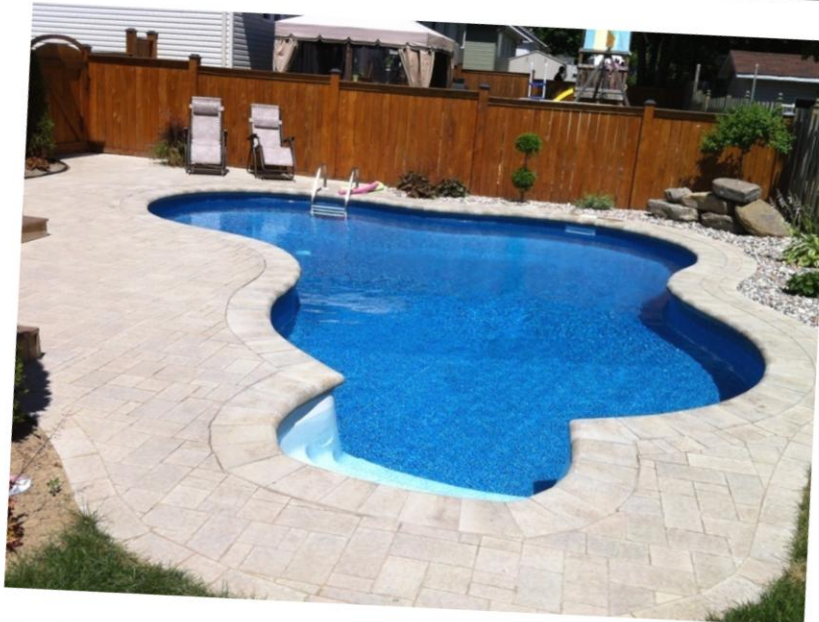


CAMPBELL POOLS

Thinking of purchasing an Inground Pool? It's a big project and a big investment so you probably need a few tips to get started.

This guide should help with everything from designing your backyard oasis, establishing a budget, figuring options and getting the whole thing completed.

With 20 years of experience in the industry and thousands of successful installations, we hope this guide will help empower you to making an informed decision.



Step 1 : Design and Planning

An inground swimming pool is rarely a spur of the moment decision. In pretty much every case it's something that has been in some form of planning for years. As you begin the process you may very well have a very detailed idea and plan for what you want your backyard to look like or you may be starting from scratch without even a notion of the shape or size.

Regardless of whether you have a very good idea of what you want or no idea whatsoever, we would recommend two exercises that will help getting things started or even make you realize something that you may have overlooked in your plans.

Create a Wish List

Put a quick list together of all the things you may have seen or heard of that you'd like on your pool.

This will give you a starting point when you meet a pool builder. During that meeting the pool builder will be able to answer any questions and discuss options and feasibility.



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Create a “Look Book”

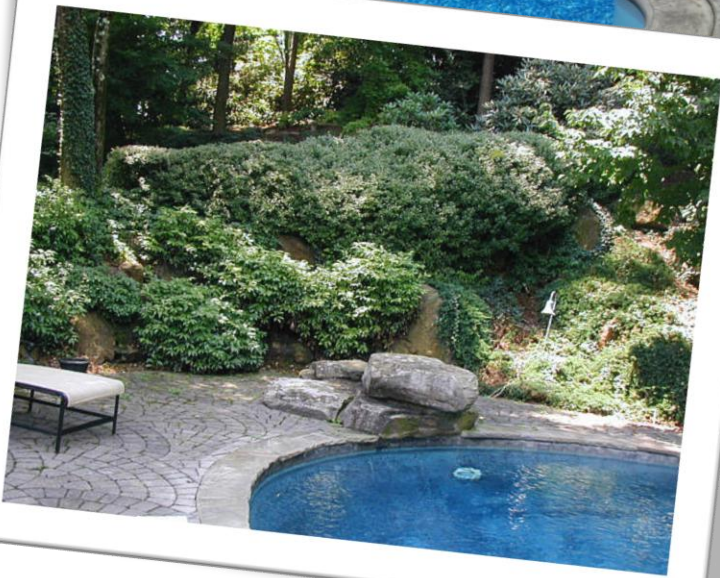
Sometimes it can be difficult to put your design ideas into words.

Gather as many pictures as you can of what you like and would like to re-create in your backyard.

[Landscape design and home design magazines](#) are a great source as is [Google image](#).

When meeting a Pool Builder or Landscape Architect, being able to pull out a picture and say “This is what I’m looking for” is invaluable and ensures everybody is on the same page.

This will make it much easier to incorporate your style preferences into the swimming pool design.



What I'm I going to use my pool for?

One of the questions that you need to ask when thinking about building an inground pool should be "What do I want to use the pool for?" The answer to this question can have a dramatic impact on the design process. Let me explain.

If the main reason for having an inground pool is for the kids and family to play, then it might make more sense to have a pool with a larger shallow end or even a pool with a resort style bottom so that you can touch the bottom in most of the pool.

Maybe the main reason for the pool is to do laps for fitness. Well in that case we'd focus on designing a pool that has more length and uses a straighter, linear design.

Perhaps you'll want to use the pool and attached patio area to primarily entertain. Then we want to focus on the living spaces in the yard and incorporating a pool shape that keeps these areas intimate and connected.

When the time comes to sit down with a swimming pool professional and discuss the pool design, he or she will be able to help guide the pool design much better with a basic understanding of what the pool will be used for. A client with a clear purpose is a pool builder's best friend.

But remember to keep an open mind. For example, we often hear that the pool will be used "For my young kids to have a place to play in the summer". This is fantastic. But it often leads to a design with a very large shallow area for the children. As a professional pool designer I would caution against this because those young children very quickly grow up into teenagers that may be more interested in a pool that has a large deep end.

Design Tip! – "Poolanitis"

One of the big challenges we often encounter during the planning and design phase of an inground pool project is something we jokingly refer to as "Poolanitis"

It is a condition in which the homeowner is looking to build the absolute largest pool that will legally fit on their property.

If you feel you may have a case of "Poolanitis", please remember the following.

- You need space around the pool to 'live'. Don't underestimate how much room the patio furniture, barbecue and other items will take.
- Thinking long term; a yard that has too large a pool with little to no living space will be a huge turn off for potential home buyers.

Design Tip! – Rectangle vs. Freeform Pools

A few things to think about when considering the shape of an inground pool.

- Rectangular pools tend to be more formal than freeform shapes. The rectangle is ideal for swimming laps
- Most freeform pools are designed around elements in nature or to blend into a natural setting.
- In a small yard, the Freeform pool will typically "fit" better because there are no corners jutting out.

Step 2 : Types of Inground Pools

Inground pools come in three main flavours; Concrete, Fibreglass and vinyl. Each has its advantages and disadvantages and choosing between them becomes a question of picking the best construction method for your money and environment.

Let's take a quick look at the three types and what they are all about.

Concrete Pool

The concrete pool, known as a gunite or shotcrete (depending on the mixing) pool, is a very popular type of construction method in many parts of the United States that have moderate climates in the winter.

They allow for virtually any design you can imagine and are extremely durable. Depending on the exact type of surface finish, these types of pools do need to be re-surfaced every five to ten years.

The disadvantage for this type of pool in Eastern Ontario is cost. Because of our rather harsh winter climate the gunite concrete pool must be built to withstand some pretty extreme ground frost. The extra material and labour required to build a gunite pool to these standards makes them roughly two to three times the price of either a vinyl or fibreglass type pool.

The long term maintenance costs of a gunite pool tend to be slightly more than either the fibreglass or vinyl pool.

Fibreglass Pool

Fibreglass pools are manufactured in a factory and leave that factory fully ready to be put in the ground as a single large pool shell. They have a very durable surface that doesn't need and maintenance and can be repaired in the event of a crack or puncture.

Fibreglass pools however have a few disadvantages. First is the fairly limited size and design choice. Because these pools must be shipped to the installation site, they must fit on a transport truck. This limits the size and shape to what you can fit on the truck bed.

The second disadvantage of the fibreglass pools is how it reacts in very wet soils. Because the fibreglass pool is a single large shell, it can be thought of as a large boat hull. If the level of ground water rises sufficiently, it can actually push the fibreglass pool up. The same is true in cold climates where ground movement due to frost can be a concern.

Vinyl Pools

The vinyl inground pool can be broken down into two types, a steel frame or a polymer frame. Both systems use the same type of construction and offer the same finished product. Vinyl pools are by far the most popular type of inground swimming pool in the Eastern Ontario area, and also in most of Canada, Eastern United States and more and more in the Southern United States.

Much like the concrete pools, vinyl pools have virtually unlimited possibilities for size and design. With the addition of built in steps, benches and sunledges, any design feature found in a fibreglass pool can easily be incorporated into a vinyl pool. Long gone are the days of only having two or three choices in possible shapes.

Because of how vinyl pools are built, they deal very well with various soil conditions over virtually any type of climate. This makes them ideal for our very warm and dry summers and wet and quite cold winters.

The downside of the vinyl pool is the vinyl liner that holds the water. It can be punctured or cut leading to a water leak far more easily than concrete or fibreglass. Luckily they can be repaired fairly easily and permanently by welding a patch. The liner will also need to be changed about every fifteen years from normal wear and tear. This can be done by a professional crew in less than a day.

So when we look at the three types of pool construction and compare price, design freedom, suitability to local conditions and durability, the vinyl over steel or polymere type tends to come out ahead in Eastern Ontario.

Steel vs. Polymere?

This is one of the most common questions we get asked. 'Which is better, polymer or steel?'. When we compare both systems we need to remember that everything else is the same. The pool equipment, the accessories, the possible acrylic steps and benches and the vinyl liner. Both products offer limited lifetime warranties and both are expected to last for longer than we can expect to be around.

But there are a few differences and each one does have some advantages and disadvantages. Let's take a look.

Steel Wall Advantages:

- Corrosion resistance: The type of steel wall used by Campbell Pools is a 14 gauge galvanized steel using a G235 coating (or Z700 using the metric system). This is the heaviest coating weight to galvanize steel and should resist corrosion once buried for over 50 years.
- Steel walls are much stronger than the polymer equivalent. Which makes sense; after all they build skyscrapers and bridges out of steel and not polymer.
- Steel walls are easier to adjust during the installation and this makes it easier to ensure the pool wall is straight and level.
- There is a much greater variety of panel length and radius's available giving greater options in design, acrylic step and bench placement and coping options.
- Steel walls also have a larger thermal range (deal better with extreme cold and hot weather) and deal better with shifting soil conditions.
- Very wide range of possible custom step and bench designs possible using our Vinyl over Steel system.

Steel Wall Disadvantages:

- The G235 or Z700 galvanization should not corrode, but years after installation it is possible to have slight surface corrosion.

Polymer Wall Advantages:

- Built from non-corrosive resin material, can not and will never corrode.

Polymer Wall disadvantages:

- Slightly more expensive than steel.
- Less design options and more panels required to achieve certain designs which means a higher cost of material when compared to steel.
- Limited to using acrylic or fiberglass inserted steps and benches.

So at the end of the day which one is better? Well the answer is both. Campbell Pools sells and installs both so it comes down to our customers preference. Both come with a lifetime warranty and both will produce a beautiful, long lasting inground pool.

Whichever is used, it's the right choice.

Step 3 : Find a Pool Builder.

Now that you've decided to become an inground pool owner it's time to choose the builder. Like any construction or renovation project, you want to make sure you get the best professional people for the job.

Picking your builder

Talk with several candidates and ask them about the building process. Don't be afraid of asking questions. Any experiences and reputable builder will be able to answer all of your relevant questions.

Ask about what work do they do themselves and what do they contract out. It's not uncommon for a pool builder to contract the excavation work. Ensure that everybody who's going to be working in your yard is certified and insured.

Ask for references and check them out. Most reputable companies will have done work in your area and should be able to provide examples of their work for you to visit.

Since you will be working with this builder for several months, you'll want to choose somebody you feel comfortable and can communicate with

Where to get information

When looking for a pool professional to build your inground pool you may want to;

- Talk with friends and neighbours that had a pool installed.
- Use online review sites such as homestars.com
- Check with the Better Business Bureau

What about Landscapers?

It's very likely that you'll be looking to not only build an inground swimming pool but also landscape your yard around the pool.

It's important to realize that this will often require the service of a professional landscaping company separate from the pool builder.

Most reputable pool builders will have strong relationships with a few good landscapers that can be brought onboard for landscaping design.

Step 4 : Creating a budget for your project.

You probably already have a good idea of what you're willing to spend on your new swimming pool but it's important to speak with your pool builder and start getting hard numbers for your project.

Getting a Quote

Any good builder will be able to give you a good idea of what the cost of your project will be during your discussions. But you'll also want to get a firm quote in writing before making any decisions.

When you do get a written quote you will want to make sure that everything is well itemized so you know exactly what you are getting in the quoted price.

Make sure that any particularities about your project, such as the removal of existing elements in the yard or any special needs for gaining access to the yard are spelled out in the quote.

Beyond the quote for the pool

It's important to realize that your pool builder may not be the only professional you need to work with to make your project a reality. In some cases you may need to get quotes for other items that are beyond the scope of the pool but necessary to its completion. Ensure that you take the following into account.

- Electrical work
- Natural Gas or Propane connection (with a pool heater)
- Fencing; even if your yard is fenced, it may need some updates to bring it up to code.
- Landscaping; this also applies to the cost of repairing any damage to the property from the construction of the pool.
- Water; to fill the pool. Is it part of the pool price or charged separately?
- Building Permit

Tip! – Talking about your budget

Talk to your builder about your budget from the start! It's not uncommon for people to be uncomfortable or even sometimes unwilling to discuss how much they are prepared to spend. They assume they will 'get a bad deal' and be charged more if they tell their builder how much they are prepared to spend. Huge Mistake.

By letting the potential builders know that you will be getting several quotes, each will strive to be as competitive as they can. But more importantly, by discussing your budget upfront with a builder, he or she will be able to work with you to get your vision to fit your budget. You may need to adjust your plans or you may have the resources to add to the initial concept, but in either case it's important that both you and your builder know what the budget is from the start.

Step 5 : Get the features you really want.

We just told you to come up with a budget and stick to it (great advice), but don't settle if you can help it. It's almost always far more expensive and more difficult to retrofit a swimming pool than doing it during the initial installation.

So if you really want that water feature or automation system, then go for it. If this busts the budget then ask your pool builder how you may be able to save elsewhere. You just don't want that 'almost perfect' pool.

Finishing touches - It's the little things that matter

Placement of the lights, height of that water feature, adding color to the concrete deck around the pool.

These are just some of the little details that can really make or break an inground swimming pool project. They are also sometimes put aside as unimportant. Don't let that happen.

A good pool designer / builder will take the time to explain what features and options are available and how they can add value, convenience or aesthetics to your pool. But don't forget to speak up if there is a certain feature or finished look you want.

If a landscaper is involved it becomes even more important to ensure there is proper communication between your pool builder and the landscaper.

Campbell Pools prides itself on being able to coordinate large, complicated projects, with ease. We've done thousands of pools while working with landscapers and have figured out how to ensure that your final vision becomes a reality.

Tip! – How to do it later.

Sometimes it's just not possible to incorporate every element that you may want into a working budget. But that might not necessarily mean the end of it.

With proper planning it's often possible to prepare for future add-ons without incurring extra costs. For example, if you really want a water feature but can't make it work in your budget right now, it's possible to run the underground plumbing and so any of the structural work needed around the pool for a few hundred dollars during the installation. That way, if five years down the road you are ready to put in the water feature, you don't need to spend thousands to run new underground plumbing and pour extra concrete to support things since they've been done. All you need to do is have the water feature built at the same cost it would have been during the initial installation.

So if you are bumping up against your budget, talk to your pool builder about what needs to be done now, what can wait and what would need to be done to make something happen later at a lower cost.

Step 6 : Check your local building codes

This is something that your pool builder will be able to help with a great deal, but it's a good idea to know the rules yourself.

A quick trip to the local building permit office will typically do the trick. In many cases they have handout packages ready with all the by-laws that apply to pools and what steps need to be taken to get your permit and so forth.

They can also quickly look up your address and let you know of any special building restrictions or noise restrictions that might apply.

Do I really need a building permit?

A question that get's asked alot is whether you really need a building permit for a pool and the answer is... It depends.

Most jurisdictions do require you to obtain a building permit while a handful don't. This is something your pool builder or a quick visit to the local building permit office will be able to get the answer for you.

It's also important to get the permit for liability issues. By obtaining the permit and having the related inspections passed, the pool is then certified as compliant in your jurisdiction which can be important in the case of an accident.

How hard is it to apply and get the permit?

Not hard at all. Most by-law offices realize that these are permits that will be applied for by the homeowner and have made the process and requirements very simple.

In our case, Campbell Pools will take care of applying and obtaining your building permit for you (In some areas outside of Ottawa we may not offer this service) at no extra charge.

Step 7 : What are the costs associated with owning an inground pool?

It's important to take a moment to consider the costs of owning an inground pool and it's a frequent question asked. Let's take a quick look.

Seasonal Costs

These will include such things as:

- Electrical
- Natural Gas or Propane
- Chemicals / Salt
- Replacement items
- water

Electrical: Based on an average pool running a two speed pump full time, with a salt system and lights, you can expect somewhere between \$150 - \$175 a month at the very high end.

Gas: Very difficult to give an exact number since there are so many variables that come into play. But based on an average pool in an average summer, we would expect about \$500 - \$700 a season for natural gas and about three and half times that for propane.

Chemicals: This will vary depending on pool size and therefore on how much water is in the pool. But on an average 16'x32' pool it would be reasonable to expect about \$300 a season in chemicals including salt if using a salt system.

Replacement items: This is everything that wears out over time and needs to be replaced. Some years it will be next to nothing, other years it may be more. But on average you should expect to budget about \$200 a season.

Water: Having to fill up the pool every spring is fairly common plus there will be a need to top up the pool regularly during the summer. You can therefore expect your water bill to be slightly higher with a pool.

Long Term Costs

Here we are talking about costs that will need to be addressed five plus years down the road. Most of these are the replacement of items that will wear out over time such as solar blankets, salt system cell.

There is also maintenance costs on items such as the heater, automatic cleaner, LED lights and the pump.

This will vary quite a bit from pool to pool and it's something that your pool builder can go over with you on your specific pool.

The one big item that will need to be looked at about fifteen years after the pool is built is the vinyl liner. On an average pool this will be about \$3,500 to \$4,000.

Like everything in life, if your pool is well maintained from the start then your long term costs down the road will be less. Your pool builder will be able to walk you through the basic maintenance that will keep your pool in good working order for years to come.

Step 8 : Don't forget about insurance.

Installing an inground pool adds a substantial element to your property and is a major investment. It's important to talk with your insurance broker about your coverage and possible addition costs.

Insurance, really?

Yep, it's important to look at your insurance policy and find out if your new inground pool is covered.

Over the years many insurance providers have removed swimming pools from their home insurance policies. This means that if a tree falls into the pool or some other unforeseen accident occurs you may not be covered.

It's worth the time to talk to your broker and find out exactly what your policy covers. In some cases it may cost you a bit more a year to have the pool and it's equipment fully covered.

In some rare cases it may even save you a few dollars to have a pool in your yard. In rural areas where there are no fire hydrants, having thousands of litres of water readily available to the fire department may lower the fire protection portion of you policy.

Next Steps

There you have it. This guide should be able to get you started on putting together the right pieces of information as you consider a pool.

If you want to read more details about buying or owning a swimming pool – be sure to go back to our blog and read about the topics that matter to you.

<http://Blog.campbellpools.ca>

If you are looking at getting a quote, feel free to request one from us by clicking the image below.

Hope this guide helped you and share it with others. Thank you.

[Request a Quote for Pool](#)

<http://hubs.ly/y0BBJY0>