

The Seven Hot Tub Buying Mistakes!

And how to avoid them.



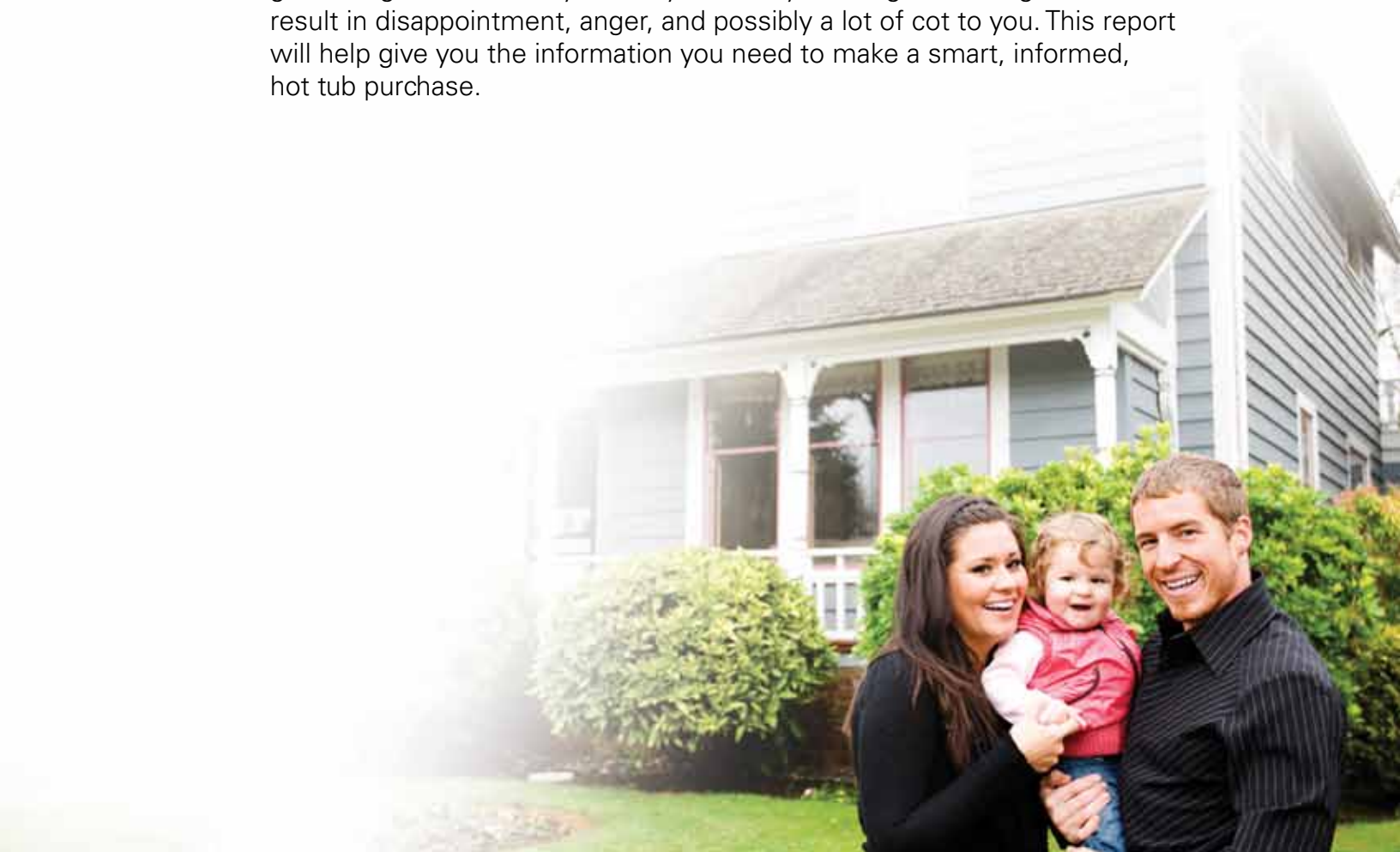
HYDROPOOL
hot tubs • swim spas

This consumer information report is designed to help educate you about the seven common mistakes every consumer should know when shopping for the “right” hot tub. This free report will arm you with just the right facts and information you need to know to make a smart hot tub purchase.

Avoiding The Seven Deadly Hot Tub Buying Mistakes Will Help Prevent...

The disappointment and headache that many consumers experience the unnecessary waste of hard-earned money after having made the wrong Hot Tub decision.

Buying a hot tub is an important decision. It will most likely be the third most expensive thing you buy after your home and car. You want to make sure that you are informed about your options and understand what questions to ask to get the right hot tub for you and your family. Making the wrong decision will result in disappointment, anger, and possibly a lot of cost to you. This report will help give you the information you need to make a smart, informed, hot tub purchase.



Glossary Of Terms (For the Hot Tub Beginner).

You'll find out very quickly that hot tubs have their own language. Bromine, ozonator, acidity, skimmer, pull valves, uprate and water jets are all terms that most consumers have never heard of; however, each is important to understand to make an informed hot tub decision. So let's start by clarifying some potentially confusing terms you will hear while shopping for your hot tub.

Horsepower Rating

The amount a hot tub pump delivers while in operation. Two types of horsepower ratings are "continuous operating" and "brake" (also called marketing horsepower). Continuous operating is the amount of horsepower the motor produces while in operation and brake horsepower is the amount of horsepower the motor produces on start-up before dropping to its continuous operating rate. Uprated Hp is the amount of horsepower given off during the start-up, which lasts only for a couple of minutes. The maximum horse power of any hot tub pump is 4 hp as it is impossible to run anything bigger on a home electrical panel.

GPM - Gallons of water per minute, which is a measurement of the amount of water a hot tub pump can push per minute.

Ozonator - A water care system that neutralizes water contaminants using ozone.

Shell - The structural layer of the hot tub usually made out of a combination of acrylic, resin, and fiberglass.

Jetting - A system in which water surges through small water jets. The jets create different swirling actions that deliver various massaging sensations.

Hydromassage - The water jet action and air together to create different massaging sensations depending on the type of hot tub jetting system.

Filtration - The water cleansing process that takes place when water passes through the hot tub's filter.

Skimmer - Part of the filtration system that sucks in surface water where such as body lotion, hair spray, and body oils float.

Dead Air Hot Space - The hot space between the hot tub shell and the cabinet that is left open and does not contain insulation.

Thermostatic Controls - Electronic controls that maintain the temperature of the hot tub at a pre-set level.

Wet Testing - Testing the hot tub before purchase by physical getting a into demonstration model hot tub that is filled with water.

Plumbing - The fittings and lines (pipes) through which the hot tub water circulates.

Heater Element - The electrical element that provides heat to the hot tub water.

Hot Tub Cover - The removable cover that provides heat insulation and weather protection.

Air Controls - Controls that adjust the amount of air flow to various jets.

Filtration Pump - A small energy efficient pump that moves water through the filters, ozone and heating system.

Brominator - Dispenses the chemical bromine in the hot tub water for purification purposes.

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You.

The worst thing that can happen to you as a hot tub shopper is to purchase a hot tub for thousands of dollars and when it arrives at home and you discover a bunch of unhappy surprises. You need to learn as much as you can about hot tubs so that your selection will result in satisfaction and a lot of happy moments.

Unfortunately, hot tubs can be very complex with a dizzying array of options and features. The confusion even multiplies after speaking with a salesperson because each has their different spin on what's good, what's not, what's a must-have, and what's optional. It's possible to walk out of a hot tub store being more confused than when you walked in.

The fact is that you need to understand what's good and what's not good BEFORE you walk into a hot tub store so that you can decipher truth from fiction. Too many consumers walk right into a cheap hot tub store and get sold on the first visit. I've always said, "buy in haste, and suffer at your leisure!! Yes, what you don't know can hurt you.

The Seven Hot Tub Buying Mistakes Revealed.

There is a pattern of mistakes made by consumers that could easily be avoided if they had only educated themselves before going shopping. Not in any particular order (because they are all important) the following are the seven most common mistakes consumers make when purchasing a hot tub.

Mistake #1: Focusing on price versus long-term efficiency and satisfaction.

Mistake #2: Not investigating the structural integrity of the hot tub.

Mistake #3: Underestimating the amount of required maintenance.

Mistake #4: Not selecting the right hydrotherapeutic jet structure.

Mistake #5: Not taking into consideration the area in which your hot tub will be placed.

Mistake #6: Overlooking the importance of the warranty.

Mistake #7: Not choosing a reputable dealer and manufacturer.

There they are. These are mistakes that consumers have made over and over again. This report will help you to overcome each one of the seven mistakes and avoid them so that you can get the best hot tub value for your money. Let's get going!



Mistake #1

Focusing on price versus long-term efficiency and satisfaction.

Most consumers have the number \$3000 to \$4000 in their head when they walk into a hot tub store. Once they look down at the price tag they usually get sticker shock. They had no idea that hot tubs can cost up to \$7000 to \$8000. What they don't understand is many \$3000 hot tubs can eventually end up costing well over \$8000 in electrical bills, chemicals, parts and other unexpected expenses and headaches. "Price is once; cost is forever."

Leaks are the hardest thing to find in a full foam hot tub.

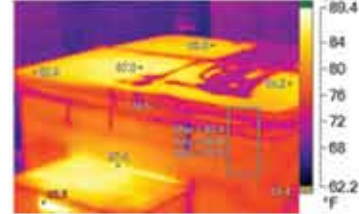
When shopping for hot tubs, don't focus so much on the upfront cost, but on the hot tub's total lifetime cost. This forces you to focus on the hot tub's efficiency rather than solely on its sticker price. Depending on the efficiency of the hot tub, the climate you live in, and the level of maintenance received, your operating cost for the hot tub can run you anywhere from 50¢ to \$2 a day.

There are many factors that go into how efficient a hot tub is let's look at a few elements that can make or break your hot tub efficiency.

1. Insulation - Most hot tubs are placed outdoors and; therefore, are subject to the weather conditions making insulation a key consideration when determining a hot tub's efficiency. The better insulated your hot tub; the less you'll pay in heating bills. You'll discover two types of insulation techniques when shopping for your hot tub; "Full Foam" and "Dead Air Space." Dead Air Space works on the principle that hot air will stay trapped in an enclosed, insulated air space. The Full Foam insulation technique fills all the dead air space in the inner compartment of the hot tub with a combination of high and low-density foam. The problem with full foam is that it is very difficult to service and it doesn't trap any of the waste heat created by the motors.

2. Hot Tub Cover - The hot tub cover is important in that heat rises. The only thing keeping the heat from rising is the hot tub cover. Many hot tub covers are made out of regular vinyl covering with Styrofoam inside. The better hot tub covers are made out of marine vinyl, which was specifically developed to withstand even the worst weather conditions. In addition, look for hot tub covers with a min of 4" to 3" tapered foam for maximum heat and retention and has an insulated bumper down the middle of the fold as the cover tends to lose most of its heat through that fold. Your hot tub cover should have a tight-fitting cover lock that will form a protective seal to keep the heat in and to keep the water clean longer. Lastly, look for a cover that has locks to help keep the hot tub safe when no one is around.

3. Pump and Motor - Many salespeople will boast about the power of their water jets and pumps. They'll quote horsepower ratings and water per minute ratings. The fact is, water flow control is more important than horsepower ratings. What does it matter if you've got a turbo-charged water pump propelling water through an inefficient plumbing and jet system? Using oversized horsepower pumps just raises your electric bill. By the way, there is no set standard for rating horsepower in the hot tub industry, which can make comparing very confusing and misleading. The ultimate test is to physically feel the power of the water jets and compare it to the gallons per minute ratings and the horsepower ratings. You want strong water jets with a high gallon-per-minute rating and a lower horsepower rating. This means the hot tub is more efficient. When you ask for horsepower ratings, ask for the "continuous operation" rating which is really all you should care about. Don't be fooled when the salesperson quotes a "market rating" or an "uprating." These rating only measure the horsepower during start-up.



Thermal Imaging reveals the heat loss.

4. Filtration Pump - Some manufacturers use one large jet pump for filtration and Hydrotherapy cycles. Others use filtration systems that come with a small filtration pump, which is dedicated to pumping water through the filters and ozone and heating systems. Using the small filtration pump greatly reduces the wear and tear on the large jet pump while reducing overall electricity costs and excessive noise. Finally, there's nothing worse than sitting in your hot tub, wishing you had purchased the options that you really wanted, knowing that if you had just invested a few more dollars you could have had the type of hot tub you really wanted in the first place. Consider making the necessary up front investment to get what you really want, then sit back, relax, and enjoy your hot tub for years to come, knowing that you made a good investment.

Mistake #2

Not Investigating the Structural Integrity of the Hot Tub.

The hot tub shell and the outer cabinetry are areas of the hot tub that often get overlooked because, to the average person, they all look and act the same. Yes, the hot tub shell and cabinetry both come in different colours and textures, but most shoppers would consider these preference decisions and not anything that makes one hot tub "better" than another.

This couldn't be farther from the truth. Just ask anyone who had a hot tub shell crack on them or had their cabinetry start to fade, rot and chip away.

Hot Tub Shell - The hot tubs shell in most cases is very durable and most come with long or even lifetime warranties. About 90% of all hot tub shells are made of acrylic or thermal plastic, which are both very durable.

Under the acrylic shell you usually find fiberglass. To make sure the bond between the acrylic and the fiberglass is sturdy, your hot tub should use a vinyl ester resin skin coat or a bond laminate.

This provides a triple-layer shell that will provide extra support to the areas of the hot tub that hold a lot of weight and protect from cracking, peeling, blistering, or delamination.

Cabinetry - Early Generation hot tubs were traditionally made out of redwood or cedar due to their inherent durability. However, most new hot tubs are being manufactured with synthetic cabinets. In fact, manufacturers of better-built hot tubs have invested significant engineering resources to ensure that these synthetic cabinets are superior in durability and impervious to various weather conditions such as extreme heat, cold or UV rays. These quality synthetic cabinets are virtually maintenance-free. The cabinetry is not just there to look pretty. Sometimes it is part of the structural support that holds and balances the weight of the hot tub. Make sure your hot tub has various support beams that extend from the lip of the hot tub and the seat of the hot tub to the floor.

If your hot tub is made out of wood, make sure it is high quality wood. Look for any knots or splintering. How the wood is treated can make a big difference on how long it lasts. Make sure the wood is "kiln-dried" preventing it from warping or cracking. In addition, ensure that it is treated with a UV protectant stain so that it will be protected from snow & rain, but more importantly from UV rays, which are more damaging than snow, rain and heat put together. One last thought about the cabinetry; make sure that the underside of the hot tub is well sealed so moisture, pests, and rodents don't get into your insulation and plumbing.

Mistake #3

Under estimating the amount of required Hot Tub Maintenance.

The number one complaint of hot tub owners always circles around maintenance. Don't underestimate the need to maintain your hot tub to keep it looking and functioning properly. However, with some smart hot tub shopping tips you'll be able to dramatically reduce the amount of required maintenance and the associate costs.

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Chemicals - First let's explore the myth of chemical maintenance. Many hot tub retailers will insist that you always maintain the correct chemical levels in the hot tub at all times and you will need to check it every time you use your hot tub. In reality the retailer is just trying to sell you a lot of chemical and supplies that you don't need. More chemicals are not necessarily better!

Filtration - Filters help to cleanse your hot tub of body oils, lotions, hair sprays etc. Hot Tub filters require cleaning which can be a hassle. However, a quality hot tub will have a filtration system that filters both the top of the water and the bottom of the hot tub. Be sure to choose the hot tub that has a pressurized filtration as opposed to a suction side filter. Pressure side filter clean 100% of the water in only 15 minutes as opposed to suction side filters that can take up to 4 hours to do the same.

Draining - Most manufacturers recommend draining and cleaning your hot tub no more than three to four times per year depending on how well you maintain it. It can take an average hot tub @ 4 – 10 hours to drain through a gravity drain and even when it gets to the bottom there is still 4 – 6" of water left in the bottom that still needs to be bailed out. Look for a hot tub that makes this process simple

Exterior - The hot tub cover needs to be well treated in order to repel water and withstand the elements. Don't be led into thinking this is a major task. All you have to do is spray your cover with a water repellent every 2-3 months.

Mistake #4

Not selecting the right therapeutic jet structure.

One of the primary reasons for owning a hot tub comes from its hydrotherapeutic benefits. There are 8 major reasons why people buy hot tubs; back pain, neck pain, sports recovery, leg pain, stress relief, insomnia, headache relief and over all body awakening. The shape or type of the jet and the position of the jet determines the type of Hydrotherapy you will receive. You need to get this right because jetting is what hot tubs are all about.

If you have upper back pain and the hot tub you buy doesn't have a jet structure that helps you with that particular problem, then there is no use having the hot tub. Also, if the jet structure isn't flexible enough to adapt to the type of massage you want, you'll always receive the same old massage over and over again, make sure you buy a hot tub that has different seats and different massages.

Make sure you buy a hot tub that has individually adjustable jets. Many hot tubs allow you to adjust the water pressure to a group of jets, but not each one individually. Being able to adjust the water flow individually allows you to customize your hydrotherapy experience.

Wet Testing - Is physically getting into the hot tub to test it while filled with water. At the very least, dip your hand in the hot tub to feel the strength and pattern of the hot tub jets. This will give you an idea of the massage given by that particular jet.

Make sure that...

- a) The seating fits your body form.
- b) The jets hit the areas of your body that needs therapeutic help.
- c) You feel comfortable in each seat.
- d) You can move from seat to seat with ease.
- e) The jets aren't too strong but can give enough power to give a good massage.
- f) You can adjust the water jets to your desired preference.
- g) You can reach the controls with ease.
- h) The hot tub will hold the right number of people you expect to invite in.

Water jets - Water jets are those small holes where the water comes out. Heated water is forced through the small, contoured holes making a jet-like action.

There is a wide variation of jets with which you should familiarize yourself. Several types of jets are

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engineered to give you a unique and different sensation. The jets should be able to give you several types of massage options such as:

Directional Jets - a direct, non-rotating water stream, which is the most basic of all jets.

Rotating Jets - Supplies a rotating water action, which is often the most preferable massage because it imitates the type of massage you might get from a human massage therapist.

Waving Jets - Provides a waving sensation either back and forth or up and down.

Air Jets - Jets emit air down around your legs and lower back that create a soft tissue massage.

Pulsating Jets - Provides a gentle pulsating massage.

Neck Jets - Neck jets can be wonderfully soothing therapy for you if you experience neck aches or even headaches from time to time. Most manufacturers have designed neck jets into their hot tubs. Be sure that you purchase a hot tub with neck jets that cascade through your pillow and are adjustable.

Foot Jets - Many of the lower end hot tubs lack foot jets that provide foot massaging. You only need one good foot massage to know that it's one of the best areas of the body to receive a massage. Why? Because all your nerves end in your feet. So there is a lot of truth to the charts that show how different parts of the foot affect different areas of the body. In fact, some types of lower back pain can be treated through good foot massage.

Seating - Seating is a big factor in your quest for the right hydrotherapeutic massage. The seats in your hot tub should have lumbar support so that you don't have to slouch down like you do in your bathtub. The water should at least touch your shoulders, if it doesn't you'll never get the hydrotherapy benefits you're looking for. If the hot tub you are looking at has a lounge seat, make sure it is deep enough to allow you to get the full hydrotherapy benefits offered. Some lounge seats are so shallow that you float instead of getting a massage. Also, make sure the fixed jets on the hot tub are hitting the right places on your body to get a good muscle tissue massage.

Aromatherapy - A relatively new option in some hot tubs is the option to have a light fragrance injected into the air jets that provide different sensations. Some aromas provide a relaxing and calming mood while other provides a more invigorating experience.

Noise - Although noise has nothing to do with the jet structure, it has everything to do with your overall hot tub experience. The pumps are a big cause of hot tub noise. You'll find that these hot tubs can become quite annoying when trying to speak to your partner, or anyone else, for that matter.

Mistake #5

Not taking into consideration the are a where you will be placing your hot tub.

Do you want a hot tub purchasing nightmare? Go buy a hot tub without considering where you will place it. Then when the installers bring it over to install it in your home you will have your nightmare! You must decide where you are going to put your hot tub before you go shopping. If your hot tub will be placed outside, make sure that it isn't in a low area that may get flooded during a heavy storm. Don't put it in or around any sand. If sand gets into the hot tub it can cause serious damage. Make sure that the surface is firm and level, preferably on a flat, concrete slab. If you are planning to have a hot tub installed on a patio or deck, have a structural engineer inspect the deck to ensure it can support the weight of the hot tub filled with water and people. An average four person hot tub weighs around 5000 pounds when full.



Mistake #6

Over looking the importance of the warranty.

The types of warranties that you will see when shopping for your hot tubs will include the following areas:

Shell Structure - Warrants against water loss due to defects in the hot tub shell.
(average warranty period is one to ten years)

Shell Surface - Warrants the interior surface of the hot tub against blistering, peeling, cracking, and delamination. (average warranty period is one to 5 years)

Leaks - Warrants against the loss of water due to defects in the fittings and plumbing lines. (average warranty period is one to three years)

Equipment - Warrants the hot tub electronic controls and pumps against mechanical or electrical breakdown, including parts and labour. (average warranty period is one to three years)

When you inspect your warranty, make sure that it covers each of these areas, including leaks. One of the "fine print" items that some hot tub retailers don't divulge is that the warranty may be 'pro-rated' from day one meaning that you pay a certain percentage of the cost to fix it and the retailer will pay a percentage of the cost to fix the hot tub. Make sure that you get a "full-warranty"

Mistake #7

Not choosing a reputable dealer and manufacturer. Beware of the Hot Tub & Swimspa EXPO

The technique is used by several manufacturers as a travelling road show to sell excess inventory in a quick and misleading fashion. All advertisements bill the expo as having 8 major brands on display, the reality is that it is one supplier with some false advertising.

The old saying applies here "If the deal is too good to believe...it usually is"

Choosing the right dealer is as important as choosing the right hot tub. You are beginning a long-term relationship. You want to purchase your hot tub from a dealer that is honest, sells a high quality hot tub, has been in business for a while, and has a solid warranty. Anything less could spell disappointment.

The best way to judge a good dealer is to talk to some of their customers.

Ask the dealer for permission to contact a few of their customers to discuss with them their experience.

When you visit other dealers, ask them about the last dealer you just visited, Ask them about the hot tubs that their competition carries that you've already visited. More than likely, they'll bring up some interesting points that you'll want to verify.



