

NEWS SPLASH

Winter 2015

ALL ABOUT POOL HEATERS

We have swimming pools in our backyard because we enjoy getting into the water. If the water is too cold, however, the pleasure of our pool's use is diminished.

Fortunately, we live in sunny Sarasota which helps keep our pools naturally warm. This doesn't mean the water is warm enough year-round though. According to the Florida Solar Energy Center, a caged pool will be 80°F or above from the end of May to mid-September, just 107 days. An uncaged pool will stay 80° or above for 144 days.

If we want to extend our pool's use, we need to do something. The least expensive method is to put a plastic blanket over the pool at night when heat escapes into cool night air. These blankets generally cost under \$200 and can extend your swim 'season' by about a month. They need to be removed from the pool in the morning and then put back on each night.

To add supplemental heat to our pools, we have three basic choices - solar panels, a gas heater or an electric heat pump. Each has its distinct use:

SOLAR - solar heat for your pool is almost free. All that is needed are black plastic panels placed on your roof's southern facing slope. The panel's size will duplicate the surface area of your pool.

When your pump is running, water is pushed up into the panels where it is warmed by the sun before flowing back into the pool. Generally, you can obtain about ten degrees of added heat with solar. If you also used a blanket nightly, you could expect 80° plus water from March to October.

Solar heating costs about \$2,500 to install with little to no operating costs. They usually last at least ten years.

GAS HEATERS - using natural gas or propane, a gas heater is a very quick yet expensive way to increase water temperature. This is why gas heaters are more common on smaller pools or pools with spas. They heat water effectively, operate in any temperature and offer year-round heating.

Gas heaters cost about \$2,500-3,500 installed and last about 5-10 years. Yearly operating cost, dependent upon use, could range from \$250 to \$2,500 or above.

ELECTRIC HEAT PUMPS - these type of pool heaters are most common in Florida, due to their low cost of use.

Heat pumps draw their heat from the surrounding air so they are essentially a form of solar heating, using the sun-warmed air from which to extract heat. The only electricity needed for a heat pump is to run a fan and a compressor.

A heat pump can maintain a swimming pool at 80-90°F as long as the outside temperature is above 45°. When below 45°, there is not enough 'heat' in the air to be extracted. Annual cost of use is about \$250-500.

Prices for heat pumps vary with the heating capacity but generally range from \$2,500-\$4,000. If the heat pump is not a replacement but a new installation, a separate electrical line may be needed.

Because of their relatively simple operation, heat pumps usually carry a 5 year warranty and can easily last 10-15 years.

If you want to lengthen the time you and your family can enjoy your pool, please ask your Technician or call our office for more details about heating options.



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