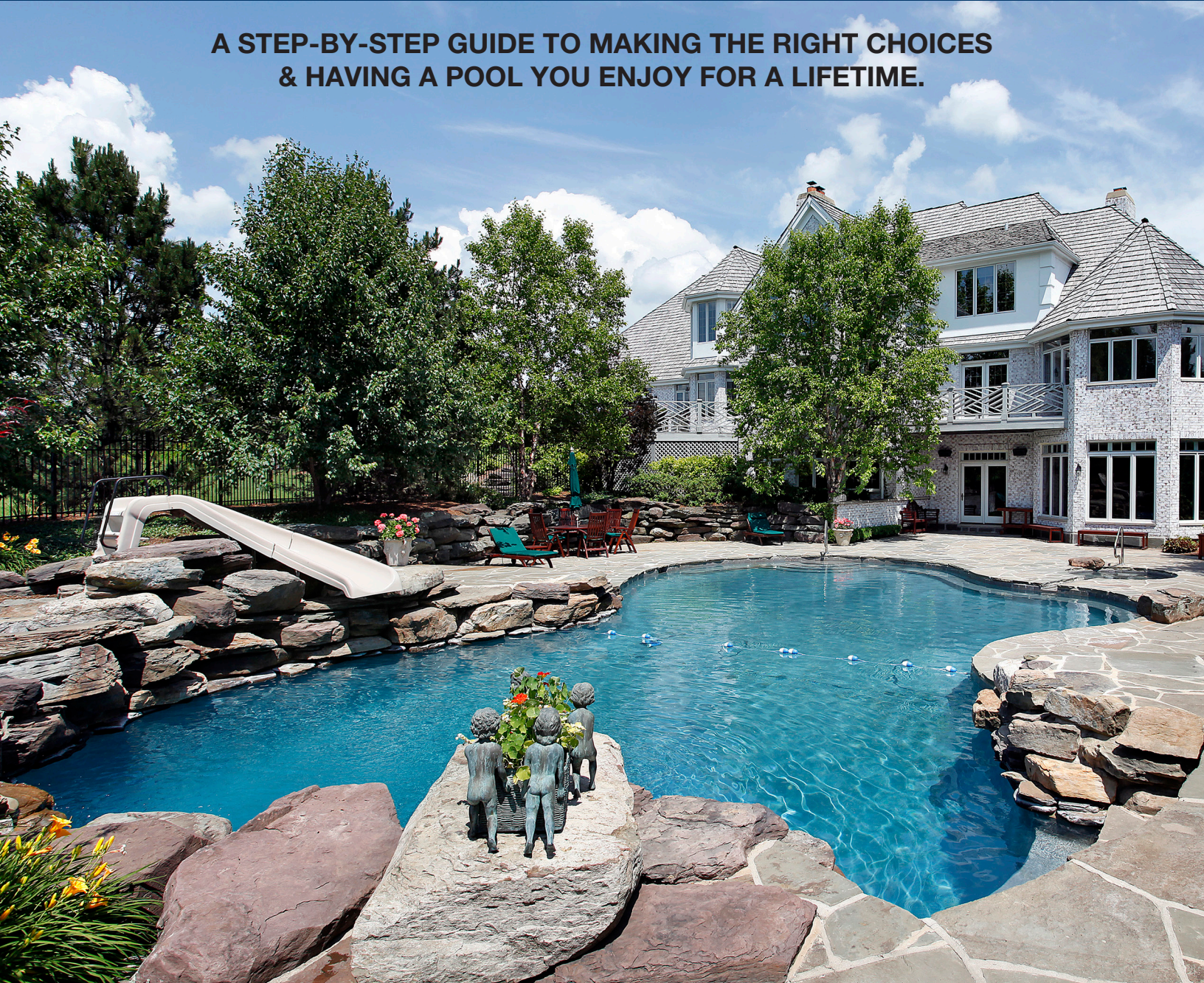


5 EASY STEPS TO CHOOSING THE

Perfect Pool

**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES
& HAVING A POOL YOU ENJOY FOR A LIFETIME.**



A FREE HOMEOWNERS REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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Why do you want a Pool?

Before deciding on size, shape and accessories, it is a good idea to think about your REAL motivations for wanting a pool. The more thought you put into this one question will make all the other decisions coming your way very easy. It will help your builder better advise you and enable you to end up with your dream pool that you will enjoy for a lifetime.

Often, homeowners don't put enough thought into how they will use the pool and this can lead to problems later on. If you buy a new front door and don't like the color, you can paint it easy enough. But, if you don't like the shape of your pool after it is complete - it's not going to be that easy to change. And, people often don't think size, shape and even the plumbing can affect how you will be able to use the pool.

Most people want a pool for at least one (and often more) of the following reasons. Rate the following questions by what will be the most (and least) important to you.

1. A pool would **look so good in my backyard and make our home much more attractive.**
2. A pool would be the center of our **backyard parties and entertaining with family and friends.**
3. A pool will be **great for my kids and get them outside more.**
4. A pool would be **wonderful for my health and exercise routines.**
5. A pool would be a **replacement for the family vacation** or amusement park with so many toys and fun things to do in the pool.
6. A pool would be great to dive in, take an occasional dip and then **work on my tan.**
7. I just love being in the water - **playing and swimming.**
8. I just love being beside the water - **reading and relaxing.**

Each of these statements has an impact on the size, style, shape and functional requirements for your new pool.

If you want a pool for the aesthetic value, it will be important to con-

Not all pools ARE CREATED EQUAL.

sider how it will fit into and complement your existing or new landscape. The materials, shape and visual effects will take precedence over other features.

If your pool is for parties and entertaining, you want to consider how many people would use the pool at the same time and size the pool accordingly. You may also consider ambient lighting and water features to draw attention to your pool as a focal point while entertaining.

A pool used primarily for exercise will have long straight spaces for swimming laps.

A pool for the occasional dip may feature a larger pool deck surface to lounge and relax.

A pool for the family to play in would feature a larger middle area between the entry and deep end or a sports style pool with an even depth.

A pool for the busy professional would have the latest automated technology to minimize maintenance.

Custom Built for you...



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Step 1

SIZE & DEPTH

Most homeowners have a place in their yard where they can already envision a pool. Besides your preferences you should consider your yard's slope, exposure to the sun, accessibility for drainage, equipment placement and your yard's dimensions.

Try laying a large tarp or garden hose in the area you have in mind for your pool. Play with the size until you are happy and then consider you will need a bare minimum of three feet around the perimeter of the pool for decking. Your decking can extend more than three feet in different areas depending on whether you want an area for sunbathing or entertainment. Go as large as feels comfortable when you lay out the hose and then consider how much surface area will be subtracted for the decking.

In a pool where you intend to have diving, there needs to be a deep end. To accommodate a pool with a shallow side and the depth required for diving, the pool needs to be at least 38'-39' long. You can purchase and install diving boards of different heights. As the height of the board increases (or the springiness), the required depth of the pool increases as well.



1. **Shallow end:** suitable for small children
2. **Play Area:** anywhere you can stand with your head above water
3. **Deep end:** suitable for diving & swimming

*Studies have shown that most people will spend about **80% of their time** in the play area of an inground pool. A pool suitable for diving usually has about a third devoted to the shallow end, a third devoted to the required slope and a third to the deep end. That means very little space is left for the play area.*



If your primary use for the pool will be playing – you may want to reconsider the diving board. Most residential pools built today don't include a diving end for this reason. Diving will also add to the safety risk and possibly your homeowners insurance. Non-diving pools tend to have so much more play area than traditional diving pools so even if the kids want a diving board, they will definitely love the increased play area. If you still just need the diving board – talk with your builder to make certain the depth of your pool and the size are suitable and safe for its use.

Your builder will have information about zoning and building restrictions. Zoning is primarily handled on a local level and typically covers such issues as fencing and barriers, pool depth requirements for diving boards, set-backs and proximity to utility lines.

NEED HELP DETERMINING THE RIGHT SIZE & DEPTH?

Call PoolMax - we'll help you measure, determine shape, provide a lot of useful advice and best of all - it's free! Call us at: 410.320.7817 to schedule a time.



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Step 2

SHAPE

There are two basic shapes when it comes to your new pool: freeform or geometric. Geometric can also be described as traditional like the standard rectangular shape you often see. When choosing your shape, take into consideration these things.

1. What style do you typically prefer and how will it fit into your landscape?
2. Will you be using the pool mostly for fun, parties or swimming laps?

If space is limited in your backyard or your pool will be used mostly for laps, you may want a traditional rectangular shape in order to maximize the swim area. Rectangle pools never go out of style and will always coordinate perfectly with the surroundings.

With a gunite pool, you are not limited to pre-designed shapes. The sky is the limit when it comes to shape. You can choose a basic rectangle to maximize space and then soften the shape giving it angles or curves in any direction.

INFINITY POOL



DOG BONE SHAPE



If you want to use the pool for laps but need space for children to play too, you may consider an "L" shape to accommodate both types of use. Or, if space is not limited, you may consider a beach entry for relaxing with a deeper end for swimming.

If beautifying your yard is the prime motivation for building a pool, you may want to consider a vanishing edge (infinity pool) which are particularly impressive in pools built near lakes or cliffs. A lagoon or natural style pool can add a tropical look and feel and have a dramatic effect on any landscape.

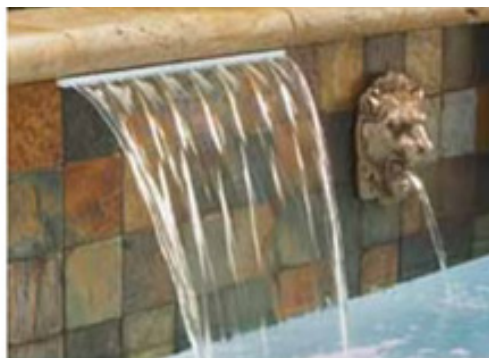
For the shape, start by collecting photos of pools you like and then narrow the list to those that primarily fit your use and the space you have available. Spend as much time as possible on this step - size and shape would be the most difficult and costly elements to change once your new pool is built.

LAGOON SHAPE



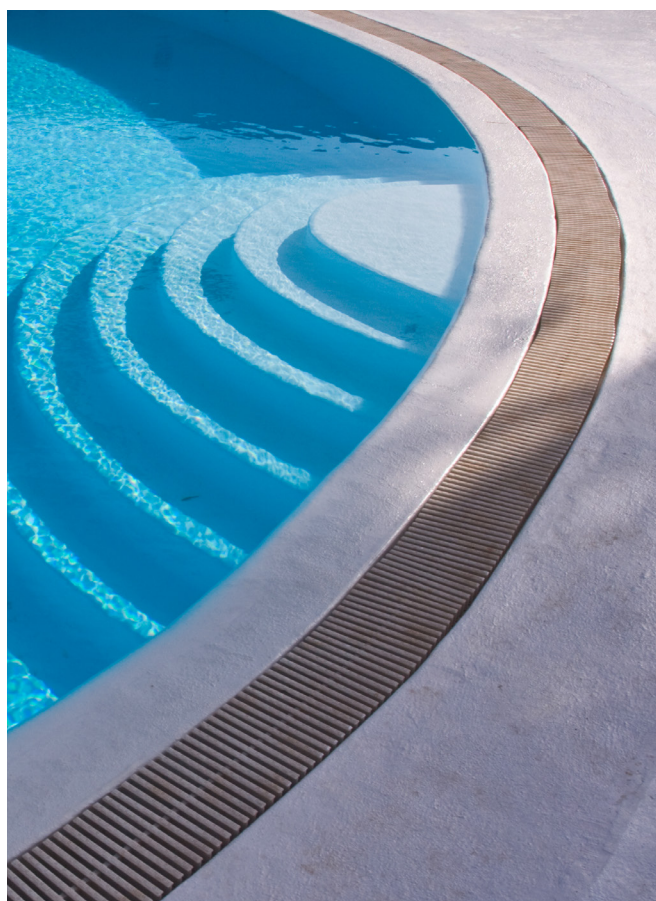
Step 3

FEATURES & ACCESSORIES



This is an area where you should not spare expense. Some features or accessories are going to be dramatically less costly when they are included in the original design of your new pool. Since your pool is built to offer a lifetime of enjoyment, you definitely want to think far into the future about the features you may want or need.

CUSTOM STEPS



BUILT-IN FUN

Built-in features like custom entries, tanning ledges, and swim-up bars can add more fun and function to your pool. With a gunite pool, steps can be large and flowing, offering plenty of space to lounge, sit or play. With a beach entry, you can walk out like you are in the ocean – but they can also take up a lot of space – so, depending on your pool size you may consider ledges. Ledges can be placed anywhere and offer an area to lounge or sit or even large enough for toddlers to play.

Water Features like waterfalls, jets and fountains can bring a touch of beauty to any pool and offer romance and relax-

ation. Using water features combined with ambient lighting can take any pool theme to the next level. Built in spas or spillover spas can connect to your pool transforming it into a whole other level of entertainment. Add a spa and your pool instantly becomes more elegant, exotic and more fun!

WATERSLIDES & DIVING

A swimming pool waterslide integrated into the pool landscape gives you the feel of a water park in your backyard! Diving can be anything from the traditional diving board to a beautiful diving platform built from natural rock.

WATER SLIDE



ROCK WATERFALL

DIVE ROCK



BEACH ENTRY

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Step 4

FUNCTION & MAINTENANCE

WATER TYPE

You can choose to have either saltwater or freshwater in your pool. Both saltwater and conventional freshwater pools use chlorine to keep the water clean and sparkling. The difference is that the saltwater pool system creates its own chlorine, while the freshwater requires that chlorine be added continually.

If you have ever been in a saltwater pool you'll notice the salt is not the same high level as in the ocean but rather the amount of salt found in a teardrop. You may be able to feel the difference because the water leaves your skin feeling softer. However, the saltwater can be more corrosive to metal ladders and equipment.

Saltwater equipment will add to the initial purchase price, however, salt costs much less than chlorine so the savings in chemicals more than pays for the extra equipment cost in the long run.



POOL INTERIOR FINISH

The decision on what interior finish to use will depend on looks, economy and what kind of durability factor you wish to achieve. While plaster is the economical choice during the initial build, it is highly susceptible to discoloring, staining, and harboring bacteria due to the porous nature of the material. Aggregates, on the other hand, can be a little rough to the touch but they last much longer and require less maintenance than plaster. Often, homeowners choose aggregates for the wide variety of colors available - from white to blue to black and everything in between.



PEBBLE TEC FINISH

White Plaster Finish

Standard white plaster remains a popular choice in spite of the innumerable choices that have come into the market in recent years. It is simply a combination of white cement, white marble aggregate and water and that makes for an economical choice that will give you that classic swimming pool look. When filled with water, white plaster finish creates a brilliant, clean, light blue appearance. It is also very smooth to the touch. Although it is the most economical approach, it is susceptible to developing blemishes in appearance over time especially if chemistry is not balanced.



WHITE PLASTER FINISH

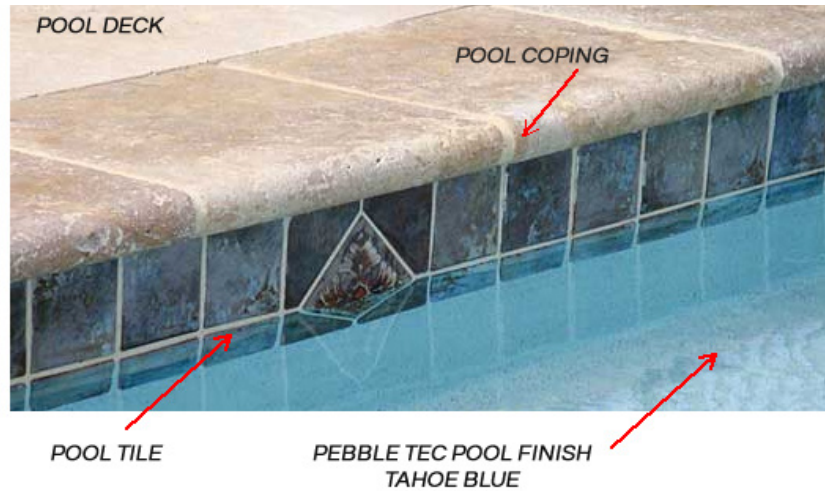
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Aggregate Finish

Aggregates are basically a very specialized form of ceramic-coated sand that comes in a variety of products. Some (like PebbleTec) are made up of naturally polished pebbles creating a slightly bumpy texture with a non-slip surface. These finishes come in a wide variety of colors and textures delivering an elegant, long-lasting beauty combined with resilience and durability. While it is more expensive than plaster initially, it has more longevity and the ability to hide chemical residue.



POOL DECK

Pool decking should be a minimum of 3 feet around the perimeter of the pool but often is larger in areas where you want people to sunbath, sit or entertain. It can even extend from the pool to provide pathways to the pool house, home, garden or entertainment areas. While a pool deck may essentially look and function like a patio, it has unique requirements for slip resistance, sun reflectivity and orientation.

Concrete is the most economical option for your pool deck. Decorative concrete, pavers or natural stone are some of the more expensive options that can complement the exterior of the home & merge with the outdoor environment or décor.

POOL COPING AND TILE

The coping is the capstone for the beam, and is used to finish the pools edge and bring it up flush with the pool deck. Pre-cast concrete coping with a bull-nose front edge has been the standard for many years. Modern designs are making use of bull-nose brick coping in many colors and textures. Flagstone is also a popular choice.

Ceramic tiles may be used as a border by installing a row of tile at the water line, or they may be installed to cover the entirety of the pool's walls and floor. This adds an attractive accent to your pools finish and design.

FILTERS

There are three main types of swimming pool filters, D.E. (which stands for Diatomaceous Earth) Sand and Cartridge pool filters. There is not a right or wrong choice here, it's more about what you prefer. Sand filters are less expensive to purchase, though slightly more expensive to operate. They will generally keep the pool water clear, though probably not as sparkling as the water cleaned by DE. And lastly, Cartridge filters

are really easy to clean or replace with no backwashing ever. So, discuss with your pool builder the pros and cons as it relates to operation and the size of your pool before you decide.

CLEANING

With today's technology, you're able to automate much of the cleaning processes, making maintenance less of a chore and pool ownership more relaxing. Talk to your builder about the options before building so the appropriate plumbing can be installed to accommodate the automation options you choose.

COVER

With an inground gunite pool, you have a couple options for winter. You can use a standard cover or safety cover. A standard cover is relatively cheap and made of a tarp-like material held down by water bags. You have to be vigilant during the winter and pump-off any excess water that accumulates on top of the cover. You also have to be wary of any person or animal falling through the cover. A safety cover has a trampoline type look that is custom sized for your pool. It has spring-loaded straps and anchored into the concrete. It is usually made of a mesh material so that it will hold a person or animal but it will let water pass into the pool so there is no accumulation.

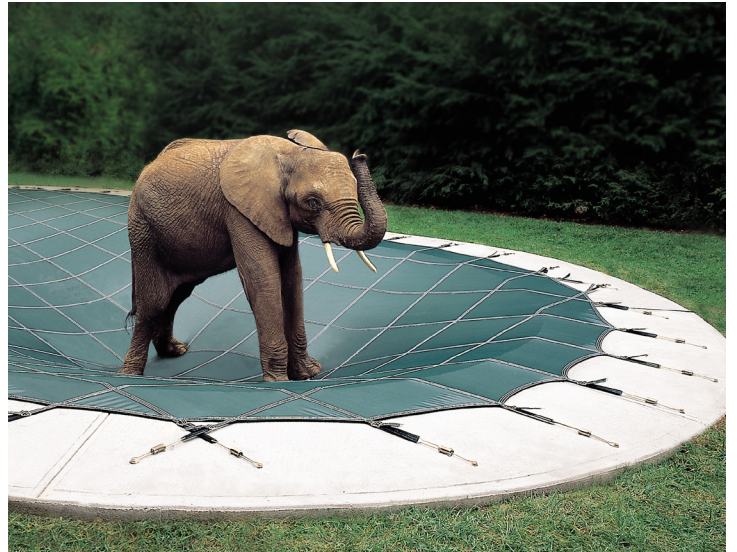
With a safety cover, the water usually takes a few days to clear but there is little (if any) winter maintenance.

HEATING

If you live in the Northeast, a heater can extend your swimming season by up to several months. Heating your pool can be accomplished with a heat pump, gas or solar system. If you're planning to heat your pool, gas heaters are the least expensive to purchase, but they typically have the highest operation and maintenance costs. Many pool owners opt instead for electric heat pumps, which take longer than gas to warm the pool, but they're more energy-efficient, costing \$200 to \$300 less to operate per swimming season.

Regardless of heating system, covering the pool with a solar blanket to trap heat and reduce evaporation will promote lower operating costs.

SAFETY COVER



STANDARD COVER



Step 5

FINANCING & COSTS

Building a new pool is a major investment. Most homeowners opt to finance some or all of the purchase.

Financing through a home equity loan or a secured mortgage usually makes sense since the interest rates with these methods are the lowest.

If you are financing, it's truly important to consider everything you will want now and into the future. Skimping on a feature here or there to reduce the price of your pool may seem practical. But, you need to consider the fact that the feature you eliminate only adds \$20/month now but may cost thousands of dollars later.

If you are worried about affordability, talk to your builder about the **practical alternatives**. Things like water slides and lighting can be affordably eliminated now or upgraded later while built-in features like steps and shelves are way more costly to add after the build.

Most people don't build a pool in order to increase the value of their home. However, a well planned and well-built pool can add value to your home. *And, it can certainly add value to your life and enhance your enjoyment of life – those are things **you can't put a price tag on.***



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