HOT TUB BUYER'S GUIDE

MAXIMUM COMFORT POOL & SPA

INTRODUCTION

Buying a hot tub isn't just a home improvement project. It's a big step toward better health, a closer-knit family unit, and a proven way to develop better relationships with friends and neighbors. Research shows that spas improve your health in multiple ways: mentally, physically, socially, and perhaps even spiritually!

The first step towards making the right buying decision is research, such as reading this handy guide. But slow down! Take your time. Make the research and selection phase fun. It doesn't have to stress you out to buy a product designed to de-stress!

This guide contains all the information you need to have a successful and even enjoyable hot tub search. Maximum Comfort Pool and Spa is here to help if you have additional questions. We don't just "sell hot tubs". We help our customersdesign and build backyards that nourish their health, their families, and their lifestyles.

Happy hot tub hunting!

BASIC QUESTIONS EVERY BUYER SHOULD ASK

You can narrow your search considerably by answering a few basic questions before you start comparing Brands A and B and Models C and D.

Where can/should I put my hot tub?

Most hot tubs live in backyards on concrete slabs. But many also find homes on reinforced decks or in sunrooms. Knowing where your hot tub will live helps you determine what size you can manage, as well as what preparations need to be done. For instance, you will need to pour an adequate concrete pad, reinforce the deck or sunroom, and plan for water and power hookups (usually 240V, but this can vary). Also, you'll need the specs of the hot tub before you apply for any local building permits you need.

Who all will enjoy the hot tub with me?

Is your hot tub going to be a solo show? A date-night-for-two investment? A family affair -- or perhaps somewhere to convene with a group of friends? Always plan for an extra person or two, even if you only need it on a rare occasion. Make sure your investment suits all your social requirements. Plus, extra "seats" become additional leg room you can enjoy even when other people aren't around.

What goals do I have for my hot tub? Therapy? Socialization? Relaxation?

Just as cars are designed for various purposes (economy, performance, luxury), spas are, too. Your buff neighbor who spends 3 hours a day at the gym has different needs than your senior friends who use it for arthritis pain, or your cousins who kick it in the hot tub with their 4 kids. You'll notice subtle words and phrases in the marketing of each model:

- ***"Unparalleled hydrotherapy performance"*** - *It's a great therapy spa if you have aches and pains.*
- ***"Unmatched luxury"*** - *It's a high-end hot tub that's going to look amazing in your backyard.*
- ***"Generously proportioned"*** - *This is the perfect party tub for you and 6 of your closest friends.*

Look for a spa that markets itself as what you're actually looking for. Pay attention to queues like "compact" (great for small spaces; not so good for your football-watching parties) or "affordable" (perfect if you're on a budget; not the best choice if you are looking for the latest features and technologies).

Often, the first question a shopper asks about a hot tub is, "How many jets does it have?" Unfortunately, this is the wrong question. The power and positioning of the jets has far more to do with your massage experience than the actual number of jets. For instance, if you have 15 jets pounding you, but the flow is weak and none are hitting the right spots, this makes for an unsatisfying experience! We encourage all our shoppers to take a test soak. See how the jets feel instead of worrying about how many there are.

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How often will I use my spa? Mornings? Evenings? Both?

Depending on your needs and lifestyle, you may want to soak multiple times per day, or you might just want something to kick back in on the weekends. Your typical use patterns should guide you when selecting price point, comfort level, therapeutic functionality, size, and optional features like lighting and water effects. If you'll primarily be an evening user, don't underestimate the value of incredible lighting and the soothing pitter-patter of a waterfall!

What is a realistic budget for my hot tub?

Since you'll probably only buy a hot tub two or three times over your lifespan, it pays to get the best you can afford. Higher-priced hot tubs generally last longer, have more and better features, come with superior warranties, and improve property values more than an entry-level hot tub. However, if you're struggling to pay for it, that isn't very relaxing or therapeutic. Maximum Comfort Pool and Spa offers financing options to get you in the right spa. Just be sure you're comfortable with the payment plan, so that your hot tub is a pleasure to own!

THE REAL SCOOP ON WATER CARE & HOT TUB MAINTENANCE

One of the common misconceptions about hot tub ownership is that you spend more time on water care than you do enjoying the spa. Some of the misunderstandings come from people who owned hot tubs many years ago, before water care was such a refined science. The rest likely comes from people who were never taught proper water care. Maximum Comfort Pool and Spa carries a comprehensive line of top-notch water care products to prevent issues like cloudiness, unhealthy water quality, and even damage to the beautiful hot tub you buy due to improper water chemistry. Also, modern hot tub owners have the option to schedule regular, ongoing spa maintenance, so that they can focus 100% on enjoying the spa, while we take care of the water care and regular maintenance.

Whether you DIY or utilize our Route Service, there are three basic choices when it comes to hot tub water care:

- **Chlorine-Based Water Care** – This is the traditional, and most popular, choice. Chlorine-based water care products use a specialized formula designed to clean and beautify the water, removing impurities, while minimizing the "chlorine smell." In fact, in a properly balanced hot tub system, you can hardly smell the chlorine at all!

- **Ozone-Based Water Care –** Without getting into a very nerdy discussion about oxygen molecules taking on extra atoms, ozone systems break down the contaminants in your spa water, reducing (but not entirely eliminating) your need to use chemicals, such as chlorine or bromine.

■ **Salt Water-Based Water Care –** There is a misconception that salt water systems are an "alternative" to chlorine. In fact, salt water sanitizing systems merely generate their own chlorine, using the salt in the water. Like an ozone sanitizing system, it reduces the amount of extra chemicals you have to add to your spa water, and many users prefer the feel of salt water spas.

Maximum Comfort makes water care and maintenance easy and breezy with our Route Service! Our service is operated by Certified Pool and Spa Operators and certified through the National Swimming Pool Foundation. Our basic services include (but are not limited to) testing and adjusting the water balance and level, checking all equipment for proper system operation, cleaning spa or pool and reporting any malfunction or damage.

Maximum Comfort also offers drain and clean services, seal and oil treatments for the wooden exterior of your hot tub, vinyl cover treatments, as well as filter replacements and chemicals, as needed. We offer several Rout Service options, including twice per week, once per month, or once per season, whichever best suits your needs.

DETERMINING WHICH FEATURES ARE WORTH PAYING FOR

If you carefully and thoughtfully answered the questions we posed earlier, you're already in a great position to decide which features you're willing to pony up for and which you can do without.

For most buyers, the number one issue is the quality of the massage. Check those marketing buzzwords to determine which spa is designed for your desired type of experience (therapy, luxury, etc.), and then narrow your search by visiting the Maximum Comfort Pool and Spa showrooms for a test soak.

Now, decide which optional features are important to you. Some of your options include:

- Audio and video systems
- Steps, towel racks, drink holders, and other accessories
- Lighting effects
- Water effects (fountains, waterfalls, etc.)
- Smartphone controls (allows you to control things like temperature via a smartphone app)
- Cover lifters (let you remove and replace the cover without having to manhandle it)
- See the Maximum Comfort Pool and Spa showrooms for more ideas and available features

THE BASIC ANATOMY OF A HOT TUB

Whether you're investing in a compact and affordable hot tub or splurging on the top-of-the-line spa, all hot tubs share a basic anatomy:

- **Shell -** interior of the hot tub
- **Cabinet -** exterior of the hot tub
- **Pump(s) -** electrical component that circulates the water in the hot tub
- **Jets -** openings in the shell of the hot tub where the pump expels the water, creating the massage action
- **Heater -** this element heats the water (typically up to a maximum of 104-degrees)
- **Controller -** usually housed with the heater, the controller controls the actions of the working parts of the hot tub (pump, heater, etc.)
- **Filters & Sanitization System -** these filter and sanitize the water for both clarity and cleanliness. The actual systems vary according to what kind of spa it is (traditional chlorine, ozone, salt water, etc.)

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT TO SPEND EACH MONTH ON UTILITIES?

This is a little like asking, "How much does a house cost?" You can find a used house trailer for less than 10 grand, or you can spend millions on prime real estate. Similarly, a number of factors can affect how much it costs to run your hot tub each month, including:

- Where you live (the energy costs in your area)
- Your region's climate and weather (a cold year will cost you more than a warm one)
- How big your hot tub is
- How many people use the hot tub
- How you set the thermometer
- What optional features you choose
- The brand, model, and energy-efficiency of your hot tub

Generally, it costs between $10 and $50 per month in electricity. Each time you fill your hot tub with water, that adds to your water bill. You can expect to spend roughly $100-$300 per year on chemicals, filters, and light bulbs.

AVOIDING THE MOST COMMON PITFALLS FOR HOT TUB BUYERS

Now that we've covered all the "do's" for hot tub buying, let's cover the most common "don'ts".

- Don't buy a hot tub without accurately measuring the space you have to put one. Eyeballing it leads to big trouble come installation time. There needs to be adequate clearing for maintenance and service, walkways, and convenient entrance and exit, and for any features you want, like steps, sound systems, railing, etc.
- Don't neglect regular maintenance. Improper care is not only unhealthy and unsanitary, it seriously hinders the lifespan of your spa. Poor water chemistry damages the working parts and can harm the finish of your spa interior.
- Don't be tempted to DIY hot tub installation unless you are a qualified professional. It is essential to have proper drainage (and a place for the water to go) and for the electrical components to meet code. Water plus electricity is a bad combination if done incorrectly. Also, don't skimp on the foundation. A concrete pad too thin, or worse, a deck that isn't reinforced, can lead to catastrophic failure. Your hot tub won't be worth much under a collapsed deck.
- Don't forget to get your permits ahead of time. Each municipality has its own regulations, so check with your local building inspector before scheduling your installation. Some areas require things like a particular type of cover or fencing around the spa. Know what you're getting into before you "sign on the dotted line".

WRAPPING UP

Hot tubs bring immeasurable health benefits, plus a lot of very special family time. Take your time. Enjoy the search. Then, be smart about your purchase decision and forward-thinking about the installation process. A little thought now means many, many years of awesome enjoyment.

MAXIMUM COMFORT POOL AND SPA IS HERE TO HELP!

Call: 970.949.6339 for your free consultation, or visit our Contact Us page on the website.

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