

**GREAT BAY SPA & SAUNA**  
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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED SPA QUESTIONS**

### **Chapter 1: Using Your Spa**

#### **A. When do most people use their spa?**

The most common time to use a spa is in the evening. Many customers find a spa is a great way to unwind and relax after a busy day. Many people find that soaking promotes the onset of sleep. Soaking first thing in the morning with a cup of coffee is a great way to start the day. A real benefit of today's spas is that they are warm and ready to use just about any time, day or night. Try using your spa at different times. You may be pleasantly surprised.

#### **B. How long can I soak in my hot tub?**

Most common soaks are fifteen to thirty minutes. When the water temperature is maintained at 102 degrees or below, most people will not feel overheated. Never stay in a spa if you feel dizzy and overheated. If someone complains of these conditions help them to carefully get out, sit down and cool off.

#### **C. What is the best water temperature?**

The most common temperature at which people enjoy spas is 100-102 degrees Fahrenheit. Most spas will go to 104 degrees, which is warm enough for most users. The hydro-jets will intensify the effect of temperature. In certain models, we can override the standard system and allow the spa to go hotter if you desire. You will be required to sign a waiver if you request this change. If you question whether your controller is accurate, use a fever thermometer to check the spa water. You will find it is very accurate at spa water temperatures.

#### **D. Should I shower before I use my spa?**

If you are reasonably clean you probably do not need to shower before you use your spa. In general, this means you haven't just exercised or worked in the garden. Just as problematic as an uncleansed body, are cosmetics, body lotions and oils that can create problems with your water chemistry. You may want to consider allowing only members of the household who respect the spa the privilege of not showering. We do think it is a good idea to take a shower after using the spa. Even the healthiest spa will not leave your body as clean as a shower. Do not use a skin moisturizer until you are through using the spa and have taken a shower.

**E. When can I invite my friends over to try my new spa?**

We would love to tell you to go for it, but this can be a mistake. Given some time we think you will find the spa almost effortless to maintain, but first there are some things to learn. We find it takes a typical customer six to eight weeks to get comfortable with good water quality and maintaining proper chemistry. A single person using a spa is equivalent to fifty people using a typical swimming pool. A party in a new spa before the owner is familiar with the spa can lead to real water chemistry disasters. In general, we suggest you wait several weeks before having a spa party.

**F. What about using my spa while drinking alcohol?**

Use extreme caution when using a spa and consuming alcohol. Your body dehydrates faster in the water making it difficult to gauge the effect of the alcohol. Alcohol effect is greatly intensified when the body temperature is increased, and is therefore considered dangerous. We suggest staying out of hot tubs when there is a significant amount of alcohol in your system.

**G. Can young children use spas?**

Children should be constantly supervised while using a spa. We have found no research showing adverse effects of children using spas at temperatures below 101 degrees. Children should not stay in the spa any longer than an adult. Children should not be allowed to put their eyes, ears or hair under water. This can lead to eye or ear infections.

**H. If I have a medical problem, can I use my spa?**

If you have **any** medical concerns or problems, you should consult your personal doctor who knows your medical history and can make specific recommendations. We do offer reprints of articles dealing with different medical conditions and the effects of using a spa.

## **Chapter 2: Maintaining Your Spa**

**A. How often does the water need to be changed?**

This depends on many factors, most importantly the bather load. If an average spa is used three or four times a week, the spa will usually require a water change every three or four months. At the very least, you should change your water twice a year, in the late fall and spring. Keep in mind, that diligence in testing and chlorinating your spa, will keep your filter cartridge cleaner and you won't have to change your water as often.

**B. What is the best way to drain the water?**

Sundance and other manufacturers provide drains for their spas, but they are probably not the quickest, most efficient method to empty the water. Start with a garden hose. Put one end of the hose where you would like the water to drain, then activate the hydro-jets. To

start a siphon, hold the other end of the hose against the jet until water flows out the other end. Keep the hose end submersed and place it in the deepest area of the spa footwell. Turn power off to the spa. Drain as much of the old water as possible. Refill the spa to the recommended level. Turn the electrical power back on.

If you are draining the spa for the season, or winterizing the spa, you should use extra care to get every bit of water out of the spa's pipes, pumps, etc. to avoid damage from freezing. If you are going to winterize your spa, please call Great Bay Spa & Sauna so we can instruct you or have one of our service technicians do the job for you correctly.

### **C. Can I fill the spa with softened water?**

This may depend on the reason your water is being softened. If you have high levels of iron or manganese in your fill water, you should probably use softened water to fill your spa. With softened water it is important to use special test strips that measure total hardness in addition to pH and total alkalinity to insure the water is properly balanced when the spa is refilled. Use calcium increaser to raise the total hardness levels.

### **D. How often does the spa surface need cleaning?**

Cleaning the spa surface is important especially at the waterline. (Between water changes, you can carefully clean and polish the waterline area as necessary without draining the tub.)

Clean this area frequently to remove body oils, scum, etc. You should clean and polish this area when changing the water. Use caution if you choose to polish the footwell area, as it can become very slippery. We recommend using Gel Gloss polish/cleaner for this procedure.

### **E. When does the filter need cleaning?**

Filter cleaning depends on many factors including bather load, body chemistry, lotions, cosmetics and moisturizing products that get trapped in the filter. The average family might remove the filter element and hose it down once a month, while thoroughly soaking it in Filter Cleaner, every two to four months. A family with a light bather load (1-2 people using the spa a couple of times a week) will obviously need to clean the filter less often.

Factors that will cause you to clean your filter are:

- ◆ Low pressure coming out of your hydro-jets
- ◆ Cloudy water
- ◆ Excessive foam
- ◆ Musty odors

### **F. What is the best way to thoroughly clean the filter?**

Clean the filter by holding one end vertically and resting the other end on the ground. Thoroughly rinse off any particles with a garden hose equipped with a high-pressure nozzle. Keep turning the filter, holding the nozzle a few inches away from the filter element. Rotate the filter until the water rinsing the filter is clear. Next soak the entire filter in a plastic bucket for at least one hour. Use water and two to three cups of liquid

household bleach. Use a plastic bucket big enough to completely submerge the element. After one hour, discard the water; refill the bucket with a solution of fresh, warm water and Filter Cleaner at a ratio of eight ounces of Filter Cleaner per fifty square feet of filter media. Soak a minimum of twelve hours for a thorough cleaning. It is recommended to have a clean spare filter to swap in while the dirty one is being cleaned. **NOTE: It will not hurt your filter to soak for longer than 24 hours. The longer it soaks the better.**

**G. Does the cover need regular cleaning and maintenance?**

Yes. To get the longest life from your cover, you should clean it occasionally with a mild solution of soap and water. Then treat the outer surface with a protective coating of 303 Protectant. Spas that are subject to the damaging rays of direct sunlight will need the protectant more often. Outdoor covers should be kept free of ice and snow. Use a plastic shovel with blunt edges to clean the cover. For light snow use a broom.

**H. My cover has a mildew/musty odor when I open it. What should I do?**

If the inside of the cover ever develops a “musty” or unusual odor, you can use a mild solution of household liquid bleach to kill mildew. The inner foam cores will need to be removed from the outer jacket. Fold the cover in half and find the zippers located on the end of each half. Open the zippers completely and with two persons slide the cores out of the jackets. Turn the jacket inside out and soak the jacket in a tub in a mild bleach solution. Use the same solution to sponge down the cores. Air dry the jacket and cores completely before inserting the cores back in the jacket.

**I. How do I care for the wood skirt?**

Re-staining the wooden cabinet every couple of years is the best way to protect the wood. If the cabinet is subject to mold or mildew due to shade, or intense sun exposure, more care may be required. Remember to clean off any mold, mildew or scale prior to staining with a scrub brush and a mild bleach solution. Allow the wood to dry completely. Always use Sundance quality stain or equivalent to preserve your investment. You may choose to re-stain your spa to compliment your house. Great Bay Spa & Sauna stocks premier stains in a variety of colors, which provide the highest protection, especially against UV destruction.

**J. What mechanical parts need to be regularly checked?**

As the consumer, you should know how the spa operates normally. Be aware of how the pumps sound, how the jets feel and sound as well as the air controls and diverter valves. If you notice, or hear, anything out of the norm, call us. The homeowner may be capable of fixing minor problems. Great Bay can educate you about regular maintenance issues. Knowing how to take care of dirty filters, sand in the spa or missing toys can eliminate many unnecessary charges for service calls not covered under warranty. There are no parts in the heating and pumping systems that need regular alignment or lubrication. An annual visual inspection of the equipment is a great idea.

**K. Which spa components should I expect to replace?**

We have found that the following items will typically need replacement in the following time frames:

- ◆ Filter Elements: One to three years, depending on use, water chemistry, fill water composition and maintenance. Filters will eventually wear out and need replacement.
- ◆ Rigid Covers: Two to five years, clean and apply protectant to your cover regularly. Never walk on your cover, or let snow or ice build up on it. Cover lifts will generally prolong the life of the cover. Covers will eventually become water logged and need replacement.
- ◆ Ozone Generators: Two to four years, Ozone generators should be inspected yearly to ensure they are operating correctly and that air is moving properly through the generators. Eventually, with UV generators, the bulb stops working or gets so weak that ozone production is greatly reduced. It is generally more efficient to replace an old generator than to repair it.
- ◆ Pillows: Two to four years –water chemistry is the biggest factor that degrades pillows. Over Bromination or acidic water conditions caused by Bromine can cause pillows to deteriorate. Advancements in materials used for pillow manufacturing have increased the life expectancy.

**L. If the spa is not used in the winter, is there a correct method for winterizing?**

The spa needs to be completely drained with the power off. All of the jet lines should be sucked out with a wet-vac. All pump drain plugs should be removed. This should be done before freezing temperatures set in. The small circulation pump should have the front hose removed because it doesn't have a drain plug. If the tub is exposed to snow and rain, it should be tightly covered with a tarp. If the tub will experience a continuous snow load, consider building a winter wood protective cover. This will prolong the life of the insulating cover.

**M. Who in the family should maintain the spa?**

Someone should be designated as the "spa guy". This person knows that the spa has been sanitized, and when. The same person will know when the filter was last cleaned and the procedure for keeping the water in balance. There should be a back up "pinch hitter" that will be knowledgeable in maintaining the tub in case the "spa guy" is unavailable.

**N. Is there a service that will drain, clean and refill my spa?**

Yes. Great Bay Spa & Sauna will provide this service to our customers, for a fee. When you purchase a spa here, you are a lifetime customer, unless you move out of our service area, sell or give away the spa.

**O. My covers inside straps (handles) have ripped out. Is this common? Why don't they manufacture a cover that is of better quality?**

If you remove your cover from the spa, you can not lift the cover back on the spa using those straps, as they will rip out. Those handles were designed and installed for use only with the cover slide (cover removal apparatus). They are to be used to carefully slide the cover horizontally back to the halfway position for closing.

**P. We have well water and have developed a stain inside our tub, just around the waterline. It resembles a tea stain. How do you suggest we remove this stain without hurting the spa surface?**

This stain is the result of iron and minerals in your water attaching to the spa surface. Mild staining can usually be removed with a Gel-Gloss on a cloth rag. If that isn't adequate, try soaking a sponge with liquid PH Down and applying it directly to the stain line. Let it soak. Then, scrub the area with a non-abrasive nylon pad. If metal or mineral stains become an on going problem, then the water should be regularly treated with Metal-X Conditioner whenever the spa is filled or make up water is added.

**Q. Our daughter loves to sunbathe and insists that she won't hurt our cover by lying on it. Is she right?**

The cover is designed to keep heat and condensation inside your tub. It is not designed for sitting or lying, as it will distort the shape and/or break or dent the cores.

**R. Is it okay to leave the cover off the spa when the spa has no water in it?**

No. When the spa is empty and the sun is out, extreme heat can generate through the spa shell and could actually damage the acrylic shell by blistering or warping.

**S. Do you think it would help save energy if we insulated more around the spa's pumps and sealed up the louvered vents on the front of our tub?**

No, No, No. The pumps on your tub must be ventilated just as they came from the factory. Further insulating will cause them to run hot and shorten their life. This is also true for the louvered vents. If flying insects are finding their way into your spa cabinet, you can take off the front panels and tack some screening material on the backside of the vents. Never block the vents!

**T. Should I be concerned with mice and other varmints wanting to live in my spa cabinet?**

Mice find the spa cabinet an irresistibly warm place to build a home. We have found this especially true if a food source is near by. If you have bird feeders close by it is wise to relocate them. Don't make it easy for mice to gather seed and move into the cabinet. Consider keeping mothballs or other rodent repellent in the cabinet. Inspect the equipment area at least once a year for signs of animal activity.

## **Chapter 3: Operating the Controls**

### **A. What is the best way to operate the touch pad?**

Lightly touching one button at a time will operate your spa correctly. You should always refer to your original owner's manual for the correct operation of your spa side control (touch pad).

### **B. How do I program a digital controller?**

Again, refer first to your owner's manual for program adjustments and operation. After you are familiar with programming your particular spa model, you can make any changes you would like. If after studying the manual and attempting this yourself you still have a problem or question, please feel free to call us for assistance. Before delivery, the spa has been tested with the factory program, which is based on average use. Most digital controllers are easy to use after reviewing the basic instructions.

### **C. The jets and controls are pretty confusing. How will I remember what controls what?**

Just like any piece of equipment you own there are some functions that you use all of the time. In your car you constantly use the window switches, ignition key and shift lever. Other functions like the seat warmers, the radio pre-set buttons or the roof rack adjustments you might change rarely. When you do, you refer to your owner's manual. When you receive your spa you should read your owner's manual and become familiar with the entire spa and its controls. This will only take a few days. After that, it becomes second nature to increase the power of certain jets or to operate the whirlpool jets. If you don't use a certain function of your tub's control regularly, you may need to refer back to the owner's manual for a refresher course. It's a good idea to get in the spa and experiment with the controls. Don't worry, you won't hurt anything. Call us with any questions you still have.

### **D. Is there a way to shut the circulation pump off while I'm using a new Sundance Spa?**

If the sound of the bubbles made by the circulation pump is bothersome, then lower the spa temperature a few degrees to shut off the pump. Be sure to turn it back to your preferred temperature before closing it up.

### **E. Is it necessary to run the jets for maximum enjoyment?**

No. The term "enjoyment" is different for everyone. The hydro-jet system may give you maximum enjoyment one time, but be unwanted or unenjoyable the next time. One of the greatest features of the modern spa is the flexibility the controls provide for maximum enjoyment.

**F. Should I leave the air controls on or off when the spa is not in use?**

To conserve heat, air controls should always be shut off in cold weather or when the spa is not being used.

**G. Should adjustable volume controlled jets be left on or off?**

At no time should the majority of the jets be left closed. It will cause unnecessary back pressure when the pump comes on during a filter cycle. This will decrease filtering efficiency.

**H. Is it common for the diverter valves to make noise in certain positions?**

Yes. Water flowing with great pressure through the diverter valves can cause noise depending on valve position and speed of the pump.

**I. The air bubbles from the blower system seem cool. Is that normal?**

Yes. The air injector system pulls outside air through the cabinet interior, then into the injectors. The bubbles may feel cooler than the spa water, depending on the outside air and water temperature.

**J. Is it common to float out of your seat with the hydro-jet on?**

Yes. This can happen depending on your buoyancy level and size relative to the depth of the spa seat. Spa models with lounges are easiest to float out of.

**K. What happens if the jets are accidentally left on?**

Most modern spas are designed to automatically shut off after a twenty-minute duration. It will not be a problem if you leave the jets on.

**L. My massage selectors or diverter valves, have gotten stiff. One won't move at all.**

Diverter valves need to be kept clean to operate smoothly. Sand has probably gotten into the spa from the beach, around the yard or off the roof and jammed the valve. It is easy to clean the sand. Remove the diverter handle and lock nut, then attempt to remove the diverter valve itself. If the sand will not come out easily then turn on the water pump that services that valve, for a few seconds. She'll blow water out like Old Faithful along with the sand that has accumulated in the pipes. Clean and install the valve back into the tub and you are finished.

## **Chapter 4: Water Chemistry**

### **A. What are the most important things to do in water maintenance?**

Determine who in the family will be in charge of spa care. Review all the materials you were given concerning water chemistry and maintenance. Learn to use your test strips for proper sanitizer levels and balance. Please contact us if you have any questions what so ever.

### **B. Which products will I use the most?**

You will use your sanitizer the most, along with test strips to ensure you are getting the correct sanitizer levels.

### **C. Is a mineral and metal conditioner needed for every spa?**

We believe so, because your water source composition can sometimes change. This is why we recommend adding 8 ounces of Metal-X each time the spa water is changed, as a preventative measure. People that have an excessive amount of Iron, Manganese and other metals or minerals will need to use Metal -X, more often. Metal-X is an inexpensive medicine.

### **D. Should I worry about using spa chemicals if the water appears clear and fresh?**

Sanitizing chemicals must be used in all spas, regardless of the perceived water quality. Certain types of bacteria and microorganisms are invisible and can grow rapidly if left untreated. The spa owner must destroy these unwanted elements. Another invisible but measurable parameter is water balance. PH and alkalinity need to be checked on a weekly basis. If your water is out of balance, problems will escalate. You will find yourself having to use more sanitizer to keep the water fresh and clear. The long-term effects of out of balance water on your spa components are corrosive and expensive to repair. Problems resulting from the misuse or non-use of chemicals will **void** the spa manufacturer's **warranty**. You will be responsible for all repair charges.

### **E. Should I bother to shock the water on a regular basis if an ozonator is used in the system?**

Yes. Regular super chlorination or shocking the water is the only way you can be sure to eliminate any or all microorganisms and bacteria. Although the ozone is very effective in aiding the purification of water, a chemical sanitizer with a residual is necessary to completely destroy any microbiological growth.

### **F. What should I do if my water appears fine but gets foamy and effervescent when I put the jets on?**

Dirty, unsanitized water typically causes foaming. Often, foamy water is also cloudy. If Bromine is used as the primary sanitizer, it will also cause foaming if it has been used for more than a week. If foaming has been caused by Bromine or dirty water, treat the water with non-chlorine shock for twenty-four to forty-eight hours. If you are using the tub when it foams you may use a small amount of Suds-X to knock it down. Suds-X doesn't cure the foaming but will stop it for several hours.

**G. What is the best method to add chemicals to the water?**

Add chemicals with the jets running at high speed. Be careful to lightly sprinkle the chemicals into the jet flow to thoroughly dissolve them. After chemicals are mixed turn the pump to low speed and close the cover. The pump will automatically shut off in ten to twenty minutes.

**H. What is the best time to add chemicals to the water?**

The best time is when you are finished using the spa for the day. You will probably want to stay out of the water for several hours after adding DiChlor. It is not necessary to wait to use the spa if you use Non-Chlorine shock.

**I. When should I use chlorine versus Non-Chlorine shock?**

There is not a completely correct answer to this question. In general we always recommend using DiChlor as your regular sanitizing agent. DiChlor is more powerful than non-chlorine shock and more effective at killing microorganisms. We suggest that you stay out of the spa for several hours after using DiChlor because it has a very strong smell when first added to your spa water at 5 ppm. Non-chlorine shock works very quickly and has no detectable odor. Test strips are now available to ensure you have added appropriate levels. There are several circumstances where non-chlorine shock works especially well:

1. If Bromine is used as a primary sanitizer Non-Chlorine shock must be used weekly to breakdown built up Bromamines that cause foaming, effervescence and unpleasant odors.
2. If a number of people have used a spa during the day and it appears that the spa will get continued use, then use Non-Chlorine shock at any time to break down the organics left by the heavy bather load.
3. If your water gets cloudy from organic build-up, Non-Chlorine shock can be very effective restoring clarity. You can use the spa more quickly than with DiChlor Chlorine because of DiChlor's strong initial scent. If you use a lot of Non-Chlorine Shock, you should purchase special test strips to be sure you are adding the correct amount.

**J. Isn't Total Alkalinity and pH really the same thing?**

Even though they seem to behave similarly they are actually measuring different parameters. We check pH to determine if the spa water is acid or alkaline. The pH scale goes from 0 to 14. If the strips measure 7.0 the water is neutral. Measurements above 7.0 indicate the water is becoming increasingly alkaline. Measurements below 7.0 indicate the water is becoming increasingly acidic. Our goal is to keep the water just slightly alkaline at 7.2 to 7.6. We measure Total Alkalinity to make sure the water has adequate buffering capacity, which in turn helps stabilize the pH levels. If Total alkalinity is maintained at the appropriate range on the test strips then pH levels will generally stay in the appropriate range. If pH and Total Alkalinity are both low then add Alkalinity increaser to raise both values, but if the Total Alkalinity is good and the pH is still low then add straight pH increaser.

**K. If my water gets cloudy when should I add Super Blue?**

Cloudiness is often a sign of unhealthy water so it very important to correct the situation. Before using Super Blue the water should be continually shocked with Dichloro Chlorine or Non- Chlorine Shock for 24 to 48 hours. If the water is still not clear then it is time to use Super Blue. Add only the prescribed amount that is printed on the bottle. Before adding the Super Blue agitate the water to the highest level with the hydro-jets and the air blower. Add the Super Blue and continue to agitate. After a few minutes you may start to see discolored particles coming up into the foam. The Super Blue is causing the microscopic particles that cause cloudiness, to coagulate together in the foam. Skim off the discolored foam. Continue to run the jets as long as this sticky mixture is combining in the foam. When it stops, which could take up to 45 minutes, then shut off the jets and do a final skim. With a rag clean the water line of the spa and inside the filter area. If the filter element looks dirty then rinse it off. After the spa is wiped off then run the filter pump on low speed for twenty more minutes. Within 24 hours the spa water quality should be drastically improved.