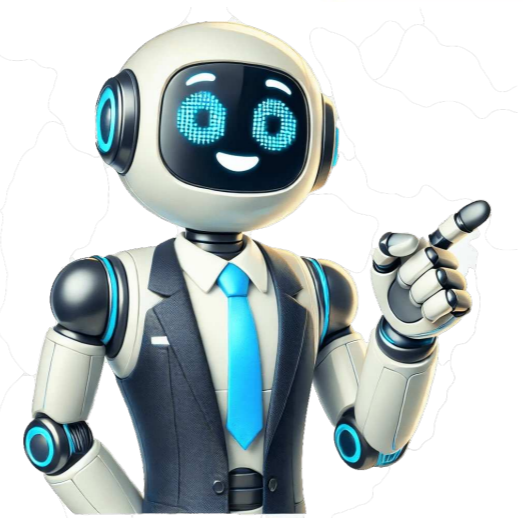


I'm not a robot



Pool water testing kits

Testing your pool is essential to managing its chemistry and ensuring it's safe to swim in. However, swimming pool testing kits aren't created equal. Here are the top testing kits currently on the market, as well as information about how I chose them. Pool Water Testing Kits: My Top Picks Poolmaster 5-Way Test Kit Best Liquid Testing Kit Research Score: 4.2 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 4 Accuracy: 4 User Friendliness: 4 Price: 5 What's Great: Simple, easy-to-use test for common chemical needs It lasts for at least 1 season unless you need to test the water persistently Outstanding value for the number of tests offered Limitations & What Needs Improvement: A poor choice for people who have difficulty distinguishing colors It's possible to squirt too much of the test chemicals in and waste them Number Of Different Tests: 5 Test Categories: Chlorine, Bromine, pH, Acid Demand, and Total Alkalinity Testing Style: Liquid Drops The Poolmaster 5-way testing kit is one of the best liquid test kits out there on the market today. Not only does it test for 5 of your pool chemicals, but it is also surprisingly easy to use, thanks to the clear instructions that come with the product. This test kit is highly rated for accuracy - barring any human error! On that note, if you are color-blind to any degree, it might be worth looking for a digital tester instead. Type of Tests Performed This Poolmaster 5-way testing kit performs five different types of tests: chlorine, bromine, pH, acid demand, and total alkalinity. It tests for all of the most commonly needed chemicals, so this is a great testing kit for your average maintenance needs. However, there are other kits out there with many more tests in a single kit, so if you are looking for a more thorough testing kit that tests for both chemicals and metals in your pool, you may want to look elsewhere. Accuracy As a general rule, liquid test kits will be much more accurate than your average testing strip. However, with that said, liquid test kits like the Poolmaster 5-way testing kit do come with one disadvantage: room for human error. Liquid test kits require people to put the right amount of drops into the vials, but as long as you do it slowly and carefully, this Poolmaster testing kit should come up with very accurate results. The other thing to keep in mind is that if you have any sort of colorblindness, you may find it difficult to interpret the results. User Friendliness This Poolmaster test kit is rated 5 out of 5 stars for ease of use and 4.8 out of 5 stars for instruction quality. Although liquid drop test kits are, as a whole, more difficult to use than testing strips, this kit comes with a comprehensive manual that walks you through how to use this kit step-by-step. Price This liquid testing kit should last you for at least one pool season. And some testers even report this kit lasting for up to two seasons! For this price point, getting one or two seasons out of a liquid drop kit is a pretty good steal. Plus, unlike some other testing kits on the market, this one kit tests for five chemicals already, which will save you money. Notes From Other Testers The Poolmaster 5-way test kit rates highly with other testers, rating an average of 4.5 out of 5 stars from over 70 reviews. It ranks particularly highly for ease of use, accuracy, and instruction quality. Liquid test kits can be intimidating for pool owners that have never used one before. But testers love that this test kit gives a visual aid and helps with the process every step of the way with clear instructions. Research Score: 4.0 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 3 Accuracy: 4 User Friendliness: 4 Price: 5 What's Great: Accurate to within 200 ppm of salt in your pool Simple and easy to use once you know how It usually lasts 15+ tests unless you have a ton of extra salt in your pool Ideal for saltwater pools Limitations & What Needs Improvement: It gives false results if you use it in any way other than exactly how you're supposed to Number of Different Tests: 1 Test Category: Salt Levels (saltwater chlorine generators only) Testing Style: Droplets Overall, I really like the Taylor Technologies K-1766 drop test kit. It is a great addition to any pool test kit for saltwater pools. Although most salt generators will tell you if the salt levels in your pool are too high or too low, they aren't very good at letting pool owners know how far the water is from the ideal salt level range. This is where this drop kit comes in handy! With accuracy within 200 ppm of your salt levels, the Taylor Technologies' K-1866 kit is also simple and easy to use. Ensure that you use this kit exactly as you should, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Failure to do so may result in inaccurate results. Type of Tests Performed This Taylor Technologies K-1766 drop test kit is an excellent addition to your pool testing kit for your saltwater pool. This liquid drop test is only for use for saltwater chlorine generators and is used to test for salt levels in the water. The salt level in your pool should be between 2700 to 3400 ppm (parts per million), with the ideal level sitting around 3200 ppm. This product does not score as highly in this section simply because it is a specialty test. Accuracy This saltwater liquid drop test is accurate for up to 200 ppm of salt in your pool, which is quite a small margin. Of course, as with other liquid test kits, there is room for human error. But as long as you use the test kit according to the manufacturer's instructions, you should end up with a fairly accurate reading of the salt levels in your pool. User Friendliness This saltwater drop test kit is straightforward to use. The manufacturer's instructions are clear and simple enough to follow - even for those who have never used liquid drop tests. However, I have docked off a point simply because some users have had difficulty interpreting the results according to the color chart. Price The Taylor Technologies K-1766 drop test kit is a reasonably priced product for the quality of the item. Plus, this drop test kit should last you more than 15 uses, so you definitely get a bang for your buck. Notes From Other Testers This Taylor product is one of the most popular test kits for saltwater pools. It boasts an average rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars from more than 800 reviews. Other testers particularly like that this kit is easy to use and read. In addition, many testers rave about the accuracy of this product in determining their saltwater levels within 200 ppm. However, some other testers question the accuracy of this test kit, so if you get this product, you should ensure that you follow the instructions word-for-word to get an accurate result. Research Score: 4.2 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 5 Accuracy: 4 User Friendliness: 5 Price: 3 What's Great: An incredibly comprehensive testing kit Only requires five drops per test (except cyanuric acid, iron, copper, and biguanide shock, which use tablets) Water-resistant housing Ideal for people who have difficulty reading other test results Limitations & What Needs Improvement: Far more expensive than most other testing kits Some testers have received faulty or expired reagents Number Of Different Tests: 11 Test Categories: Free Chlorine, Total Chlorine, Bromine, pH, Alkalinity, Calcium Hardness, Cyanuric Acid, Iron, Copper, Biguanide, and Biguanide Shock Testing Style: Liquid Drops (mostly) with Digital Readout The LaMotte ColorQ Pro 11 is one of the best digital pool testing kits out there. It tests for 11 different chemicals, so it's incredibly comprehensive, covering everything from free chlorine to copper and more! Featuring a water-resistant housing, this testing kit takes the guesswork out of matching the tested chemical levels with a color chart - the digital reader does this all for you. The biggest drawback of this testing kit is the price. It is much more expensive than liquid drop test kits and testing strips. Type of Tests Performed This LaMotte digital tester is one of the most comprehensive on the market for at-home tests, testing for 11 different chemicals and metals. This one kit covers everything: free chlorine, total chlorine, bromine, pH, alkalinity, calcium hardness, cyanuric acid, iron, copper, biguanide, and biguanide shock. The only thing missing is a saltwater level test for saltwater pool owners, but it won't be a dealbreaker for most. This single digital tester will cover all your chemical testing needs. Accuracy Digital testers, as a whole, tend to be much more accurate than other types of pool testing kits, as there is less room for human error. The LaMotte ColorQ Pro 11 is a mix between a liquid drop test kit and a digital tester. First, you use the reagents like in a liquid drop test kit. Then the digital reader will give you an accurate reading. This testing kit takes out the guesswork when matching colors according to charts. So, this makes it an excellent option for those that are colorblind as well. With that said, although everything looks perfect on paper, there is still some room for human error when adding the correct number of drops of the reagents. Therefore, when using this testing kit, you should ensure that the reagents have not expired. User Friendliness This LaMotte digital testing kit works similarly to a liquid drop test kit. However, this kit is much easier to use simply because of its digital reader. The reader takes the guesswork out of matching the colors to the given color chart, which makes it a much more user-friendly product - especially for those that have trouble distinguishing between two similar colors to determine the chemical levels. Price Price is the number one drawback for this LaMotte product. In general, digital testers will cost much more than testing strips and liquid drop tests. And the ColorQ Pro 11 is no exception. For the value of the product you get, it's certainly worth the money. However, if you're confident with your color-matching skills, it might be worth saving those extra bucks and getting a normal liquid drop test kit instead. Notes From Other Testers The LaMotte ColorQ Pro 11 has an average rating of 3.8 out of 5 stars from over 70 reviews from testers all over the world. It rates particularly highly for it being easy to use. This kit only requires 5 drops per liquid reagent and tablets for cyanuric acid, iron, copper, and biguanide shock. Testers also love that this product has made it easier to test the chemical levels in their pool water with high accuracy. On the other hand, a few testers have had issues receiving faulty or expired reagents, so it might be worth double-checking the results when you first get this product with another testing kit. Research Score: 4.0 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 5 Accuracy: 3 User Friendliness: 4 Price: 5 What's Great: Gives accurate results in seconds You only need one testing strip per test (two per session, checking each end of the pool) Extremely easy to use Limitations & What Needs Improvement: Results are relatively small and may require a magnifying glass The app can be faulty and inaccurate Number Of Different Tests: 7 Test Categories: Total Hardness, Total Chlorine, Total Bromine, Free Chlorine, pH, Total Alkalinity, and Cyanuric Acid Testing Style: Strips Test strips are incredibly user-friendly, which is why they are a popular choice for the average home pool owner. The AquaChek test strips are a great testing strip product, testing for 7 different types of chemicals in just a single dip. The results are accurate, but there is room for user error as you will need to compare colors according to the color chart to determine the reading. Type of Tests Performed The AquaChek test strips test for seven different types of chemicals in your pool water: total hardness, total chlorine, total bromine, free chlorine, pH, total alkalinity, and cyanuric acid. This should cover all of your basic needs in a private home pool. If you have a saltwater pool, you'll just need to purchase a saltwater test separately to supplement this. Accuracy These pool test strips are pretty accurate, but I did dock off a point simply because this kit does rely on the ability to distinguish colors. If you cannot properly distinguish between colors to compare the color on the strip to the color chart, you're not likely to get the most accurate reading. If you have trouble distinguishing similar colors, I recommend purchasing a digital test kit instead, which will do the reading for you. The AquaChek pool test strips do come with an app that can read the test strips. But unfortunately, the app is not very accurate and can be faulty. So, I wouldn't rely entirely on the app to provide accurate readings. User Friendliness Testing strips are the easiest way to test your pool water as all you need to do is dip a strip in the water, shake off the excess, and get the results in mere seconds. With that said, unfortunately, the results on the strip are relatively small and may require a magnifying glass. Price You won't get a better deal than purchasing these AquaChek test strips for your pool testing needs. This testing kit is a great option for pool owners looking for a budget-friendly testing kit without compromising the quality of the product. With these AquaChek test strips, you'll need to use just two per session, one for each end of the pool. So, these 50 strips should last you quite a while! Notes From Other Testers The AquaChek Select 7-in-1 pool test strips are rated very highly by more than 1,000 reviewers, with an average rating of 4.4 out of 5 stars. Testers particularly like that these strips are easy to use and are accurate enough to determine what chemicals need to be added to the pool. A big complaint some testers have is that the app that comes with the product is not very accurate. Research Score: 4.0 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 5 Accuracy: 3 User Friendliness: 4 Price: 5 What's Great: Rapidly tests for several common metals More affordable than most other pool testing kits Comes with useful information for interpreting the results Limitations & What Needs Improvement: Not necessary for all pool owners Some testers have had issues with the test pads bleeding into each other Number Of Different Tests: 16 Test Categories: Total Hardness, Free Chlorine, Total Chlorine, Iron, Copper, Lead, Nitrate, Nitrite, MPS, Fluoride, Cyanuric Acid, Ammonia Chloride, Bromine, Total Alkalinity, Carbonate, pH Testing Style: Strips The SJ Wave water test strips are very comprehensive, testing for chemicals and metals in the water. Although testing metal levels in the pool water may not be necessary for all pool owners, this kit is a game-changer for those who need it. Not only that, this kit is very affordable, especially if you take into account that this single kit has 16 different tests. However, some users may find these water test strips difficult to read. If you have any issues with colorblindness, you may find it better to purchase a digital tester. Plus, there's another issue of the testing pads occasionally bleeding into each other, rendering it all the more difficult to read the results. Type of Tests Performed SJ Wave water test strips test for 16 different chemicals and metals. These strips test everything from total hardness and free and total chlorine to metals like iron, copper, and lead. Although testing for metal in your pool water is not necessary for some pool owners, if you want to test the quality of your pool water after refilling it, these strips will come in handy. Or, if you live in an area with high metal content in the water, these strips will be great to have on hand to ensure all chemical and metal levels are at the ideal levels. Accuracy As with most other test strips, there is room for user error. After dipping these test strips into the pool water, you'll need to compare the color according to the color chart. If you're unable to distinguish between two colors very well, you may have inaccurate results. But barring human error, this pool testing kit does give accurate results. Another thing to note is that these strips won't provide readings that are accurate to the ppm, but if you're looking for a basic test strip that will give you the general reading of your chemical and metal levels, this will do the job. User Friendliness I love testing strips because of their ease of use. Even the most novice of pool owners won't have any trouble using these testing strips by SJ Wave. However, despite the user-friendliness, it must be mentioned that some users have had issues with the test pads bleeding into each other. I have not personally seen this in my own testing, but it's worth noting. Due to this, I have had to dock off one point. Price The SJ Wave water test strips are affordable and are great value for the product you get. This single testing kit comes with 16 different types of tests that test for both chemical and metal levels in your water. It's a pretty great deal! Notes From Other Testers Closing in on 3,000 reviews, the SJ Wave water test strips are one of the most popular water testing kits on the market. It boasts a rating of 4.2 out of 5 stars, with 80% of tests giving this product a 4 or 5 stars. Testers particularly love that this product is easy to use. On the flip side, unfortunately, some testers complain that the test strips bleed into each other, making them more difficult to read. Research Score: 4.4 out of 5 Type of Tests Performed: 4 Accuracy: 5 User Friendliness: 4 Price: 4 What's Great: It can test for all of the basic needs of a home swimming pool Refilling the reagents is generally cheap Useful for both regular and saltwater pools Limitations & What Needs Improvement: A little expensive for the number of tests you get out of it Number Of Different Tests: 5 Test Categories: Chlorine, pH, Alkalinity, Calcium Hardness, and Cyanuric Acid Testing Style: Drops The Taylor Technologies Complete Test Kit is an excellent option for those looking for an accurate pool testing kit. This kit is a bit more expensive, especially considering that you only get 5 different tests, but the quality of the product makes the price worth it. If you have never used a liquid drop test kit before, this kit may be more challenging to use than your average test strip, but thankfully, the kit comes with some handy and detailed instructions to help even the novice chemistry student. Type of Tests Performed Although the Taylor Technologies Complete Test Kit does not boast as many tests as some of the other testing kits on my list, this kit covers all the basic pool chemical needs. This kit tests for five different chemicals: chlorine, pH, alkalinity, calcium hardness, and cyanuric acid. For those with a saltwater pool, you'll want to purchase a salt-level test kit separately. Accuracy This test kit rates particularly highly for accuracy among other testers, with an average rating of 4.3 out of 5. From my own testing, I've determined that this pool testing kit provides accurate results - as long as you use them according to the instructions. As with most other testing kits, there is room for human error. User Friendliness All liquid drop test kits come with a bit of a learning curve, especially if you've only used testing strips in the past. However, this Taylor kit includes handy instructions that even the novice chemist can follow. Just make sure you follow the instructions closely for the most accurate results. As with other non-digital testing kits, if you have any issues distinguishing colors like red and green, you will have difficulty with this test. Price This testing kit is not the cheapest, and considering that you only get five different tests doesn't make it the most value-friendly pool testing kit. However, for the quality of the product that you get, the price is fair. Although if you're looking for a more budget-friendly option, there are other testing kits at a lower price that also provide accurate results. Notes From Other Testers With an average rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars, the Taylor Technologies Complete Test Kit is loved by pool owners worldwide. This kit boasts more than 2,500 reviews, 90% of which rate this product a 4 or 5 stars. Other testers particularly love that this product is accurate and comes with handy instructions. Some complaints other testers have had is that the kit doesn't come with enough of the cyanuric acid reagent. So, it may be worth purchasing another bigger bottle of the CYA reagent with this kit. I created a scatterplot mapping all my top picks for testing comprehensiveness and price. Essentially, answering the question, which kits have the best value? AquaChek and SJ Wave performed very well. Accuracy Comparison Taylor Technologies Complete Test Kit: 5 Poolmaster 5-Way Test Kit: 4 Taylor Technologies INC K-1766 Drop Test: 4 LaMotte ColorQ Pro 11 Digital Testing Kit: 4 AquaChek Select 7-in-1 Pool and Spa Test Strips: 3 SJ Wave Water Test Strips: 3 Taylor Technologies came out on top in my accuracy tests. User Friendliness Comparison LaMotte ColorQ Pro 11 Digital Testing Kit: 5 Taylor Technologies Complete Test Kit: 4 Poolmaster 5-Way Test Kit: 4 Taylor Technologies INC K-1766 Drop Test: 4 AquaChek Select 7-in-1 Pool and Spa Test Strips: 4 SJ Wave Water Test Strips: 4 LaMotte shined above the rest for user-friendliness. Most of my top picks did really well in this category. Other Notable Pool Test Kits Researched ESeasonGear SALT-3000 Pool & Pond Salt Water Meter: This digital reader took way too long to get accurate results for me. HTH Pool Care 6-Way Test Kit: The Poolmaster test kit is a much better liquid test kit and comes with a handy carrying case. Runbo Pool Test Strips 7-in-1: It was a close call between these test strips and AquaChek, but I ultimately think AquaChek is the more reliable option based on my testing. U.S. Pool Supply 3-Way Swimming Pool & Spa Test Kit: The limited number of tests in this kit didn't line up with the price point for me. My Research Criteria When selecting products for this list, I weighed several factors to calculate the final results. Type of Tests Performed First, I decided to focus on different types of kits instead of several kits of the same type. You don't need five different salt testing kits; you just need the best one. There are a bunch of various chemicals in your pool. Each test kit can assess these chemical levels and also test for other elements like heavy metals. I chose testing kits that hit every one of these major tests (plus pH levels) and suggested a few specialty tests like iron and other metals (which can be bad for your pool; just take a look at my research on getting iron out of pool water). Another consideration for me is the number of tests in a kit. Typically, you'll get a better value for your dollar with more tests in the kit. The type of tests performed accounted for 20% of the total product scores. Test Accuracy and Consistency Several kits out there will give you results that are all over the place. Of course, you have to administer the test correctly to get an accurate reading, but often it can be faulty equipment. The kits I chose are consistently the most accurate on the market today. Accuracy will also differ depending on the type of kit you get. For more on that topic, head to my guide on pool test strips vs. drops. Since accuracy and consistency are huge indicators of what is the best pool testing kit, test accuracy made up 40% of the overall product scores. User Friendliness Testing your pool is an integral part of pool maintenance, so you want to ensure the testing kit is easy to use. The last thing you want is to dread having to test your pool as part of your maintenance routine! Testing strips, liquid drop tests, and digital testers all have different methods of testing the water, so part of it is finding the best type of pool testing kit for you. But in my choices above, I've also considered how easy it is for these testing kits for the average pool owner to use. Is adding the reagent an overly complicated process? Is there a huge margin for error? Is the testing kit as simple as simply dipping it in water? User-friendliness made up 20% of the overall scores. Price Of course, I want to make sure you're getting good value for what you're paying. There are a few test kits with unnecessary digital features or extra packaging that allow them to (unfairly) jack up the price. I eliminated all of those products from my consideration. Price and value accounted for 20% of the total scores of each product. What Else to Consider Here are some other things to consider when choosing the best pool testing kit for your pool needs. Type of Test Kit There are three different types of pool testing kits: Testing strips Liquid drop tests Digital testers Testing strips are the easiest to use as you simply dip in your pool water and get results in seconds. Although they are accurate, to get a better understanding of how much of the chemical to add to your pool, you should couple using a test strip with a liquid drop test. Liquid drop tests do have some room for human error. You need to be precise in how many drops of the reagent you put in the sample. Plus, as with testing strips, there's also the need to interpret the results by comparing the color with the provided color chart. If you have trouble distinguishing colors, testing strips and liquid drop tests won't work for you. Instead, you should invest in a digital tester to interpret the results and let you know how much of each chemical you have in your pool water. If you want, you can even test your pool water without a test kit. Local Regulations Check the local regulations on pool chemical testing kits in your state. Some areas have specific guidelines you must follow: others don't. Questions? Let me know, and good luck with your search! As an Amazon Associate, we earn from qualifying purchases. Participation in these programs helps us keep the lights on at PoolResearch.com and in no way impacts my research process or editorial opinions.