

Hot tubs are supposed to help you relax. So why does thinking about water maintenance give you high school chemistry class flashbacks?

Hot Tub Chemistry really doesn't have to be difficult to keep the water in your hot tub clean, though. By being aware of just a handful of things, it's easy to keep your hot tub looking (and smelling) good.

Testing and Adjusting

There are three critical levels you need to test and adjust for:

	Min	Max
Alkalinity	80	120
pH	7.2	7.8
Sanitizer (Chlorine)	1.5	3.0
(Bromine)	3.0	5.0

A fourth factor to consider is the amount of much organic material in the water... how often is it used, and by how many people?

All four of these things are connected. Organic material in the water feeds bacteria (smell) and algae (cloudy, green water). Sanitizer slows down the growth of the gooey stuff. PH levels affect how well the sanitizer works, and alkalinity determines how stable the PH levels are.

To keep these elements under control, you'll need 5 things: test strips, alkalinity adjuster, PH adjuster, sanitizer and shock chemicals.

Once you've dipped your strip:

- Compare the color of the strip with the color swatches on the packaging
- Check alkalinity first, then PH, then sanitizer levels
- If any of those things is not where it should be, add the appropriate chemical to adjust it
- If more than one thing needs adjusting, adjust them one at a time.

- Add the first chemical and wait several hours, or overnight
- Test again and add the next chemical if still necessary
- Repeat if needed

Sanitizers

The two most common types of sanitizers are bromine and chlorine. They both do the same thing – inhibit the growth of bacteria and algae – in much the same way. Some people find they are sensitive to one or the other and experience skin or eye irritation, so don't be afraid to try switching to the other if the water bothers you shortly after a treatment.

*Mineral systems like Frog @ease or Nature 2 supplement bromine or chlorine and allow users to enjoy lower levels of those chemicals. Simply maintain sanitizer levels as indicated with your system, and replace the mineral cartridges every 3-4 months. It's still critical check alkalinity and pH as indicated in these instructions

Shocking

No matter what sanitizer you use or how carefully you check and adjust, biological matter will build up in the hot tub with use. A shock treatment takes care of this problem by oxidizing the organics in the water before they can feed the bacteria. It also helps get rid of sanitizer residue that remains after the sanitizer has done its job.

It is recommended that you shock your hot tub once a week – more often if it's seeing heavy use. If your levels are all good, but the water is a bit cloudy or doesn't quite smell right, it's time for a shock. You should also shock the tub if you haven't used it for an extended period of time.

Filter

Chemicals alone aren't effective if your filter is dirty. Remove and rinse the filter with a garden hose at least once a month – as often as once a week if you are experiencing cloudy water and heavy bather loads. You can also soak the filter in a degreasing filter cleaner as needed. Replace it at least once a year.



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