

Elist Discussion on Showering Before Pool Session

10-4 From Cynthia

I am curious to know others' policy regarding showering before entering the pool. My sessions are from 8-10am first thing in the morning and I advise clients to avoid lotions, deodorants, perfumes, oils, etc. so as not to contaminate the pool water. Clients must also shower in our dressing area before entering each session.

From Janet:

Our state law [in Connecticut, USA] requires a shower with soap before entering a public pool.

From Patti:

For even greater health reasons if individuals would take a cool shower they would acclimate to the pool temperature and invigorate themselves. Also, since the water would not need to be as warm you would use less chemicals than you would in a warmer pool. A Doctor suggested this: start a shower with cooler water, then warm water, cool it down to just the point of tolerance and then get into the pool. This type of shower is supposed to be good for the heart as well.

From Liz:

This is a battle I have fought without much success for years at the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). I have explained and explained about chloramines and what causes them to accumulate and how harmful they are and how they are the chlorine smell that clients complain about, but it hasn't done much good. Most states require showering, and most facilities have a "live and let live"* attitude about it. A quick shower before they hop in isn't such a big deal. I don't know why folks are so resistant to it. *["live and let live" is an idiom expressing the modern concept that one should let others live their lives as they see fit.]

From Sue:

Good for you (Liz)! It is not an easy job to tell your members or patients they have to shower but it is the best for the water and the filters.

From Mary:

We had a shower on the deck where everyone could rinse off before entering the pool. It was also convenient for therapists to use for rinsing off between patients.

From Fran:

Regarding soap showers prior to getting into a pool: I've done this for years, but had to wait so long for my skin to dry out before I could get into a swimsuit. If you take a soap shower with your swimsuit on, how do you wash those areas of the body that offer the most contaminants into the water? Is the soap ok for your swimsuit? These are just some issues I've been asked about over the years.

From Bill:

Technical Pool Solutions has conducted considerable research that might interest this group. They have developed two new products to control combined chlorine, trihalomethane (chloroform) and disinfection byproducts. Their research proves that pool filters are full of biofilm, bacteria, scale and other contaminants. Their website has some nice SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) images proving this. They developed a very effective sand filter cleaner that is added each time the filter is backwashed keeping the filter clean all the time. Biofilm is the key component for bacteria in pools, and what makes pools unsafe. If you remove or greatly reduce biofilm in pools chlorine will be more effective, thus you develop less disinfection byproducts. With less disinfection byproducts you have less trihalomethane (chloroform) in the pool. They have a 2 step program: (1) Use their filter cleaner each time you backwash (2) Use their Swim Rx on a weekly basis. Our company has been using these products with great success. Pools that had combined chlorine problems are able to control the combined chlorine at very low levels and the pool filters are keeping the water crystal clear.

I am very convinced that pools live and die on how well their filters are maintained. A dirty filter will lead to combined chlorine problems, clarity problems and a buildup of trihalomethane and disinfection byproducts.

From Cameron:

I like to imagine the skin as a sponge. If you wet the sponge before you put it into the water it will absorb less water (chlorine). If you place a dry sponge in the pool, it will absorb a lot more. This keeps the skin less dry and helps the body in not absorbing all the chemicals in the pool. This is a good thing to say to clients to get them to want to shower or rinse off before they enter the pool.

10-8 From Lynise :

You may want to know that shower water also has chlorine in it! You don't really rinse it all off!

From JD:

However, a shower has much less chlorine than a pool.

10-12 From Tami:

I worked at a facility that had pools in multiple locations. The rehabilitation pool requirement was for everyone to shower off before going in. The fitness pools had sign requesting people to shower before entry but no one complied.

The pools were all maintained by the same chemical technician. The rehabilitation pool maintained its chemical balance well with occasional adding of Baking Soda. All the fitness pools had multiple problems requiring numerous shockings in the same year.

This has been the biggest example for me that taking a quick shower before you go in the water makes a big difference in the maintenance on the Pool Chemicals. This is a simple step.

From Elizabeth:

Adding baking soda? I've never heard of this? Can you explain further please?

From Erika:

Adding baking soda is a quick fix if the alkalinity is off. Baking soda raises alkalinity. In our pool, we add 1/4 cup to raise alkalinity to 10ppm.

From Brianne:

Baking soda is used by some in place of a pH rise chemical. Baking soda raises the pH. However if your pool alkalinity is low you will continue to have difficulty with maintaining the pH in an appropriate range.

From Patricia:

Bravo Elisters for all the good comments concerning showers before entering the pool! I just quit my state job to teach full time at our local pool and after being in the water now six to seven hours a day, my skin has fared much better by taking a soap shower in the morning, and then one at the end of the day. After this last shower I slather on the oils to help my skin.

The next morning before I get in the pool again I take another soap shower. It definitely has helped my skin to not have any oils or perfumes on before entering the pool. Thank you comrades for all your wonderful comments on this elist!