

Internal finishes

There are a number of different internal finishes used in swimming pools today. However the choice is initially dictated by the construction of the swimming pool. There are basically four types of construction / installation:

- Reinforced concrete
- Liner
- One piece moulded
- Above ground

Reinforced Concrete Pools

It is usual, but by no means exclusive, that the reinforced concrete shell will have been coated with sand and cement wall plaster, referred to as a render, and a floor plaster referred to as a screed. This will give a smooth base onto which the various finishes will be applied. In some cases the render and screed will contain an additive which will make the pool watertight. If the concrete shell has been made watertight in its own right and its surface is acceptable, the finishes can be applied directly to it.

Mosaic tiles

These tiles are very popular and can be supplied in a multitude of colours and shades. They are generally 20 or 25 mm square and are supplied in sheets approximately 300mm square. They are usually made of, vitreous glass, a glass and ceramic mix, ceramic or stone either natural or a composite.

Tiles

These tend to be used more in the commercial market and vary in size from 50mm square to 200 by 100 mm. It is possible to have a variety of colours and / or patterns made on the tile surface.



Natural stone

There is a wide selection of natural stone being imported into this country. It varies in composition, colour, and dimensions. However that chosen must be compatible with full and continuous immersion in pool water and be resistant to that water or made water impermeable by the application, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, of a water impermeable coating. Consequently expert advice must be taken when selecting the material. Additionally the fixing of the stone to the pool shell must be carried out by experienced craftsmen as the size and weight of each piece mean that the adhesive application must be exact.

In SPATA's opinion, painting natural stone is not appropriate, although advice may be sought from the Stone Federation GB.

Plaster finishes

Plaster finishes can be composed of a mix of marble chips, marble dust and white cement. The original was Marblite which was brought over from the USA in the 1960's and was for some years used as almost exclusively as an internal finish for domestic reinforced concrete pools.

There are other plasters available, some with colour additives to tint the finish. It is usual to have a tile or mosaic band around the perimeter of the pool extending down from the top of the pool wall, approximately 250 to 300mm. This makes cleaning the water line easier and keeps the plaster immersed to prevent staining and shrinking.



Painting

There are two types of paint available, chlorinated rubber and water based. It is most important that the instructions are followed that is to say the pool should be emptied and the internal surface cleaned and dried. The paint can be applied in up to three coats and then left to dry for the recommended period before the pool is re-filled.

Some people put on three coats of paint and hope they will last a few years some put on one and redo it each year. Most pool contractors will not paint pools but only supply the paint on a DIY basis.

Painting has one major disadvantage, it is impossible to say how long the paint will stay on the pool. Because the walls and floor of a swimming pool are naturally wet, either from the water in the pool or more particularly from the ground water soaking the shell, paint has a tendency to blister and flake off eventually.

Liner Pools

Liner material comes in many colours and designs. The liners is made by cutting the material into appropriate shapes according to the shape of the pool, rather like cutting cloth for a suit or dress, and then high frequency welding the pieces together.

Apart from the colour or design liner material comes in different thicknesses, the standard being 0.85mm, 0.75mm and 0.50mm. These liners are made in the factory and sent to site where they are fitted into the pool structure. Heavy duty liners are 1.5mm thick and due to the weight of the material are cut and welded on site.

All liner material is susceptible to damage by sharp objects being thrown or taken into the pool and this must be avoided. They can also be damaged by high water temperatures and by water imbalance and this must be checked with the installer.

Liner material stiffens and losses flexibility with age occurring between 8 and 10 years but when properly installed and looked after will last very much longer.



One Piece Moulded

These pools are manufactured in a workshop and the internal finish is pre-determined by the material used. It is usually fibreglass or a ceramic fibreglass mixture. The selection is one of a range of colours.

Above Ground Pools

These pools are simply liner pools which sit on top of the ground. The internal finish is a standard liner as described above and with a similar range of colours and patterns. The liner thickness used is normally 0.35mm.

Now that you have a greater awareness of the types of finishes that are available, make sure you ask your SPATA member for advice before finalising what you want.

