

Organizing the Pool Deck Clutter

Storage Options for Floats and Toys

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The leaves are changing and the temperature is falling. That means that fall is right around the corner. Pool owners have made their final trips to the store for the season. They've gone through the list of winterizing supplies: chlorine, fungical algacide, canvas cover, and air pillow, if necessary. Everything seems to be in order, the pool is chemically balanced, equipment has been drained, and pumps have been set, but what about those pool floats and toys?

The solution last year of stacking them in the shed didn't work. When summer came, and it was time to use the floats again, they were all stuck together, moldy, ripped, maybe the best one even had a rake impression on top. It is possible to avoid these float storage pit falls, however.

There are many different products on the market to store floats. Most can be grouped into three categories: outside storage bins, stand-alone racks/caddies and, the newest entry into the marketplace, hanging float racks.

Outside Storage Bins and Chests

Few storage products on the market seem to offer good organizational systems for pool floats and toys. The first option, outdoor storage bins and chests, come in many varieties and materials. Most are made of injection molded plastic, wood, or wicker. They typically hold about three floats. Noodles and swim toys can be thrown in as well, but the bins do not offer a real organizational scheme for either, and the extra capacity is limited.



How do you currently store your swim toys?

In terms of safety, the bins generally do not pose a threat, though they should be locked if small children are around. Besides the limited organizational capabilities, these bins also take up valuable deck space.

Generally these bins will not rust or anodize, with the possible exception of wicker. However, the problems of mold/mildew, rips and indentations are still very likely because the floats are stacked inside the bin, without opportunity for airflow.



Does your pool deck look like this?



Stand-Alone Float Rack/Caddy

Another option for storing floats is a stand-alone rack or caddy. These have been around for awhile, and are typically made of steel, aluminum or PVC. They hold four to five rafts and offer a much better organization scheme than storage bins. Regardless of material used, stand-alone racks typically have posts that jut up from the base, which allows floats to be stored side by side. This prevents them from being stacked on top of each other, but does present a safety hazard. These racks have limited noodle and toy storage capabilities. On a positive note, however, this type of rack typically can hold both inflatable floats and the nicer foam filled vinyl covered floats that are very popular in the market today.

There are two major drawbacks to stand-alone float racks/caddies. The first being the huge safety hazard they present. They typically sit on the pool deck where people walk and children play. This presents a significant tripping hazard. The second drawback depends on the material with which the storage rack is made. Some racks are made with aluminum, which presents an opportunity for rust and/or anodization. Cathy, a pool owner from Florida, "purchased a floor stand model made of aluminum from a different retailer, and had to return it because the screws on the bottom rusted and stained [her] patio and then [her] garage floor." Those made of wicker, or similar material, will eventually wear out. Those made of a plastic, or PVC material, are clearly the longer lasting and present no evident danger of rust.

Hanging Float Rack

The shining star of the float storage industry seems to be the "The Original Hanging Float Rack"® manufactured by floatstorage.com®. This innovative concept earned the distinction and the Reader's Choice Award from Pool & Spa News Magazine in 2009. These hanging float racks can be mounted on almost any surface and offer excellent organization capabilities. One model holds three floats, while the other model holds six. One arm of each of these models can be used for an optional accessory bag to store "noodles," swim goggles, and the various toys one accumulates with a pool. They are the only storage options that accommodate towels and bathing suits as well.



Clean, neat, and out of the way... Available in two models to hold 3 or 6 floats.

"The Original Hanging Float Rack"® offers several major advantages over bins and stand-alone caddies. Since they are mounted, they do not take up precious deck space and do not pose a safety hazard to people walking or playing around the pool. They are made of furniture grade PVC material which will not fade, rust, corrode, anodize, chip or crack, even if exposed to harsh summer or winter elements.

Floatstorage.com® also offers "The Original Hanging Fence Rack"™ made with the same durable, rust resistant material. It holds four floats, as well as noodles, swim toys and pool equipment nets and poles. It can accommodate inflatable pool floats and toys, as well as towels and bathing suits.



Noodle Organizer

All of the above storage options primarily focus on floats, with an option of noodle and toy storage. There are products designed specifically to store noodles and swim toys, however. These include stand-alone holders and those that attach to a fence or wall. Some of these products offer better organization than others.



Portable, holds "noodles", toys, balls, hockey sticks, and more.

The hanging noodle organizers offer the best in terms of organization, but are limited in that they can only hold four noodles, on average. Stand-alone organizers can hold up to 12 noodles. Both of these organizers are limited to noodles, and essentially nothing else. On the other hand, they are very inexpensive and can be purchased at mass retailers.

Once again, floatstorage.com[®] seems to lead the pack in the noodle and swim toy storage category. They offer an innovative organizer called "The Original Noodle House."[™] This stand-alone organizer is also made of furniture grade PVC material with a 100 percent polyester mesh bag insert that is made specifically to withstand the effects of chlorine, salt water and other chemicals from the pool.

"The Original Noodle House"[™] is portable, so as not to use that precious deck space when not in use. It also comes in a "Super" version with casters, specifically designed for commercial use, such as public, HOA, university, resort and swimming school pools. Charles of the Hathaway Tower Condo Association in Richmond, Virginia raves, "[The] Super Noodle House arrived and . . . we are thrilled to have such a handsome storage container."

Don't Neglect Float Storage

Fall is here and it's time to get that pool or spa ready for winter. There is so much to do, but pool and spa owners often forget about appropriately storing those pool accessories. Proper storage is essential to maintaining floats and pool toys, and ensuring they are in usable condition when spring arrives. There are many options for pool float storage. Pool owners just have to do their homework and decide which is best.