



Best Pools

A Comprehensive Guide to Vinyl Liner Pools

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Introduction

A vinyl liner pool is a popular choice for inground pool design because of its overall beauty and lower upfront cost. Since the system is available in a variety of shapes and sizes, it allows you to customize your pool to not only meet your backyard needs, but create a welcoming aesthetic appeal, as well.

There's a lot to understand about vinyl liner pools and their installation process, so it's important to know what to expect before beginning the design and build process. From knowing the components of a vinyl liner pool and choosing and caring for the right vinyl liner, to having a better understanding of the initial and ongoing costs with pool ownership, there's a lot that goes into creating these easy-to-maintain pools.

We're here to provide you with everything you need to know regarding the basics of vinyl liner pools and helping you build the perfect one for you and your family.



What is a Vinyl Liner Pool?

Vinyl liner pools are the least expensive inground pool option and are created when vinyl liner is secured over a frame, commonly made of steel, polymer or aluminum. Because of their flexibility, vinyl liner pools are easy to install. The vinyl liner also delivers a smooth non-porous surface, making it difficult for algae to grow on its surface (which ultimately means less chemicals and maintenance, putting money back in to your wallet).

So what is included in a vinyl liner pool? A vinyl liner pool is made up of five main components – wall panels, pool base, vinyl liner, coping and steps.

Wall Panels: The wall panels are what is used to support the pool behind the vinyl liner. These are typically built using steel, polymer or aluminum. Wood and concrete are also options, although not the most popular choices. The material used can affect the longevity of your pool.

Pool Base: The pool base is formed using sand or a cement-like material known as vermiculite that is blended up to the wall for a seamless transition. The liner is then installed on top of the base.

Vinyl Liner: There are three different types of vinyl liner – beaded liners are installed onto a track, unbeaded liners are installed using J-hooks, and overlap liners are installed under the coping strip. Liners are measured in mils and are commonly available in 20, 27, 28 or 30 mil thicknesses.

Coping: Coping refers to the border of the pool that runs throughout the top perimeter, and it has come a long way on a vinyl liner pool. While white aluminum used to be traditional choice, it can now be painted different colors to better accentuate the pool. Cantilevered pool decks, where the concrete comes over the edge of the pool, are also becoming popular coping choices.

Steps: While white steps and benches used to be the norm for vinyl liner pools, there are now many different color options available in an effort to create a more aesthetically cohesive design with the vinyl liner. These steps are made from polymer and are attached to the walls of the pool.



The Benefits of a Vinyl Liner Pool

One of the primary reasons why vinyl liner pools are so attractive is because they typically have a lower initial cost than any other type of pools. There are a number of additional benefits, as well, including:

- Their ability to be completely customizable
- The liner provides a smooth, soft surface for swimming and lounging
- The non-porous liner reduces the amount of time you will spend scrubbing, vacuuming and adding chemicals to your pool
- It is easy to install and takes less time to complete than a concrete pool, typically within 2 to 5 weeks

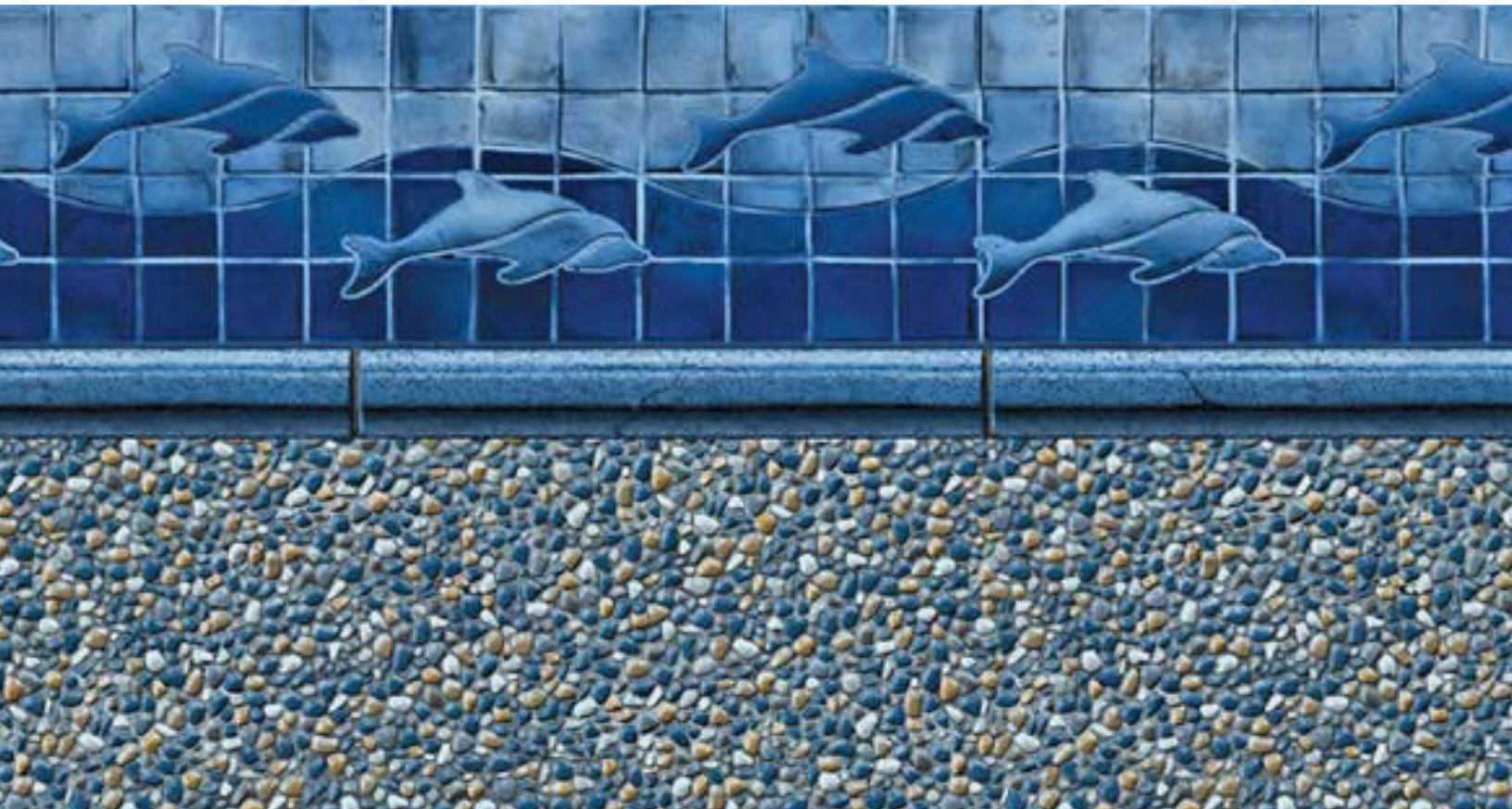


Choosing the Right Vinyl Liner

Choosing the right vinyl liner is an essential step in the pool build process. And choosing the right vinyl liner for your pool will be dependent on three factors: a.) the pool's exposure to the sun; b.) how often your pool will be covered; and c.) the surface material the vinyl will be installed on.

As stated earlier, the thickness of a vinyl liner is measured in mils, which is not to be mistaken with millimeters. Liners are commonly available in 20, 27, 28 or 30 mil thicknesses. How does that measurement equate? One mil is equivalent to one thousandth of an inch (i.e. 20 mil liner thickness is equal to 20 thousandths of an inch).

Today's vinyl liner manufacturers offer a variety of patterns, giving you beautiful mixed hues of blues, browns, and creams, depending on your preference. From geometric patterns to rustic mosaics, the pattern options are endless, leaving you with a liner that will make your water sparkle.



The Average Cost of a Vinyl Liner Pool

While vinyl liner pools are often touted as being the least expensive pool option (when compared to concrete and fiberglass pools), the total cost of your project will depend on the size of your pool, vinyl liner used, as well as any additional features incorporated.

The average cost of a vinyl liner pool in the United States today is around \$20,000 for a standard 12-by-24-foot pool. Here is a general breakdown of the costs:

- **Vinyl liner on a steel frame:** \$20-\$25 per square foot (Labor costs: \$30 to \$40 per hour)
- **Upgrading flatwork:** \$3 to \$3.50 per square foot (Labor costs: \$30 to \$40 per hour)
- **Installing a safety fence:** \$13 to \$17 per square foot (Labor costs: \$30 to \$40 per hour)

There are other expenses involved as well, including taxes, permit fees, and site clearing and preparation. The cost of the liner may also differ, with thicker vinyl costing 5 to 10 percent more than the typical 20 mil liner.

As with any pool, a vinyl liner pool will need upkeep and maintenance. Vinyl liners typically need to be replaced every 7 to 15 years, which will run anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000 depending again on the size of the pool and your choice of vinyl liner.

Extending the Lifespan of Your Vinyl Liner

While the average vinyl liner lasts 10 years, there are things you can do to increase its longevity. Below are some suggestions to better care for your liner.

- **Keep your pool water balanced.** Maintaining proper water chemistry means having non-corrosive water. Avoid direct contact with chlorine and dissolve your chlorine or shock in a bucket of water prior to adding it to the pool. Consider having a salt system or another non-chlorine system installed.
- **Keep non-pool toys out of the pool.** Though it is difficult to pierce through a vinyl liner, anything not meant for a pool should be kept out of the pool.
- **Use the right pool equipment.** Some pool equipment is specifically designed for concrete or fiberglass pools and is inappropriate for vinyl liner pools. Pool vacuums, for instance, can poke holes or scratch the vinyl liner if they have not been specifically designated for a vinyl liner pool.
- **Watch your waterline.** Washing down the water line area with a vinyl cleaner that protects your liner from UV rays once or twice a month will help the liner maintain its strength and appearance.
- **Use a winter cover.** It's important to invest in a winter cover to protect your liner from being exposed to cold temperatures and snow.

How to Enhance a Vinyl Liner Pool

Gone are the days of an uninspired pool. Today, there are a variety of ways to enhance the look of your vinyl liner pool. Whether it's stone coping, an attached spa or even upgrading to LED lighting, we can help you create a more personalized look in your backyard.

One of the most prominent ways to enhance the appearance of your vinyl liner pool is to change the coping. The majority of vinyl liner pools have coping which consists of a C-track made of aluminum, which is done for two reasons: it's easy to install and concrete can easily be poured on top of it. This type of coping creates a white rim around your pool, which can clash with your decking, particularly if you are having stamped or colored patio around your pool.

However, there are two popular alternatives to the white C-track coping. Pour a cantilevered concrete edge around the pool, or have brick or paver coping installed. Both options are more expensive than your standard coping option, but it makes a considerable difference in the appearance of your pool.



Other ways to enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of your vinyl liner pool include:

- Adding a sun ledge (also known as a Baja shelf or a tanning ledge)
- Adding an attached spa
- Swapping out basic lighting to colored LED lights
- Switching your decking to pavers such as travertine pavers (these also provide a non-slip and cool surface)
- Building water features, grottos, diving rocks and underwater speakers into your pool and deck
- Having radiant heating installed into the floor of your pool (this provides more energy-efficient heating than other traditional heating systems)



Vinyl liner pools have come a long way from 40 years ago, now often being easily mistaken as a concrete or fiberglass pool. The difference between a great vinyl liner pool and a mediocre or unattractive vinyl liner pool is the pool builder you choose.

Contact us to schedule your design consultation and start building the pool of your dreams today.

Contact Us Today

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