



OHIO POOLS

DIY Pool Process and Frequently asked questions



Planning

Welcome — we're excited to walk you through the basics of a DIY inground pool. Like any successful project, everything starts with solid planning. Before you ever break ground, it's important to think through the fundamentals: the size and shape of your pool, where it will sit in your yard, and how the elevation of your property will affect the build.

You'll also want to consider how the finished pool area will tie into your existing backyard. Will you need a retaining wall? How much fencing will be required? How much concrete do you want around the pool? These decisions can significantly impact the overall cost of the project.

Another critical step is checking for easements, zoning restrictions, or setback requirements that could limit where a pool can be placed. Many homeowners overlook this part, but it can make or break a project.

It's also important to evaluate your current backyard setup. Do you have irrigation lines that will need to be removed or repaired? Are there trees you want to preserve? And remember — most construction equipment will need to access the backyard through the front or side of the property, which can lead to temporary yard or driveway disruption.

The good news is you're not navigating this alone. Our team works on pool projects every day, and we're here to guide you through the planning process, answer questions, and help you make informed decisions from the very beginning.

Time Frame

Once you have a solid plan in place or already know the size and shape of the pool you want, the next major factor to understand is timing. Whether you're ordering a basic pool or a more elaborate design, the process is essentially the same because every kit is custom-built specifically for you.

From the moment you finalize your kit, it's safe to expect an average lead time of about six weeks for manufacturing and delivery. This window ensures that all components are made to your specifications and shipped directly to your door.

The advantage of this lead time is that it gives you the opportunity to prepare properly. You can schedule contractors, line up equipment, or plan your own DIY timeline with confidence, knowing approximately when your pool kit will arrive and when you can begin the build.

The construction process



Layout & Excavation Preparation

Once you have your finalized design, this is where your backyard transformation truly begins. Either you as the homeowner or your excavation/landscape contractor will come out to the site and lay out the pool in the yard. During this stage, the exact elevation is confirmed and set, ensuring the pool sits correctly in relation to the rest of your property.

The pool shape is then painted or marked on the ground, giving a clear visual outline of the project. Any final adjustments to placement, orientation, or elevation can be made at this time before excavation begins.



Excavation

Excavation is the stage where the physical shape of your pool finally comes to life. A skilled equipment operator is crucial here—precision saves both time and money. The more accurately the hole is dug, the less backfill and base material will be needed to achieve the final pool shape.

Be prepared for your backyard to look rough during this phase. Depending on the size and complexity of your pool, as well as whether dirt needs to be hauled away or brought in, the excavation process can vary in length. This is completely normal and part of the transformation.

It's also important to understand that soil conditions differ by region. In some areas, hitting rock is a real possibility. If rock is encountered, it will need to be jackhammered and removed to reach the correct depth and profile for your pool. This can add time and cost, but it's a necessary step to ensure the pool is built correctly.

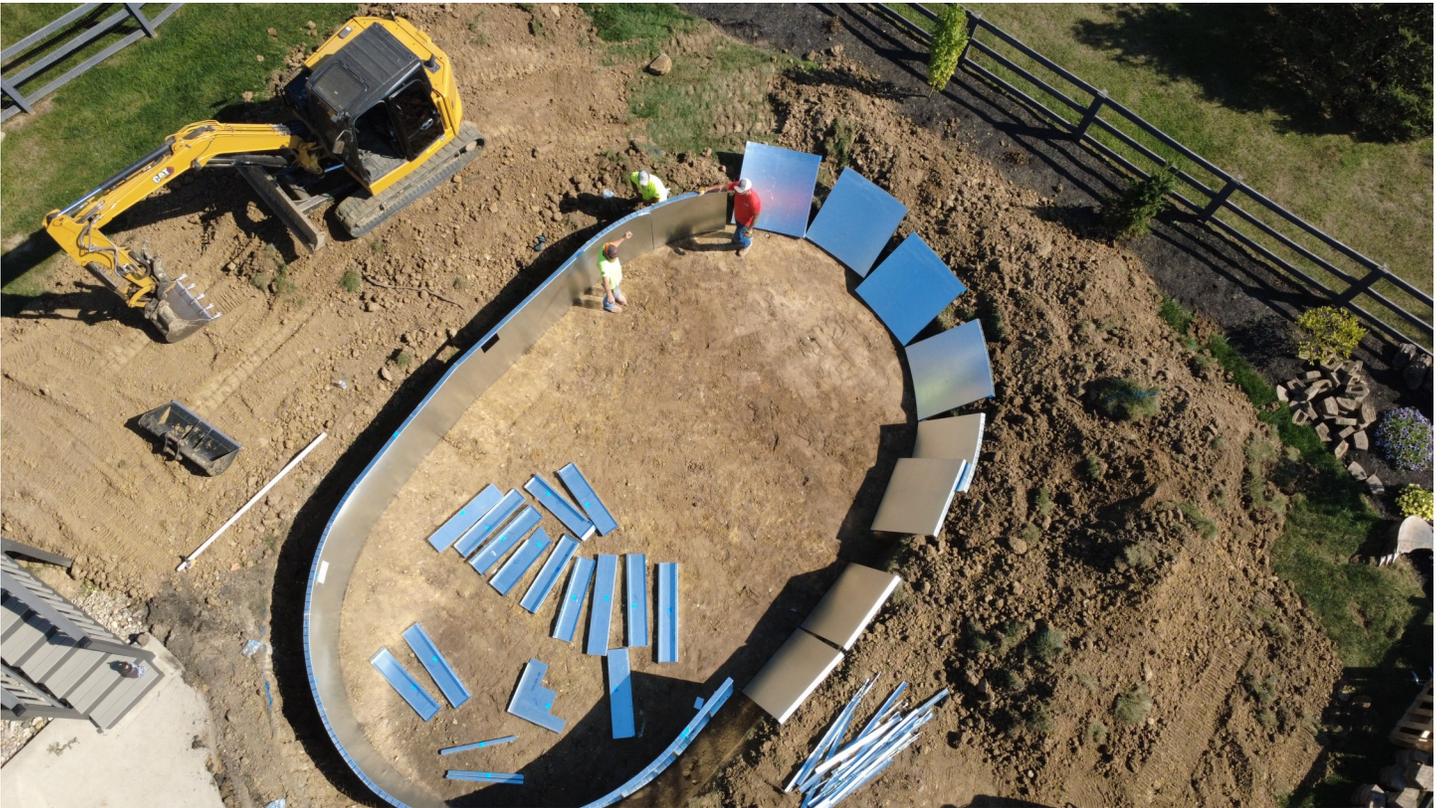


Drainage & Extras

Proper planning is essential when it comes to drainage. Just like the possibility of hitting rock during excavation, you may also uncover existing downspouts, sump pump lines, or other underground utilities. The good news is that while the equipment is already on-site, these lines can be rerouted and integrated into your new drainage plan for the pool and future decking.

It's also important to understand that any pool installed in the ground requires a way to relieve groundwater pressure. This is typically done through a well point, sump line, or natural drainage system. Without proper drainage, hydraulic pressure can build up behind the pool walls or beneath the floor, potentially causing long-term issues. Planning for this from the start ensures your pool remains stable and protected for years to come.





Pool Wall Assembly

Once excavation is complete, the actual pool structure can start taking shape. If the dig was done carefully and accurately, this phase is usually straightforward. All of our kits come with detailed diagrams, and every panel and component is clearly labeled—so in many ways, it's like assembling “adult LEGOs.”

As you build, it's important to stay mindful of keeping the pool square and as close to level as possible. Small adjustments are much easier to make at this stage than later on. This is where the old saying “measure twice, cut once” really applies—but for pools, think of it as measure ten times, double-check ten times. The more you verify that everything is level, square, and aligned now, the better. Once the concrete is poured and cured, making changes becomes extremely difficult and costly. Also while the concrete truck is there, this is the perfect time to pour your plumbing pad where all your equipment will set.





Wall Check & Plumbing Installation

After the concrete has cured, it's crucial to recheck that all pool walls are level and plumb. This is the time to make any final fine-tuning adjustments using the turnbuckles. Small corrections now will ensure a clean, accurate fit for the liner and a smoother overall build.

With the walls confirmed, you can move on to plumbing the pool. Using your layout diagram, you'll already have each panel in its correct position, making it easy to install the return fittings and skimmers directly onto the designated wall panels. From there, the plumbing lines are run through the trench and back to your equipment pad.

Once you reach the pad, the layout will depend on the specific equipment you've chosen—pumps, filters, heaters, salt systems, automation, and so on. No matter the setup, it's always important to leave yourself adequate space for future upgrades, additions, or service work. A well-planned equipment pad makes maintenance easier and far less costly down the road.



Pressure Testing & Backfilling

After the plumbing and pool lights are installed, it's highly recommended to pressure-test all lines. Catching an issue now can prevent costly repairs on a brand-new pool. Even with quality equipment, manufacturers can occasionally have defects in fittings, and small installation mistakes are much easier to correct before the pool is backfilled.

Once all lines pass the pressure test, you can begin backfilling the overdig around the pool to bring the surrounding grade up to the top of the pool wall. This step helps stabilize the structure and prepares the area for concrete and final landscaping.

If your project includes an automatic pool cover, this is also the stage when the cover box and track system will be installed.



Electrical Work

Once all backfilling is complete, it's time for the electrical phase. This is when your pool equipment, lighting, and automatic cover (if included) are wired and brought to life. It's also the ideal time to install any additional outdoor outlets you may want around the patio or pool area. Taking care of these electrical needs now ensures everything is safely integrated and ready before concrete, decking, or final landscaping begins.



Inspections & Decking Preparation

Once the electrical work is completed, most areas will require an inspection to verify proper bonding and electrical safety. After everything passes, you can move on to preparing the solid surface around the pool—commonly referred to as the decking.

Decking options are wide-ranging and can include concrete, pavers, or natural stone. Most pool manufacturers recommend at least an under-pour of concrete to lock in the pool's top beam and, if applicable, support the automatic cover system. Beyond that requirement, the design possibilities are nearly endless, allowing you to customize the look and feel of your outdoor space to match your vision.



SW OHIO POOLS LLC



Pool Bottom Installation

After the decking is complete, your pool finally starts to take on its finished look. This is when the pool bottom is installed. The material used for the bottom can vary depending on your region and installer preference—common options include solid concrete, grout, vermiculite, or a combination of these materials.

We always wait until the decking is finished before installing the bottom. This prevents any spills, splatter, or debris from the concrete or finishing process from damaging the bottom surface or the liner. Once the bottom is shaped, smoothed, and fully cured, the pool is ready for the liner installation.

Liner Installation

This is the stage where all your hard work truly pays off. Every careful measurement, every adjustment, and every double-check along the way leads to the moment the liner is hung— instant visual gratification as the pool finally looks like a pool.

Ideal weather and sunlight make the job easier, as a warm liner is more flexible and easier to position. With the liner in place, vacuums are applied behind it to pull the material tight against the walls and floor. Taking your time here to make small adjustments ensures a smooth, accurate fit.

Once the liner is set and vacuumed, you can begin adding water. As the pool fills, continue to monitor and adjust the liner to maintain a wrinkle-free finish. A properly installed liner, paired with balanced water chemistry, will last for many years.



Startup & Enjoyment

Once the water level reaches the proper height, you can start up your pump and officially begin enjoying the results of all your hard work. Welcome to pool ownership — the moment everything comes together.

Even though there may still be some final landscaping or finishing touches to complete around the pool, the best part is that you now have a fully functioning pool to enjoy while you wrap up the remaining details. It's the perfect reward for the effort you've put into creating your backyard oasis.



Final Thoughts

While there are many finer details involved in building a pool, this guide is designed to give you a clear understanding of the overall process. With a solid plan and the right team behind you, the build becomes far less intimidating than most people expect. You have the flexibility to take on as much—or as little—of the work as you're comfortable with, all while maximizing your savings and creating the backyard you've always envisioned.



Ready to Get Started?

If you're ready to begin planning your DIY pool project, our team at SW Ohio Pools is here to help. Reach out anytime — we're excited to guide you through every step of creating your dream backyard.

[SW Ohio Pools](https://www.swohiopools.com)

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Need Help Deciding What Works Best for Your Backyard?

If you're unsure which pool design or layout is right for your space, don't worry — expert help is just a message away. Reach out to **Tommy Bowers** at diypoolconsultants@gmail.com for personalized guidance and professional design support.

Want Help Deciding How Much of the Build You Want to Take On?

If you're looking for guidance on which parts of the project you want to handle yourself, online coaching is available. **Jonathan Portukanlian** offers videos, tutorials, and one-on-one support to help you confidently tackle any stage of the build. You can reach him at **502-381-8505** for personalized coaching.