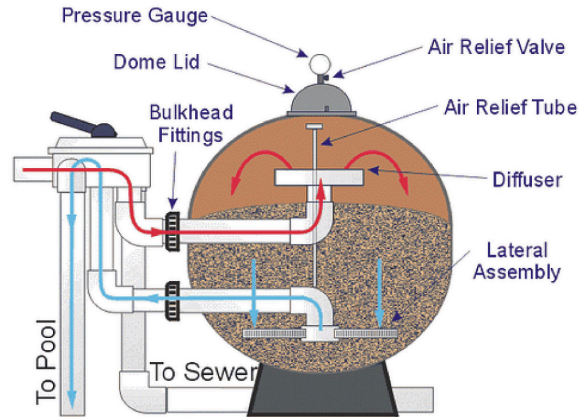


Choosing a swimming pool filter

The job of a pool or spa filter is to remove the tiny dirt particles that make the water cloudy. The choices of filters for a pool are; Sandfilter, Diatomaceous Earth filter or Cartridge filter.

Sandfilter - Sand filters are the least efficient of available pool filters, but they are also the least expensive. Sandfilters are large tanks that hold special pool sand. As dirty water circulates through the filter the sharp edges and smooth faces of the sand trap the dirt. This type of filter can trap particles down to 20-25 microns and are efficient enough to keep most pools clean. From new the sand will last 5-7 years, depending on how many hours a day the pump is operating, and changing the sand is an awful job.



Typical Sandfilter layout

How big is a micron? Anything under 35 microns is impossible to be seen with the naked eye. So - quite small, then!

Cartridge Filters – These are tanks that hold 3 or 4 cylindrical cartridges, similar to the cartridges in an automotive oil or air filter, made from a material such as polyester, which trap and hold particles down to about 5-10 microns.

They are usually priced between Sandfilters and DE Filters.

Cartridge filters require very little maintenance. You can sometimes get away with hosing the cartridges off 3 or 4 times during the swimming season. If this is insufficient you may need to soak the cartridges in a cleaning solution.

At worst you may need to replace the cartridges, which are relatively inexpensive.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE) Filter – DE filters are the most efficient, and dearest, type of filter and they will trap dirt particles down to 3-5 microns in size.

Diatomaceous Earth is a fine powder made from billions of fossilised plankton skeletons. The inside of a DE filter holds a number of cartridges or grids coated with the stuff. It works exceptionally well to catch and hold dirt.

Maintenance of DE filters can be demanding, though. Most types require periodic backwashing and this is not always sufficient to get them thoroughly clean. You may need to remove the grids periodically and discard the used DE powder. This can be a pain because some towns (in USA, anyway) classify spent DE powder as toxic waste, so it cannot be dumped.

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