athletes, active adults or any individual looking for methods of therapy for easier and faster recovery can benefit from using a swim spa. Training for the Olympics,

competition trials or a marathon in a swim spa may give any amateur athlete a boost above the competition. A runner can stand in the center of the pool and run against the current. The constant and equal resistance provided by the water facilitates an improvement in muscle balance. Swimmers can strengthen their swim strokes by swimming against the current and benefit from the same muscle re-education techniques.

You, an average consumer without a major league budget, can own one of these therapy spas for around \$22,000 depending on the options and features you need. Swim spas allow adults and children with disabilities to participate in activities that are harder for them to achieve on land. ●

Order your FREE Swimming Pool Buyer's Guide Now!



You thought you loved your hot tub, imagine adding a swimming pool to your backyard. *Poolsearch* is the most comprehensive buyer's guide available to customers. Before you buy, find out everything you need to know from our informative articles and in-depth story on pool types.

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RESTORE YOUR HEALTH

SWIM SPAS OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT
TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC DISEASES.

Today, swim spas and hot tubs are used globally to improve athletic performance, speed up recovery from injury, regain movement following illness or accident, alleviate pain and lessen the symptoms of chronic disease and relieve stress. According to doctors and physical therapists, the list of conditions in which swim spas are used as part of the recovery program is long and varied. While swim spas are used in rehabilitation and exercise facilities under the supervision of physical therapists and physicians, one of the greatest benefits of a swim spa is the ability to install one in your own home or backyard. If you have an illness, chronic pain, see if swim spas can make a difference in the quality of your life. "I used to think I was going to sell swim spas to the triathlete, the people who want an alternative to working out in the gym," says John Trzcinka, who left his position as the director of sales at Dimension One Spas to open up a studio dedicated to selling swim spas. "What we've learned is that there are a number of people who have lost hope. Water has been part of their lives because they can't do a land-based exercise, but they've been challenged, especially if they have something like fibromyalgia, which makes them very sensitive to things like temperature and smell. Though the water is their best method of exercising, they've been challenged with community pools that are too cool. And because of the public location, there's vast amounts of chlorine. I would say probably 75 percent of the people are coming here because they need our product. Therefore, we've learned we don't sell swim spas for exercise or fitness; what we've been realizing is we're offering hope."

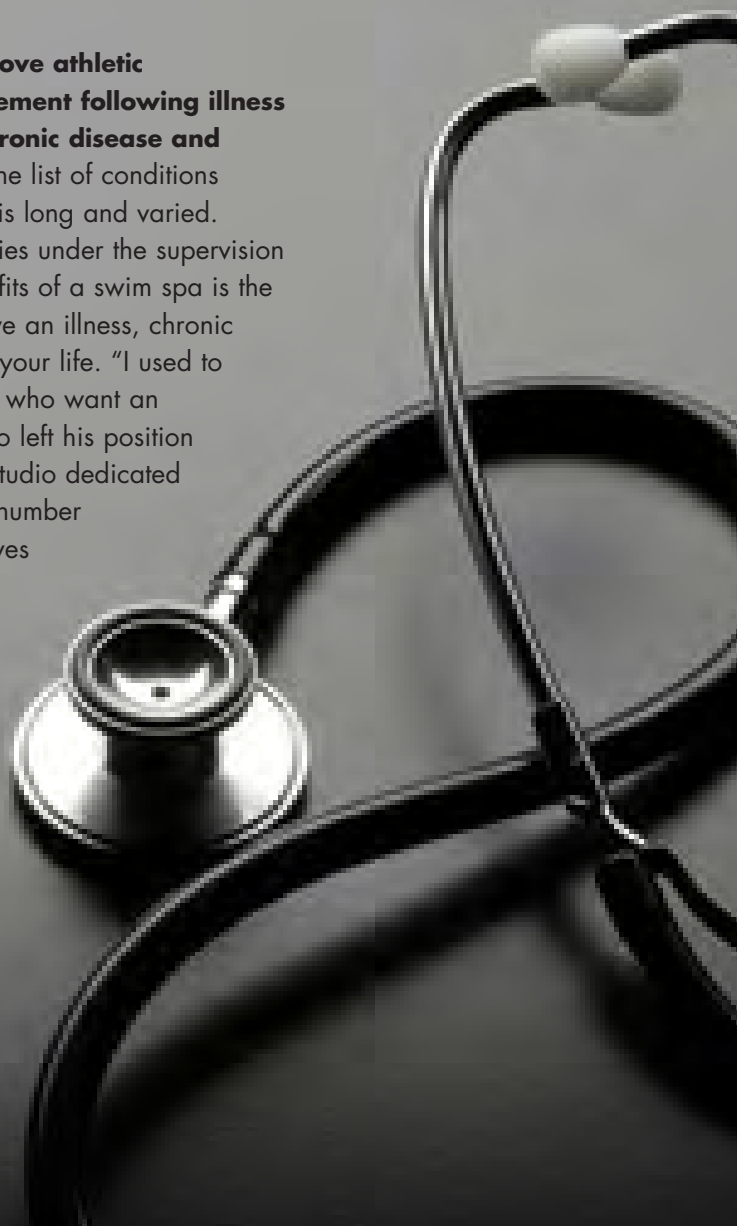




Photo: Dimension One Spas



Photo: Master Spas



Photo: Sunbelt Spas

AGING WELL

Getting older doesn't have to mean using a walker or a wheelchair to get around. Just consider Regina Sellers who started swimming in a swim spa when she was 68 years old because the stress of caring for her mother was starting to make her "go crazy." Though she began using the swim spa to reduce stress, lose weight and improve her ability to walk without pain, Sellers went on to win four gold medals in Senior Olympics swim competitions for athletes 55 years and older. The water's buoyancy relieves stress on muscles and joints, while swimming against the resistance of the current increases metabolism, endurance and aerobic capacity.

PHYSICAL REHAB

Swim spas have proved beneficial to people suffering the effects of a spinal cord injury, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, heart disease, head injuries and just plain old back pain. Keri Currutt, a certified therapeutic specialist and aqua therapy director at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation, notes that balance and coordination problems are common for people who have had a stroke, a traumatic head or spinal cord injury, and various congenital problems. But these patients often resist traditional physical therapy programs.

Recently injured or disabled people are often afraid of harming themselves further by doing exercises on dry land. Currutt has observed that this fear is often replaced by confidence and freedom when a patient exercises in a swim spa. The soothing effect of the warm water enables patients to exercise without strain on their joints or injuries, and they are able to exercise for much longer periods of time.

John Greenwood, director of communications for the Hodan Center in Wisconsin, agrees saying, "For various reasons, it's easier for people to do their exercises in a swim spa than on dry land." For clients at Hodan, a community rehab program for adults with disabilities, physical therapy must be ordered by the client's physician. Says

Greenwood, "We have a client who doesn't have any knee caps, and he always does his exercises in the swim spa. He has to do range of motion exercises with his legs, and because of the buoyancy factor, he can do his exercises in the water and they're effective, but if he does them in regular gravity, it actually hurts him." The key can be found in the buoyant quality of water and the massaging effect of a swim spa. "I see patients able to relax. They're able to move their bodies," Greenwood reports. "I have another client who has a fused spine, and when he gets in the spa, it's just amazing. He's always very stiff, and all his movements are exaggerated. But when he gets in the spa, he just sort of melts and is able to relax instead of being stiff all the time."

CARDIO HEALTH

A swim spa allows for swimming, water jogging, aqua aerobics and resistance exercises, which are all excellent cardiovascular workouts and the most low-impact of any exercise system available.

Exercising in water has unique physiological effects on the body as compared to exercising on land, including a decreased heart rate of 12 to 15 percent. Adding equipment such as aquatic shoes with wings that fan out while water-jogging to increase resistance can intensify a cardiovascular workout without adding any stress to the bones and joints.

SURGERY RECOVERY

Doctors used to prescribe bed rest for patients who were recovering from surgery, but now medical professionals know that the sooner surgical patients start moving, the faster their bodies will heal. Unfortunately, as anyone who has ever had surgery knows, moving after surgery can really hurt.

"Due to the buoyancy of water, aquatic exercise is a great low-weight-bearing activity," Currutt notes. People recovering from orthopedic surgeries, such as hip and knee replacements and surgeries of the foot, can get the exercise they need for muscle conditioning and strengthening

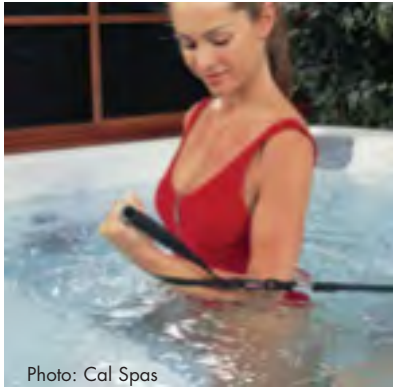


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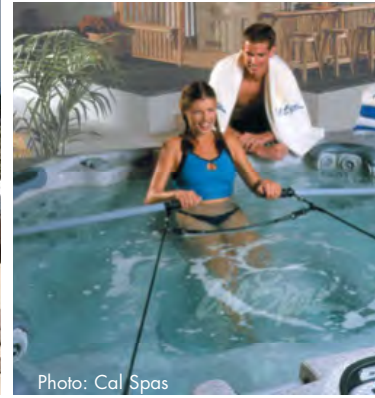


Photo: Cal Spas

without placing unnecessary stress on their joints. Less joint stress means less pain and greater range of movement.

WEIGHT LOSS

Because of the natural buoyancy of water, aquatic exercises are easy on the body yet still provide an excellent weight-bearing activity. For this reason, a swim spa is a smart choice for individuals whose weight has created health problems such as difficulty moving around, shortness of breath and high blood pressure. Aquatic exercise will help build heart and lung capacity and muscle strength without the side effect of painful joints. Adding aquatic equipment such as buoyancy belts, weights designed to be used underwater, or Water Walkers will increase muscle mass faster and burn more calories than the same exercises done on land.

CHRONIC DISEASE

People with any form of arthritis can benefit greatly from exercising in a swim spa. According to the Arthritis Foundation website, “Hydrotherapy is one method of using water to treat arthritis. The soothing warmth and buoyancy of the water makes it a safe, ideal environment for relieving arthritis pain. Using a spa adds another component to the therapy – massage.” Statistics show that one in three Americans suffers from arthritis or chronic joint pain. The Arthritis Foundation states that nearly half of these cases are osteoarthritis, which is associated with aging.

For people who suffer from arthritis and those with other types of chronic pain like fibromyalgia and ruptured discs, maintaining flexibility is essential to performing daily tasks. Warm water therapy relieves stress on the joints, improves the blood flow to the affected areas, relieves pain and minimizes physical limitations. “Swirling warm water increases blood supply to aching joints, which helps to reduce inflammation and pain,” says Lauren Stack, director of marketing and promotions at the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a condition that causes inflammation and swelling in the joints. Because

movement is painful, range of motion becomes constricted, which causes the muscles to atrophy – and increases the pain felt during movement. Joseph Alldredge has lived with rheumatoid arthritis since his late teens and he has had hip replacement surgery. “I typically work out first thing in the morning in order to get to work by 8,” he says, “and if I don’t, getting loose – any movement really – just seems to take longer.” Exercising in warm water is an extremely effective way to relax muscles, decrease stiffness and achieve greater ease performing exercises.

Meanwhile, swim spas using cool water are beneficial to people living with multiple sclerosis. Dr. Robert Goldberger lives with MS and found his health was significantly improved by installing a swim spa in his backyard. “When I began my daily exercising,” he says, “it was the first vigorous exercise I had had for a long time. It didn’t take me long to realize that I’d been missing something very important – a good way to burn enough calories to keep my weight in check while experiencing the pleasant psychological effects of a regular exercise regimen.” The body’s buoyancy in water allows people with disabilities to enjoy physical activities that would be near impossible to do on dry land.

STRESS LESS

A study by the National Women’s Health Resource Center found that nine out of ten adults have experienced serious stress, with four out of the ten experiencing negative health affects as a result. By owning a swim spa, people can reduce stress and anxiety and achieve deep relaxation. Immersion in warm water raises the body temperature. This causes blood vessels to dilate, which improves circulation and creates the optimum environment in the body for relaxation.

THE EXPERTS AGREE

Swim spas are beneficial to just about everyone, from people living with chronic disease to those who are stressed out from high-pressure jobs and can’t get a good night’s sleep. Swim spas come in all price ranges and configurations with add-ons including underwater



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SWIM SPA SITE PREP

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By Patrick Sisson



Photos: Bradford Products



“I got in one and it just exceeded my expectations.”

It's not an overstatement to say that Harold Hicks was quickly sold on a swim spa. The 66-year-old former hospital administrator and his wife Gladys had coveted the backyard addition for three years after testing one at a Master Spas showroom. Hicks was literally blown away by the unit's power and finally installed a swim spa last December in the couple's backyard in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Hicks relished exercising in the spa that kept him limber and eased the muscles in his neck and back, but after a few months of use the swim spa started to become a source of tension. In April of 2009, a representative from the Hicks' subdivision called and politely informed him that the swim spas location violated their homeowners association agreement that stated spas should not be visible from the front yard. While the situation could have been rectified simply with a privacy screen, the Hicks already felt the swim spa was too close to their house. They decided to relocate it further out in their half-acre backyard next to a newly constructed stampcrete wall decorated in a Mayan cobblestone pattern.

Hicks isn't disappointed about uprooting the swim spa. The new site still allows him to sneak out in a heavy robe for a quick dip in the middle of winter. However, his story illustrates the importance of properly installing a swim spa given the size and investment beyond that of your average portable hot tub.

“Make sure you have confidence in the people you buy it from,” Hicks says. “When you make an investment like that, you want to know someone is readily available to help you.”

SITE TRAFFIC

Once the decision to purchase a swim spa has been made, placement should be the first issue resolved. According to John Trzcinka, owner of Aquatic Fitness Concepts, Inc. in San Diego, Calif., dealers need to be upfront with clients and encourage them to check all relevant local building codes and statutes as well as the rules of their homeowners association when reviewing potential spa sites on their property.

Rules about placing spas near or under power lines should be consulted; if applicable, utility easements need to be cross-checked and laws governing the placement of

breakers and electrical wiring should be analyzed. (This is often where having a solid contractor who has experience with swim spa installation comes in handy). According to Audrey Markiton, director of marketing at Sunbelt Spas in Houston, Texas, many homeowners can find this information in the original blueprints for their home.

Future swim spa owners also need to consider how the physical dimensions of the swim spa and any surrounding deck or patio will affect the layout of their yard. The average swim spa weighs 3,000 pounds before adding a drop of water and measures roughly 52 inches high. Contractors require clearance around the site to complete installation. The finished structure should be near a hose for refilling. Buyers also should check and think about the decibel rating of the swim spa – none are incredibly loud, but noise levels may affect placement near certain rooms or neighbors. More importantly, the weight of the spa requires a rebar-reinforced concrete slab for support (manufacturers provide exact support specifications).

“When you have a contractor who installs a slab, they're almost always obligated to take a look at the land itself,” Markiton says. “If it's on sand, they're going to have to [dig] down deep and put pylons in. Most good contractors know how to do that.”

Markiton suggests buyers consider pouring a slightly larger slab in excess of the dimensions necessary for support to create a patio. Expanding the typical 8-by-12 foot slab required for a standard swim spa to, say, a 12-by-15 foot slab lays the groundwork for a suitable patio. But don't spend money to add flagstone or other decorative material under the area occupied by the spa itself – better to invest in decorations or accoutrements that you will actually see.

HEAVY LIFTING

Most standard-size swim spas can't fit through doors and are often too wide to be moved around the side of a home. Occasionally, fences may need to be cut down and the spa rolled into place on a cart. But many professionals, including Markiton and Trzcinka, recommend renting a crane.

“[Most] crane companies will come out free of charge and do a pre-site survey,” Trzcinka says. “They'll determine, based on what the reach is and the weight of the product, which size crane they need.”

Large swim spas may require a crane with such an unwieldy counterweight that it'll block the street and probably require traffic control.

START-UP SERVICE

After the swim spa is placed, buyers require the services of an electrician to hook up the spa and possibly a carpenter to build out any deck or patio area. Your retailer should be able to recommend vendors experienced in working on and around a swim spa. These contractors will know to leave room for access to the swim spa equipment compartment and other necessary provisions for regular maintenance and care.

“The key for me is to partner with a reputable contractor who you give most of your business to,” Trzcinka says. “They’re very familiar with the communities within a county. Get someone who knows what they’re doing and they’ll be an asset.”

Surrounding deck and patio areas should have safety railings for entry and exit of the swim spa and be made from material that will prevent slippage due to the splash factor. Keeping plants away from the structure also prevents them from being exposed to spa chemicals in the water, Markiton says.

“I tell people not to put furniture next to the spa because you’re going to get wet sitting down and watching your kids playing,” she adds. “You don’t think

of that when you first get a hot tub. Give yourself a little space around it. It’s a really fun family-friendly product... you have to remember it’s just like having a pool in the backyard, that water’s going to get splashed around and everyone is going to have a great time.”

In colder climates, enclosures are sometimes constructed to shield swim spas from the elements. These structures need to have proper drainage and humidity control and a built-in method to refill the swim spa.



DEEP COVER

Planning doesn’t end when the spa is grounded and running. Owners also need to have a proper cover, ideally matched to the spa and overall yard design. In the case of the Hicks, they added weights to their cover to prevent the area’s high winds from blowing it away.

“You always want to have a cover on [the swim spa] if you’re not using it, so you’re not heating the whole neighborhood, like your mama used to say about leaving the front door open,” Markiton says.

While it’s a multifaceted process, swim spa installation does result in added enjoyment and often adds significant



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Whether you own a hot tub or a swim spa, there are plenty of exercises you can do to get the full benefits of the hot water. The buoyancy of water decreases the impact that exercise has on your joints and the heat helps improve your range of motion and increases your muscles ability to stretch and relax. For years, doctors and physical therapists have been using swim spas and hot tubs to help their patients recover from injury and surgery; it's only been in recent years that this trend has taken off in the private sector. More and more people are now realizing that hot water exercise can improve their health, fitness and state-of-mind.

Rick McAvoy, who has his doctorate in physical therapy and is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, has long been an advocate of using water to help people recover from injuries and surgeries. In 2005 he completed a study that found mixing water therapy with land-based therapy increased knee flexibility and function on patients who had total-knee-replacement surgery.

"A lot of people use their hot tubs to chill out and relax," McAvoy says. "They're in this great environment that you can really benefit from exercising in, and if you bought this thing, why not use it? Why not get full use out of it with training and exercise?"

McAvoy had several patients in his clinic ask how they could use the exercises he was doing with them in their hot tubs at home. Because of those requests, McAvoy, with the help of Master Spas, put together a book and DVD of exercises that could be done in spas.

"I think the thing about the water that I love so much is that it is very holistic," McAvoy says. "I don't think a lot of people really understand how powerful water is and what you can do in it."

The Director of Aquatic Fitness at Dimension One Spas, Chris Proud, has been using holistic health care and hydrotherapy for over 13 years.

"Once you get into water, you're getting resistance from 360 degrees around you, something that is not



possible with any land-based workout,” Proud says. “In dry-based exercises, we would say you have ergonomics; in water-based exercises, the way that you shape yourself and how you’re situated we would call hydronomics. There’s an entirely different set of physics at play when you’re working out. Of course, the hydronomics, your body being in the water, that’s what adds all the benefits.”

Proud recommends that you initially work with someone trained in aquatic fitness to teach you how to use your swim spa properly and to set up a workout routine. Manuals and videos are a great resource, but to get the most benefit out of your investment, get a program custom-fit to your body.

WARM UPS

Warm up in the water by stretching, swimming against the current or with a swim tether, jogging, walking and doing deep breathing exercises.

Tread water or jog in the water to recover between exercises. For your cool-down, swim easy laps, walk and do stretches in the water.

CARDIO

Deep-water running is a great, no-impact cross-training activity for anyone who wants to build and tone the muscles in their lower body. But you can also take the typical exercises – walking, jogging and running against the current – and amp them up.

- Run against the current with your knees coming up high towards your chest.
- Run with your knees pointing downward and your heels coming up high, kicking your buttocks.
- Holding a water weight in each hand, run against the current while pumping your arms.

STRENGTHENING

Exercising against the resistance of water burns more calories than working out on land and it is an excellent muscle-strengthener. Exercises with fitness equipment include rowing, lifting weights (there are weights made for use in the water), exercises with strength bands and using a kickboard.

- Keeping knees and feet together, jump straight up while pushing down into the water with your hands.

- Jump up with both feet, your knees pointing downward and both heels coming up high at the same time, kicking your buttocks.
- Standing on a kickboard submerged in shallow water, tuck your knees up toward the chest letting the kickboard come up under your feet, then push it back down.
- Hold the kickboard with both hands. Use your abs to twist your upper body, pushing the kickboard against the current on your right and then on your left.
- Face the source of the current and do jumping jacks while holding water weights, bringing the water weights only up to just below the surface of the water.
- Stand to the side and swing your hips and your arms, as if you’re swinging a baseball bat into the jets. You can also hold onto a tensor cord with both hands doing the same baseball swinging exercise, only this time you’ll be resisting the tensor cord instead of resisting the jets.
- Stand in a forward stance and do big open-armed bear hugs towards the jets. The bear hugs will work the chest, but in addition you’re also going to be stabilizing yourself the entire time against the jets so you’re going to add a little bit of core exercise in there.
- Kick into the jets to work on your stability and your leg strength. It’s like you’re kicking down a door, but you’re kicking into the jets.
- If there is a bar above the swim jets, hold onto it and pull your knees through the water stream to your chest.
- Tread water holding a weight or a medicine ball. If done with a partner, pass the weight back and forth.
- Box in the water either holding a tensor cord or punching into the jet stream. Throw big forward swinging rights, swinging lefts and uppercuts, getting into a rhythm.
- Depending on the setup of your swim spa, you have a few different options for rowing. You can sit and use a row bar or you can prop yourself up against the step or walls for stability and use tensor cords.

STRETCHES

Just about any of the stretches you do on land can be done in the water. When you’re finished with your toning, hold the side of the pool with one hand, stand on

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