

Outdoor In-ground Swimming Pool Planning and Building Check List

A well designed and built swimming pool can be a smart investment in your lifestyle and your property. A stunning pool offers you a very special and private place for exercising, relaxing and entertaining in your own home. Since 1970 the number of pools in the UK has risen from 10,000 to well over 200,000. To be assured of a quality pool to your precise specification which will last you a long time, follow the steps below.

Choosing a Designer/Contractor

- Employ a professional pool designer or an architect with specialist pool experience to ensure that you will be given the whole range of style and materials choices and that the finished pool will meet with your exact expectations.
- Make sure you hire an established contractor which has been awarded with a SPATASHIELD accreditation with the Swimming Pool and Allied Trades Association which maintain standards in the industry by requiring that members adhere to the Association's codes of practice and conduct. The contractor should offer SPATA defined warranties for their work.
- Choose a company which can supply architects' and client references.
- Since the design, build and plant room are interdependent and crucial for a quality end result – your pool, the ideal solution is to employ a company which can manage the whole project from start to finish ensuring the three main areas of the pool integrate properly. Also, curing problems after completion is difficult, disruptive and expensive.

Suitability

Request that a pool company which meet the above criteria survey your land/garden to assess the suitability for building a pool there and ask them advice on your options – you don't need acres of land. However, do plan for the future and build the largest pool that is practically possible since small children grow up remarkably quickly, the circle of friends increases and so does the use of the pool.

Purpose

Decide what you want the pool for - fitness, leisure or both and when do you want to use it? If exercise is mainly on the agenda then a large/long pool will accommodate lap swimming and a small pool can be fitted with a counter current swimming unit to provide an "in-water treadmill". If you want to enjoy your pool all year round it will need an enclosure.

Construction

You “get what you pay for” and a low cost pool is not likely to meet expectations, with heady repair bills presenting sooner rather than later.

Planning permission for outdoor pools is only required where there may be disturbance to adjacent buildings or drains. A pool with an enclosure and pools to be located in listed buildings or conservation areas will always require planning permission. Your local authority will be able to give you all the information you need and it is always best to check with them first.

Site access for excavation machinery is important and should be planned in conjunction with landscaping. Soil conditions may need specific treatment and changes of ground level and the presence of existing structures will all need to be taken into consideration. An established swimming pool specialist will be able to advise you.

Once your pool has been installed, the local Water Authority needs to be notified in advance of filling the pool.

Safety

If young children will be using the pool then it should be designed with a sloping depth, or a moving floor which can be adjusted -raised and lowered – that effectively “grows” with the children could be well worth considering. A cover and/or fence will be necessary security features as well as a non-slip pool surround.

Siting and Landscaping

Avoid positioning the pool directly under trees which would create shade and drop leaves and other debris into it. Bear in mind that a plantroom needs to be located fairly close by.

Design

A pool contractor experienced in building bespoke pools will be able to advise on layout and styles to suit your requirements and also give you design ideas such as infinity edges, waterfalls, fountains, adjustable moving pool floor, different levels of pool surround, planted areas, island stepping stones, peninsulas or bathing platforms extending into the pool. Alongside stunning materials now available for pool interior and exterior finishes such as Venetian iridescent glass marble mosaic, exciting developments are taking place in pool technology like underwater sound systems, LED lighting, solar panel heating and ultra violet water purification treatment. To ensure that your pool is built to the very latest trends, select a pool contractor at the cutting edge of new design in all areas.

Swimming Pool Enclosures

An enclosed pool allows for home swimming and plunging all year round and reduces heating and maintenance costs. Enclosures can be a custom built architect designed structure either as an extension to your home or as a separate pool hall. Classic types can be in the form of an air dome, conservatory or even log cabin.

Heating and Maintenance

A reputable swimming pool contractor will advise you on the best heating method and other technology to suit your planned pool and situation. Often the best solution is a bespoke system using the latest innovations. Whenever possible, heat retaining covers should be used to conserve temperature as well as prevent debris and unwanted “visitors” from entering the pool.

A well built pool will last for many years and need not be emptied if it is maintained properly. The key to looking after a pool is “little and often”, so depending on usage, a weekly or fortnightly servicing by an experienced pool maintenance provider with in-depth knowledge of water treatment will ensure regular and correct care for your investment.

Accessories

There is now an amazing selection of products on the market to make your pool even more enjoyable and easy to look after ranging from water slides and counter current swimming units to automatic water top-up devices and automatic chemical dosing systems.

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