**4 Reasons to Add Borate in Your Swimming Pool or Spa**

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**Do I Need Borate in My Pool?**

The more chemicals you add to your pool water, the more it becomes difficult to maintain. So you should only use chemicals in your pool for specific purposes.

You need borate (borax) only for two main reasons. One of them is when you are fighting unstable pH that keeps drifting up or down for any reason. The second reason is that you need to raise the pH in your pool without affecting TA levels, since balancing pH and TA without affecting each other is always a problem.

For any reason you use borax in your pool, there are a few added benefits like softening your water and preventing metal stains and corrosion, among many more.

The main purpose for using borate in a swimming pool is for easy maintenance, because it works to stabilize the pH in a pool or spa, preventing pH-related problems.

It plays a very important role in having an easy-to-maintain and trouble-free swimming pool, especially when fighting pH-related problems.

Most pool problems are consequential, and they start with imbalanced pool chemicals, particularly pH, TA, chlorine, and cyanuric acid.

pH is the most basic and important chemical in water since all chemicals added in the wrong pH concentration will not work for your pool.

Drifting pH has lots of potential risks. If your water is full of metals or you have saltwater that has unstable or drifting pH, you should use borate to prevent pH-related pool issues like metal stains, corrosion, cloudy water, calcium scaling, and algae growth.

Borate should be used in a concentration between 30–50 ppm. Before adding it to your water, however, you need to test your pH and reduce it using muriatic acid if it's higher than 7.8.

You need to test and lower the pH, because borate raises it. But it will be more stable within the recommended range of 7.2–7.8 without drifting a lot when you add borax.

Below are added advantages you get when you use borate to stabilize your pH.

Here are some benefits to adding borate to your pool.

**1. It Helps Stabilize pH**

Firstly, when the pH drifts up beyond the maximum recommended level (which is 7.8), chlorine will not be effective in killing harmful bacteria and other organisms such as algae; which in most cases will result in green, yellow, or black water, depending on which kind of algae you have.

Secondly, when chlorine becomes ineffective, it will not function as a sanitizer, and this will definitely result in milky white or cloudy water

Moreover, high pH levels will result in calcium scaling, which builds on pool surfaces, waterlines, and accessories, especially in saltwater.

Finally, high pH can trigger health issues such as burning eyes and nose and dry, itchy skin and scalp.

On the other hand, when pH goes down below the recommended level, it will erode pool parts, causing damage to the plasters and grouting. Low pH also corrodes the metal accessories, such as steps and heater, and this may also result in metal stains and water discoloration from corroded metals.

Since borates keep pH under control, using them will prevent all the mentioned problems resulting from unstable and drifting pH. It will also mean easier maintenance since you will not need to use as many strong acids and soda ash to reduce and raise pH levels, respectively, when out of balance.

**2. It Helps Prevent Algae**

This is absolutely true. Since borates keep pH under control, the effectiveness of chlorine will not be tampered with, and this means that algae will not thrive in your water.

**3. It Reduces Chlorine Usage**

Too much chlorine has been associated with skin cancers and other harmful diseases. Moreover, the byproducts of chlorine that accumulate in the water are even more dangerous than chlorine itself.

Since free chlorine is not consumed at a high rate when pH is stable, you will not have to shock your pool often.

**4. It Makes Sparkling and Soft Water**

When you use borate, the water will remain clear for a long period since chloramine (or combined chlorine) does not form quickly as compared to a pool without a borate agent. Most borate agents available on the market today have chlorine stabilizer in them (cyanuric acid) which keeps chlorine from being consumed by UV light from direct sunlight. They also contain components that help to soften hard water that causes dry skin and red, itchy eyes.

**What Are the Downsides of Using Borate in the Pool?**

I have used borate for more than five years now, and I have not had any problems worth raising an alarm about, but here are some possible drawbacks:

* Some pool managers might avoid the additional expense (without weighing the advantages).
* There has been some concern that borates are toxic when taken by pets such as dogs and cats. (However, I consider this to be carelessness as opposed to side effects of the chemical.) For the record, there is no pool chemical that is not toxic when consumed and extra care needs to be taken to avoid consumption by humans or pets.

**Which Is the Best Borate to Use?**

Borates are available on the market in form of tetraborate decahydrate or pentahydrate, and the most common in the market today are:

* Proteam's Supreme Plus
* Bioguards Optimizer Plus
* Poollife Endure
* Guardex Maximizer
* 20 Mute Team Borax

[20 Mule Team Borax](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0039BWC9E/?tag=hubacct5087-20) is preferred by most people due to its lower cost. Also, you can use it to raise the level of pH without increasing the total alkalinity (TA) level, which is a plus when you have low pH and you need to raise it without raising TA in your water. However, the only downside of 20 Mule Team Borax is that when used as a pH stabilizer, you will have to use a strong acid such as muriatic acid along with it to lower pH, which may cause more problems in alkalinity level.

**How to Add Borate to Your Pool**

Here is a step-by-step breakdown for properly adding borate to your pool.

**Step 1: Add the Borate**

I recommend Supreme Plus since that’s what I use and it’s superb. Even though the alternative Salt Support has cyanuric acid in it (I always feel that will bring more complications), it’s a good product and you can use it if you don’t mind balancing cyanuric acid levels.

1. With your pump running, add the recommended level of Supreme Plus (or Salt Support) according to the volume of your pool by dumping it all the way around the pool or through the skimmer, whichever method you are comfortable with.
2. Brush down the sides of your pool all the way around to create currents to mix it up faster. (By the way, this kind of stirring is what we should be doing every time we add any chemical into the water.)

**Step 2: Run the Pump for 24 Hours**

Let your pump run for 24 hours, as this will speed the process of completely mixing the chemicals.

**Step 3: Test Your Water**

After 24 hours, you need to test for borate, pH, and TA to make sure that they are all within the recommended range. Borate should be reading around 50 ppm and between 7.4–7.6 for pH.

**Step 4: Continue to Test Borate Levels Monthly**

You need to test on a monthly basis and adjust to the recommended level of 50 ppm. Even if you backwash frequently, you will need to test and adjust on a regular basis.

**Step 5: Enjoy**

Enjoy a sparkling, soft, algae-free water with stable pH, reduced demand for chlorine, and lower chances of calcium scaling and metal staining.