



Custom Swimming Pools

ULTIMATE PLANNING GUIDE





If you want to be sure that your pool build is the perfect experience, then you will love this handy little guide. This was not written to sell features of a pool or spa, nor to promote a particular pool builder. Instead, this was written specifically for you, the homeowner, to help you get exactly what you want, no matter how inexperienced you may be. The secret to getting The Perfect Swimming Pool or Spa is to learn more about the building process.

TOP 10 BENEFITS OF A POOL OR SPA

Are you aware that just immersing yourself in a pool or spa up to your shoulders without swimming or exercising has health benefits? Soaking in hot water has even more health benefits. Here are some incredible science-based health benefits of a pool or spa.

Has No Age Limit--Improves Flexibility--An Amazing Weight Loss Tool--Speeds Up Recovery of Injuries--Increases Home Value--Relieves Stress
Alleviates Anxiety & Depression--Boosts Heart Health & Lung Capacity
Fun Social Connector--Improves Backyard Aesthetic & Enjoyment

COMMON POOL BUILDING MYTHS

As with every industry, product, or service, there can be a lot of false information you come across while researching the internet. Spending too much time reviewing information which may be inaccurate can lead to you spending a lot of time trying to figure out what is true and what is not! With that in mind, we wanted to provide you with some common myths that you might find on the internet.

MYTH: Pool Building Investment Returned When You Sell

It is a pervasive myth that all upgrades or home building projects will be recouped. It is probable that you will get at least a partial return on your pool or spa investment. But the percentage you get back when you sell depends on what you do and the quality of the work and personal preferences of future buyers and popular trends.

MYTH: Always Pick The Expensive Material Options

When choosing materials for your project, you should always choose the options that are the most functional and aesthetically pleasing for your backyard and home, regardless of the size of your swimming pool project.

MYTH: Building Work Does Not Require Permits

Neglecting to get the proper permits can cost you a lot of money. A city or county inspector might find out that work is being done and may stop by to check your permit. If you do not have one, they may order all or part of the work to be demolished and redone. You could get hit with fines and fees also. The good news is that a qualified builder typically handles all permits.

MYTH: Building Projects Always Take Longer than Expected

It is important to hire someone that has experience building pools. Before beginning, any professional builders will discuss your expectations. They will inspect the premises to determine what materials will be needed, calculate how long the job will take, and look for potential problems.

COMMON POOL BUILDING MYTHS

**MYTH:
A Darker Pool
Color Will Heat
My Pool**

While a darker pebble finish may help heat the water a tiny bit, the key factor at play in naturally heating your pool is exposure to sunlight. The use of cover and a pool heater is the best way to heat your pool.

**MYTH:
Swimming Pools
Are Limited In
Shape And Size**

Fiberglass and Vinyl Liner pools are limited in shape and size. However, Gunite pools allow for customization, and can match any shape you decide! Walk-in steps, beach entry, benches, waterfalls, and all sorts of features can also be incorporated to spice up the shape and features of your pool.

**MYTH:
There's No
Chlorine In A
Saltwater Pool**

This is false. Saltwater pools generate chlorine in an electrical process known as electrolysis. It creates chlorine from the dissolved salt in the water. There is just as much chlorine in a saltwater pool as there is in any other kind. The only difference is the way the chlorine gets into the water.

**MYTH:
A Swimming Pool
Won't Enhance
The Value Of My
Home**

If your real estate agent told you this, you may want to consult a different agent. Buyers love homes that have swimming pools. Think about it like this: if you live in a hot region of the United States, chances are that a potential buyer will be more likely to buy your home if it has a pool.

**MYTH:
A Pool Won't Fit In
My Backyard**

While many people are apprehensive about installing a pool because they feel that their backyard does not have enough space, there is no standard size or shape for a pool. Most pool companies can configure a pool design to fit any backyard.

Pool building myths are common. Misinformation about such projects gets easily transferred from one homeowner to the next. Clarifying those misconceptions saves homeowners extra expense and frustration.

5 BIGGEST MISTAKES MADE BY HOMEOWNERS

Starting any home building project is always momentous. For most people, it involves living with the work in progress – not to mention lots of decisions, excitement about the changes, and hopefully, a final reveal that makes everyone happy. Before you start your journey of looking at samples and design drawings, make sure you do not make these building mistakes as outlined by builders themselves.

1. Not Knowing What You Want

Before you even begin interviewing pool builders, make some hard decisions. This is the time to ask yourself what you want to accomplish, and why. When you can communicate these specific goals to your builder, you will be able to tap into their knowledge on how to make your vision come to life. Doing research on materials and ideas you like or dislike will only help when you sit down with your builder – and help you feel confident about your choices.

2. Really Thinking About Your Lifestyle

Do you have an active household? Are children and pets a part of your life? Do you need something that will be low maintenance? Who will be using it? Questions like these may seem simple, but they will tell you and the pool builder a lot about how to determine features for your pool build.



3. Neglecting Window Shopping

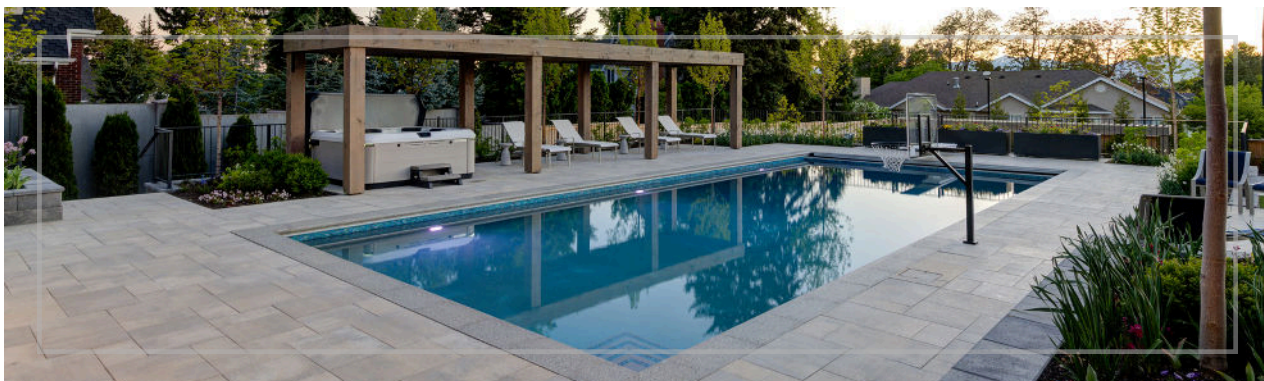
Get out there and explore your friend's pools or view photos of pools or spas online. Find out what works best in your area and what does not. If your home has features you are proud of, you can see how others with similar homes have added to the aesthetic in their backyard pool or landscaping. Home shows are another great way to learn about the latest innovations and styles that work well for our area. It is one of the few times that you will be able to stock up on information and brochures from a wide variety of businesses – and you will get lots of inspiration.

4. Being Realistic About Your Budget

Once you determine your goals for your building project, set your budget. And, once you set your budget, add on an additional 20% of that amount as a reserve. Do not move ahead unless you can assure that you have that cushion in place. With your budget and reserve set aside, you will not only reduce your stress levels, but you might even have a surplus at the end of the project.

5. Choosing Your Builder Carefully

The first company you interview may not be the best choice. By talking to at least three builders and getting quotes, you will have a firm idea of your project scope, and possibly learn about some items you did not consider. Be sure that any company you work with has extensive experience in the type of pool you are building and has worked on many similar projects. Excellent communication and the ability to listen to your needs are essential for any builder relationship.



TOP 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR POOL BUILDER

One of the best things you can do to ensure your building project goes smoothly is to treat your relationship with your builder like you would any other relationship. After all, this is a person to whom you will be entrusting a significant amount of your time, money, and, of course, your home. Do not be afraid to ask lots of questions. A good builder wants you to ask questions so you can be sure you are on the same page every step of the way. Here are some questions you can start with:

1

What is included in the price?

Pool building involves a lot of different elements and moving parts, all of which can be difficult to keep track of. A great way to ensure nothing falls through the cracks is to ask about what—exactly—is included in your builder's pricing. The last thing you want is to come to the end of a project only to find that things you expected to be completed will cost extra time and money.

2

Can you get the materials I want?

A building project is a major investment, both financially and with your time, so you do not want to end up with a final product that does not look like what you had in mind. To prevent that from happening, it is important to be clear on the types of materials you want to use. Do not make the mistake of letting a builder talk you into using materials that are almost what you want, but not quite. Be open about the specifics of the look and feel that you are after and bring photos to further illustrate your ideas.

TOP 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR POOL BUILDER

3

Is the company going to be around in the future?

The most beneficial builder relationship is one that can last a lifetime. That is because the builder you hire is going to become intimately familiar with your needs, desires, and style sensibilities, which will make him/her far better equipped to make any changes or updates you would like to get done in the future. So, you want to be clear on the future of your relationship and feel confident that if any issues, problems, or projects arise in your future, they will be there to have your back.

4

What factors can affect the timeline?

A primary challenge of a building project is waiting for that project to be completed. There is no way around it—quality renovations take time and, often, a whole lot of it. For a strong, realistic handle on your project's timeline, ask your builder what factors will affect it. It is almost inevitable that unexpected obstacles will arise, but if you stay informed on how those obstacles will impact the length of your project, you will be able to plan accordingly and rest easier.

5

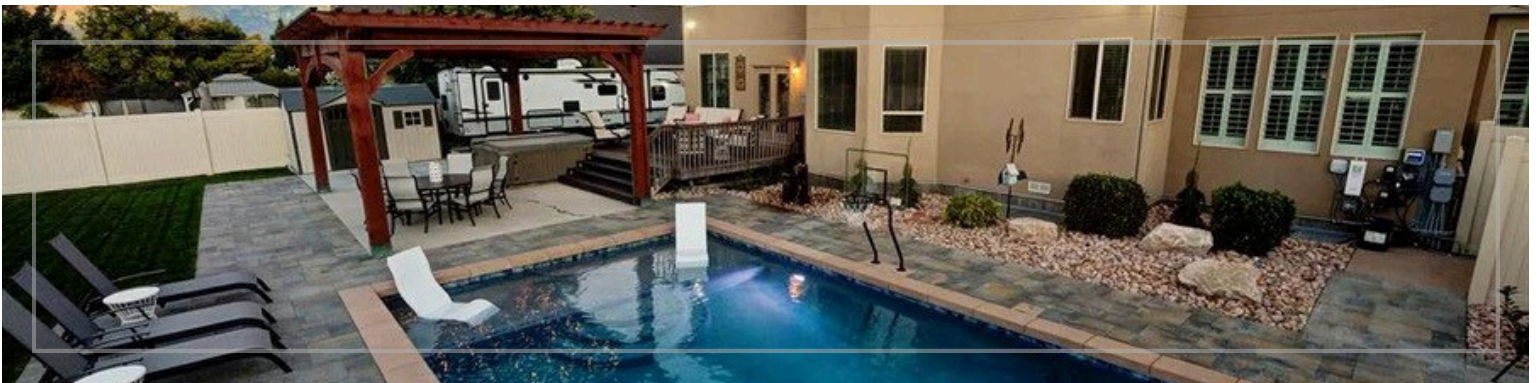
How will you stay in touch with me through the process?

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of strong communication when it comes to making your building project run as smoothly as possible. As mentioned, it is an inevitability that unforeseen obstacles will come up throughout the process, and time is money. To make sure those obstacles do not slow down the project keep an open line of communication so that you can answer questions and make important decisions as soon as they come up. The more open and communicative you are with each other, the more trust you will have in the process. Withholding questions or limiting your communication can have costly consequences.

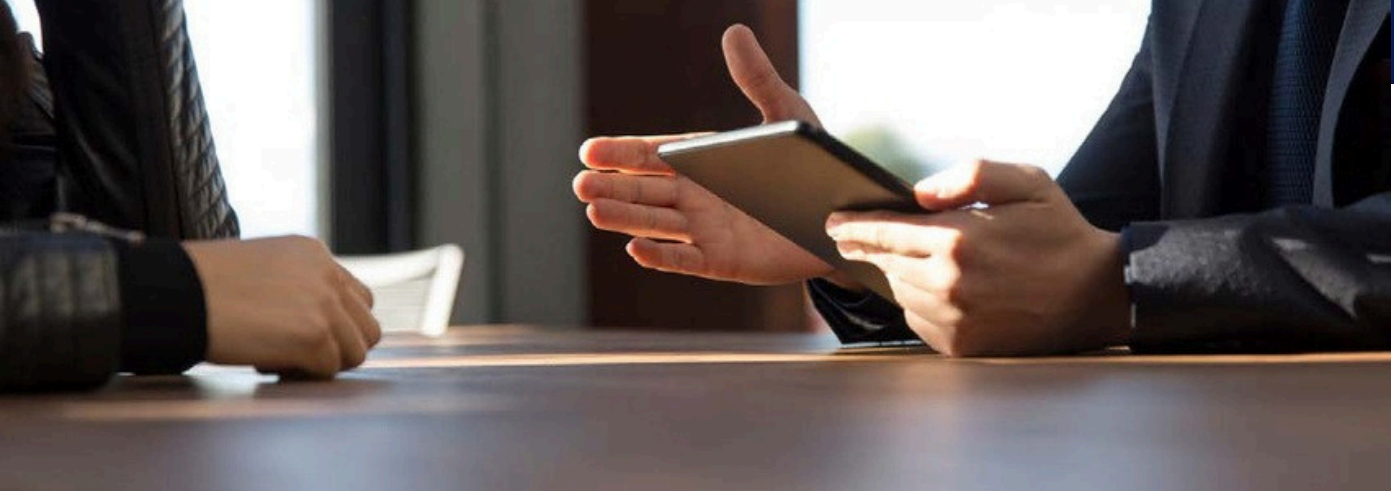
PREPARING FOR YOUR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Once you schedule a face-to-face meeting with a potential pool builder, there are several things you can do to prepare for this meeting.

- ▶ If there is more than one person making the decision in your household, make sure all parties are present at the meeting.
- ▶ Make sure you set aside enough time for the meeting. One hour is an absolute minimum; two hours may be better.
- ▶ Make sure you have your pool or spa ideas folder so you can show the builder what you like, and what you are looking for.
- ▶ Grab a copy of the plot of your property if you have it. It can be extremely helpful with answering questions such as “easements” and other issues. If your neighborhood has a Homeowners Association, it may be helpful to provide that information to the builder also.
- ▶ If you have a budget in mind, or have been pre-approved for a loan, make sure you communicate that to the builder. Keep in mind that most homeowners have no idea how much it will cost to build a pool or spa. In fact, the builder will have to explore all the different options and possibilities before they can provide an accurate proposal, including some you may not have considered yet.



PREPARING FOR YOUR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING



- ▶ Go into the meeting with an idea of what you want the outcome to be from the meeting.
 - ▷ If you have no plans to make a final buying decision that day, for example, let the builder know that up front. That will alleviate the pressure to do so.
 - ▷ If you might make a buying decision that day, make sure you are prepared to read the full contract to understand exactly what is included and what is not.
 - ▷ Are you prepared to make a down payment or finance the build?
 - ▷ What happens if you want to think about it for a few days?

Bottom line, it is better to approach this meeting with an open mind, and focus more on “what you want,” rather than “what you’re willing to spend.” If you focus too much on the price up front, the builder might be reluctant to show you certain features that you would really prefer to have, if you only know about them up front.

WHAT MAKES A BUILD PROJECT SUCCESSFUL?

Everyone will probably have their own definition of “success,” but we feel a successful build project is one where:

- ALL your expectations were either met or exceeded
- You are left feeling very pleased and satisfied with the results
- The quality of work is exceptional and enduring
- You felt comfortable with the workers that worked on your project
- A level of respect was felt by you and the building team
- You feel that you paid a fair price for the value you received
- The project has added value to your life and home

Having these criteria met obviously leads toward you being completely satisfied. Every smart builder wants success that leads to referrals for their business. If your builder has a long list of positive referrals online, chances are high that you will be satisfied as well.

