



How to Convert a Pool to Salt Water

Chlorine is by far the most common type of pool, but by no means the most popular. More and more people are switching to saltwater pools to reap the benefits of a natural and completely safe method of keeping their pool water clean.

Making the switch from chlorine to saltwater is a big change, and a serious undertaking, but if you are committed, ready to do your research, and willing to put in a bit of effort then you can convert your pool to salt water without having to spend tonnes of money to hire someone else to do it for you.

Advantages of saltwater pools

Contrary to popular belief saltwater pools are not chlorine-free. Instead they produce their own chlorine from salt in a process that is known as electrolysis. Salt water pools are also significantly less salty than the ocean, about 90% less to be exact. That means they are less corrosive, and won't leave you covered in salt after a swim.

Safer: Salt water pools are safer than chlorine pools because they don't require you to store dangerous or volatile chemicals, like chlorine. They reduce the risk of accidents but still produce water that is just as free from bacteria.

Gentle: Sensitive swimmers know that chlorine is the primary cause behind red eyes and skin irritation. Salt water pools produce less chlorine and therefore cause less irritation.

Feel better: Salt water pools are not only less irritating, but many people actually like the feeling they produce. The gentle salinity makes your skin feel healthy and the water itself feels almost silky —like the difference between softened and non-softened water.

Less maintenance: Unlike chlorine pools, salt water pools do not need you to regularly balance chemicals. The salt produces chlorine naturally. You will, of course, still need to monitor chlorine levels regularly to make sure that your pool is clean, but overall a salt water pool is a lot less work.

How to convert your pool to salt water

1. Choose the right system

When it comes to salt systems, pumps, or heaters, it is always better to err on the side of caution and go with a slightly larger system than you need. If your pool is 20,000 gallons and you purchase a system designed for up to 20,000 then it will be running at maximum output 24/7. No matter if you are talking about a car, computer, or salt system, running at full capacity all the time is less efficient and the stress of maxing the system out all the time will cause it to break down faster. Choose a system rated for a pools at least 10% larger than your own (any more than 30% larger may be overkill).

To measure the volume of your pool you first need to know the average depth. Not sure the **average depth of your pool**? Take the depth of the shallow end, multiplied by the depth of deep end, divided by two. This will give you the size of your pool in cubic feet.

Now that you know the average depth of your pool you're ready to calculate your pool's volume: Multiply the length, by the width, by the average depth. You'll need to multiple your answer by 7.5 because there are 7.5 gallons per cubic foot.

The formula to determine the volume of your pool is:

$$\text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Average depth} \times 7.5$$

2. Location, location, location

Choosing the right location to install your [salt water system](#) is pretty straight forward. When converting from chlorine to a salt system you'll simply want to remove your chemical feeder, and install your salt system in its place.

To do so, make sure that your pool filter, heater, and pump are turned off (ideally at the fuse box to prevent any accidents). You will more than likely have to use a saw to cut out your feeder, just be sure not to cut away too much PVC and keep your cut as straight as possible so that attaching your new salt system won't be any more work than it has to be.

3. Keep your plumbing straight

Make sure that you avoid over-complicating your plumbing. Extra twists and turns can reduce efficiency. You may also want to consider installing a PVC check valve. This will prevent water that has passed through your salt system from backing up through your pump, heater, or filter. Heavily chlorinated water can cause damage to your pool equipment.

Install your salt system by first cleaning the PVC pipe, applying primer, and then using glue designed for use in salt water pools. This will ensure a tight seal to keep your pool plumbing leak free.

4. Hook up the control panel

Mount the salt system control panel and power supply in a convenient, but discrete area near the chlorine generator chord. Ideally it should be located alongside your pump switch, timer, and other pool controls. Finally, connect the power supply. Your salt system should include detailed instructions, but whenever you are working with electricity (especially so close to water) it is always better to be safe than sorry, so we recommend calling in an electrician to help.

5. Add salt

The fifth and final step is to add the right amount of salt to your salt system. This will depend on your pool volume and salinity levels. Since you are converting your pool from chlorine, the pool salinity level should be near zero, and as a general rule of thumb you will want to add 30 pounds of salt per 1000 gallons. Pour the salt directly into your pool, sweep it around if it collects on the bottom, wait 24 hours, and then turn on your generator!

6. Prep the surrounding area

Chlorine pools are undeniably harsher on your skin, eyes, and hair, but saltwater pools can be corrosive to your pool fixtures and the surrounding area. Consider how saltwater in the ocean affects metal, concrete, and wood: over time these materials deteriorate.

Even though saltwater pools have only about 10% as much salt as the ocean, they can still cause some issues for equipment that wasn't designed for salt water use. If you have a wooden deck next to your pool it may corrode faster unless you take precautions to protect it, same goes for the mortar that holds brick or stone together. Chrome will lose its shine over time, and other metals may slowly deteriorate unless they are specially treated to withstand salt water conditions. Switching to a salt water pool means that you'll also have to replace your pool amenities with salt water friendly options.

Installing a zinc anode can also help mitigate the effects of switching a chlorine pool to saltwater. Contact Pool Supplies Canada today if you're ready to make the [switch to salt water](#).

If you have further questions, feel free to contact one of our specialists at customerservice@poolsuppliescanada.ca.