

Your new spa has arrived! But before you take the first of many dips, you will need to balance the water. But how do you start?

This guide will help you feel confident as you go through the initial start-up. Taking time to balance the water now will make it easier to maintain as you enjoy your spa.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- Always check the control panel for messages and the water temperature.
- Never enter the water if the temperature is above 104 °F per safety recommendations.
- Do not drink alcohol while using your spa.
- Always shower before using the spa so detergents, lotions, and body oils do not affect water quality.
- Maintain proper PH and sanitizer levels for safe use.
- Do not mix chemicals before adding to the water and add each chemical separately.
- Always add chemicals to the water, not water to the chemicals.
- Always store chemicals according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep chemicals out of the reach of children.

MUST-HAVE SPA CHEMICALS FOR CLEAN WATER

All spas require chemicals to keep the water clean and safe to use. While you won't use all of these regularly, these products are helpful to have on hand when maintaining spa water. These products might have different names, depending on the manufacturer or where you buy your chemicals.

Chlorinating Granules - Chlorine sanitizer; look for the word dichlor

Foam Gone - Temporarily removes foam

Metal Protect - Helps remove heavy metals in the water

Oil Gone - Enzyme that helps break down oils

Oxidizer Shock - Oxidizing agent used to free up chlorine

pH Down - Lowers pH and total alkalinity

pH UP - Raises pH and total alkalinity

Spa Brite - Treats cloudy water by combining with small particles so that they can be trapped by the spa filter

Scale Defense - Helps prevent chalky mineral build-up

Filter Cleaner - Although it is not a product you add to your spa water, it is important to regularly clean your filter(s) with this to maintain clean and safe conditions in the spa water.

KNOW YOUR SOURCE WATER

Knowing what your water is like makes it easier to know what chemicals you need to balance it out. It can be helpful to take a moment to test the water you intend to fill your spa with and jot down the pH, alkalinity, and other readings. Source water can fluctuate over time, so always test and don't assume it's always going to be the same each time you fill.

INITIAL SPA START-UP

1 Filling your spa. Attach a pre-filter to your garden hose. This pre-filter, which is available at your Master Spas retailer, will help remove minerals from your source water to make balancing your water easier. *Pro Tip:* Never use more than 50% softened water to fill your spa. Too soft of water can be prone to foaming, cause unstable PH levels and cause wear on components in the spa.

2 Add a sequestering agent. A sequestering agent will help remove suspended minerals in the water. Each manufacturer has a different name for this product; look for names such Metal Protect or Metal Gone, which indicate to add this when filling. *Pro Tip:* Allow water to circulate and filter for at least 30 minutes (or per bottle recommendations) before adding any other chemicals.

3 Test the water. Check your pH and alkalinity levels using the test strips in the start-up kit. *Pro Tip:* The pH should be 7.4 - 7.6 and the total alkalinity 100 - 120 ppm (parts per million). Ideal calcium hardness levels should be between 150 and 250 ppm.

4 Adjust alkalinity and pH. Use increase or decrease products as needed to adjust. Always use manufacturer's directions on the bottle when adding chemicals to your spa. *Pro Tip:* Once the total alkalinity is in the 100 - 120 range, the pH should stabilize.

5 Wait 30 minutes and retest water. Doing so allows the chemicals time to work their magic. After testing, continue adjusting with increase or decrease products, if necessary. *Pro Tip:* Remember to add one chemical product at a time, like pH Up and then test the water again, before adding anything else to adjust another level.

6 Add sanitizer. Now it's time to add concentrated chlorinating granules to the water. At initial start-up, you will aim for a free chlorine level of 8 ppm. Do not enter the spa until the chlorine levels drop below 5 ppm. *Pro Tip:* If the free chlorine reading is lower than total chlorine, add an oxidizer shock.

HELPFUL RESOURCES 24/7

Remember, help is always a click away. Master Spas has a growing video library of how-to videos and online resources to make water care and spa ownership easy. Go to [MasterSpas.com/resources](https://www.MasterSpas.com/resources) for more.

WEEKLY/MONTHLY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

BEFORE EACH USE	Check spa water with a test strip for proper pH and sanitation levels. Adjust accordingly to the proper levels of 7.4-7.6 pH and 2-4 ppm free chlorine. People should not enter the spa if the water is cloudy, if total chlorine levels are above 5ppm or if no chlorine levels are present.
AFTER EACH USE	Test water and treat accordingly to maintain proper pH and free chlorine levels for continued sanitary conditions after use. The amount of people using the spa (and duration of use) will deplete chlorine levels and can cause free chlorine to test below total chlorine, resulting in a more frequent need to use an oxidizer/non-chlorine shock treatment.
3 TIMES A WEEK	Test water using chemical test strips. Adjust alkalinity, pH and sanitizer accordingly.
AS NEEDED	If the water looks hazy, make sure pH is in the proper range and treat with chlorinating granules to maintain free chlorine levels. Treat with non-chlorine shock (oxidizer shock) if free chlorine is less than total chlorine.
ONCE A MONTH	Soak your filter elements overnight in a container with filter cleaner and then rinse with clean water before re-inserting. Note that the EcoPur® Charge filter should never be cleaned with filter cleaner, just rinse with water.
EVERY 180 DAYS	Drain and refill your spa, replacing EcoPur® Charge filter with a new one and repeat the start-up procedure. The other filter should be replaced at least once a year.

SPA WATER MAINTENANCE TROUBLE-SHOOTING GUIDE

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	HOW TO FIX IT
CHLORINE ODOR	Excessive chlorine	Apply oxidizer/non-chlorine shock treatment
	Low pH	Adjust pH if necessary
WATER ODOR	Low levels of sanitizer	Adjust sanitizer level with chlorinating granules
	pH out of range	Adjust pH level if necessary
	Bacteria or algae growth	Adjust sanitizer with chlorinating granules
CLOUDY WATER	Dirty filters or inadequate filtration	Clean filters with filter cleaner and adjust filtration
	Unbalanced water chemistry	Adjust chemistry levels
	Old water	Change spa water
EYE OR SKIN IRRITATION	Unsanitary water	Adjust according to spa test strip results
	Free chlorine level above 5 ppm	Allow level to drop below 5 ppm
	Poor sanitizer/pH levels	Adjust according to spa test strip results
FOAMING	High levels of body oils, lotions, soap, etc.	Add small amount of foam gone and check water chemistry
SCUM DEPOSITS AT WATERLINE	Body oils and dirt	Use multi-purpose cleaner to clean spa surface and add oil gone to spa water
CHALKY, WHITE SCALE DEPOSITS	Minerals present in the water and lack of sequestering agent use	When tub is drained, use a multi-purpose cleaner or white vinegar and scrub with a soft cloth.

RECOMMENDED CHEMICAL LEVELS*

Free Chlorine 2 - 4 ppm

pH 7.4 - 7.6

Total Alkalinity 100 - 120 ppm

Calcium Hardness 150 - 250 ppm

NOTE: Do not enter the spa when total chlorine levels are above 5 ppm.

*Recommended levels are based on industry standards for permanently installed and portable residential spas and swim spas.

COVER

Always leave cover open for at least 15 minutes after adding any chemical to the spa water.

See cover manufacturer's instructions for further details regarding cover care.

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Check out our library of how-to videos and other online resources. Go to MasterSpas.com/resources for more.