



Swimming Pool Renovation

Despite the advances in materials that make modern swimming pools economical to install and maintain, you may eventually wish to give your pool a facelift or a bit of cosmetic surgery. Alternatively you may have inherited an ageing pool when you move house and wish to give it a make over - what can you do?

The first step is to establish whether the pool is holding water. Fill a bucket or washing up bowl with pool water and suspend in the pool water. Mark both the pool wall and the bowl to indicate the level of water. Do not swim or clean the filter and turn off any topping up device. At the end of 24 hours examine the water loss. If evaporation is the cause, then the pool and bowl will have lost the same amount of water.

If you believe there is a water loss, SPATA can provide information on tracing water loss that suggests a series of simple tests a pool owner can carry out before calling in a pool engineer. If a fault is located in the underground pipework, equipment is available to ensure that any disturbance to your surrounding property is kept to an absolute minimum.



Liner pools

In the case of a liner pool, the life expectancy of the pre-formed PVC liner can usually be anywhere from 10 years and upwards. This can be maximised by careful control of the level of chemicals in the pool and by keeping the water temperature below 29oC (85o F). Over the life of the liner it may lose elasticity or suffer from wrinkling, cracking or minor cuts and punctures. The latter can be temporarily repaired using special waterproof adhesive patches, or permanently by welding.

When the time comes to replace the liner completely, the pool will have to be emptied and this should only be done with professional assistance. Once the pool is empty and the liner removed, the structure can be inspected and any repairs carried out. The floor and walls MUST be in good condition and any problems rectified prior to refitting a new liner. Whilst a liner can be replaced as a self build job, it does require a degree of skill and experience which is best left to the professionals who are equipped to deal with any unexpected problems.

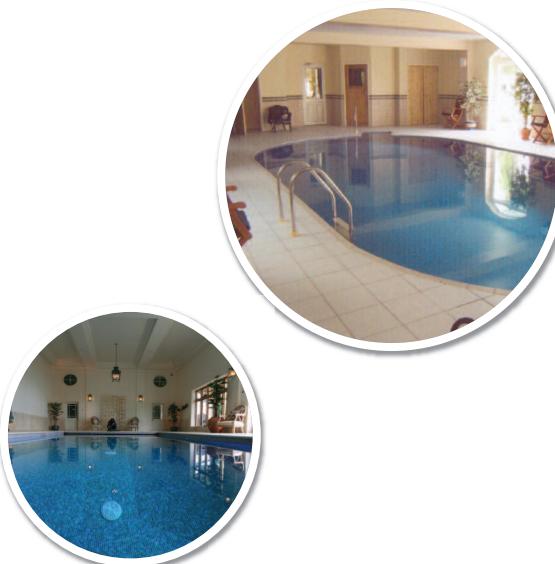
Longer life in a liner can be achieved by choosing a heavy duty PVC material. This, because of its weight, has to be cut and welded on site, unlike the standard liners which are factory made. Consequently these liners are more expensive.





Concrete pools

Again, before starting any renovations check that the pool structure is sound and watertight. If the construction is sound, the pool can be refurbished by retiling. If there are any leaking or hair-line cracks, this may indicate continued structural movement. It would therefore not be appropriate to recommend the use of a brittle finish such as tile or mosaic. A glass fibre reinforced finish may be a good alternative, as it is not only hard and resistant to impact damage, but also has sufficient flexibility to absorb minor movement. In cases where more pronounced structural movement is apparent, a heavy duty PVC lining which has the necessary elasticity can be tailor made on-site.



Composite pools

These pools are based on fibreglass and ceramic material. They will require specialist repair or resurfacing. This should not be attempted by a non-specialist as the result could fatally damage the pool.



Equipment

If the pool itself is in good order, it will be worth looking at the filtration, heating and treatment systems. Pumps have a life of approximately 8 to 10 years, more with good treatment and luck. Filters do not regularly need changing, but the sand in them might. Valves can become worn and stiff or loose. Electrical controls may not conform to modern regulations and should be inspected by a qualified electrician experienced in pool matters.

The pool may benefit from modern equipment, such as automated chemical treatment, heat pumps, solar panels and automated pool covers. Getting an enclosure may also enhance the pool experience and there are separate factsheets on these types of items.

Whichever type of pool you own, calling in a SPATA approved specialist will ensure that your renovation project ensures many more years of bathing pleasure.