

The Seven Deadly Hot Tub Buying
Mistakes and How to Avoid Them . . .

A Spa Buying Guide from B&B Pool and Spa Center





***Careful planning will
prevent unwanted
headaches later!***

When you buy a hot tub, you're investing in one of life's greatest pleasure-giving devices — something you should enjoy for years to come. To ensure that happens, you need to make the wisest investment possible.

Otherwise, every time you get in the wrong hot tub bought for the wrong reasons you'll remember all the things you did not know before you bought it. The following free analysis will help give you the information you need to make a smart, informed hot tub purchase.

The worst thing that can happen to you as a buyer is to purchase a hot tub for thousands of dollars, have it installed and suddenly discover a bunch of unhappy flaws. To avoid common pitfalls, educate yourself **BEFORE** you visit a retailer.





***You owe it to
yourself to be
informed on all
available options***

Too many consumers walk into a hot tub store and get sold on the first visit. We've always said, "buy in haste, and suffer at your leisure."

Unfortunately, hot tubs are quite complex and contain an array of options and features that can be confusing. The confusion is multiplied after talking with sales people, since each has his or her own viewpoint on what's good, what's not, what's an essential, and what's optional.

After serving pool and spa purchasers for 46 years, we've seen our share of buying blunders. Through it all, we've noticed a pattern of consumer mistakes that could have been avoided.

888.716.5623
BBPoolAndSpa.com
787 Chestnut Ridge Road
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977





The following mistakes are not in any particular order, because they're all important. But they are the seven most common mistakes consumers make when buying a hot tub.

Mistake #1: Focusing on price and ignoring the satisfaction/pleasure factors.

Mistake #2: Not thoroughly investigating the structural integrity of the hot tub.

Mistake #3: Underestimating the long-term costs of required maintenance and operation

Mistake #4: Not selecting the right spa to meet your needs and desires.

Mistake #5: Not carefully determining the best location for your hot tub.

Mistake #6: Overlooking the critical importance of the warranty.

Mistake #7: Not selecting a reputable manufacturer and certified dealer.



Let's Examine Each Mistake In Detail. We'll explain terminology you may not be familiar with, and examine the differences between quality hot tubs and their cheap competitors.

Mistake #1: Focusing on price and ignoring the satisfaction/pleasure factors.

If your hot tub is not comfortable to sit in, you won't use it much. This sounds obvious, but many consumers are so focused on price, they forget the desire for satisfaction and pleasure. Be sure to "**wet test**" any hot tub you plan on buying to be sure you enjoy sitting in it. You may also want to sit in the tub "dry" to see if there is a comfortable fit.

The cost of a hot tub does not end once it is installed. The more efficient, better constructed hot tubs require less energy and cost less to run. Cheap pumps, inadequate insulation and cheap covers will allow heat to escape adding to your maintenance costs. Depending on your usage, the difference is substantial, up to \$750 a year! Over ten years that will add an extra \$7,500 to your cost of ownership.

Terminology alert – **Dead air hot space** is the space between the hot tub shell and its cabinet that contains no insulation. The best hot tubs have **full foam insulation throughout** and consequently retain heat more efficiently.



Look beyond esthetic considerations when comparing hot tubs

Mistake #2: Not thoroughly investigating the structural integrity of the hot tub.

A **hot tub shell** is the interior part you sit in and is normally made of acrylic or plastic. The best hot tubs use 3/16” acrylic and are **bond-laminated or full resin skin coated** to the underlying fiberglass. Thinner, cheaper versions have less insulation and are subject to cracking and peeling. Most shells come with lifetime warranties, but be sure your dealer is a **manufacturer’s warranty center**.

A **hot tub cabinet** is the outer frame that holds the shell and other components. This is not simply an esthetic decision! High quality, modern hot tubs have synthetic cabinets that are extremely durable and require minimal maintenance to keep in peak condition. Check the cabinet carefully for defects and be sure the cabinet is covered in the warranty.

Also, be sure your cabinet underside is well sealed so moisture, insects and rodents don’t get into your foam and plumbing!



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Mistake #3: Underestimating the long-term costs of required maintenance and operation

The spa needs to be maintained between 7.2 – 7.8 pH level, regardless of the chemical system you use. To accomplish this use pH Plus or pH Minus, but a high-quality **Ozonator** will greatly reduce the need for lots of chemistry and maintenance. **Carona discharge ozonators** do not require UV bulb replacement and can significantly lower your hot tub operating costs and time spent maintaining your pH level.

Filtration is also an important factor. A single **Top-Load Filter** is preferable to multiple, small filters scattered throughout the tub, which can be a real hassle to clean! When it comes to filters, bigger is better. Filters are measured by the square foot – use this to compare filter sizes.

A high quality hot tub will need to be drained and cleaned only three or four times a year. If your tub lacks a good ozonator and proper filtration, you will be forced to clean it much more often!



Mistake #4: Not selecting the right spa to meet your needs and desires.

Jets in a hot tub need to be where you want them and at the desired intensity. Sounds simple, but many consumers fail to consider this when comparing colors, styles and prices of different models. You can't test the jets without a **"wet test."** If you learn nothing else from this guide, please remember: **Do not buy a hot tub you have never tried "wet!"**

There are many types of jets: Directional, Rotating, Waving, Whirlpool, Air and Pulsating jets. What works well for your body size and shape? Try different options and then decide. The best models include **individually adjustable** jets with remote controls. Instead of changing a group of jets, this lets you target one jet at a time to modify jet action and flow pressure. Foot jets are also a huge plus. Do not underestimate the difference these make! Speaking of noise, small pumps need to work very hard and can create an unpleasant, noisy experience. Be sure your spa pump is big and strong enough to run quietly.

Terminology alert – **Aromatherapy** can add light fragrances into the jets for added relaxation and comfort. Try it for yourself!



***Seriously consider
having your dealer do
the site preparation
and installation***

Mistake #5: Not carefully determining where your hot tub will be placed.

Before you go shopping for a hot tub, carefully analyze where you will place it. Hot tubs require a flat, level area that can support the weight, including water and maximum number of people. A typical four-person hot tub can weigh up to 2,800 lbs! Hot tubs are typically installed outdoors on cement slabs or stone patios, but can also be installed on decks, porches and inside. **NOTE: Spas can become damaged by sand, tree sap, limbs, leaves and small rocks.**

You will need the services of an electrician to hook up power to your spa and a structural engineer may be required for certain installations. **Remember, you will need to completely drain your spa** at least three times a year. You will also want to check with your town government to see what building codes apply to your neighborhood.

If this sounds like a lot to handle, **use a dealer that offers complete installation and set-up services.** You'll eliminate any nasty surprises down the road by having your spa professionally installed. Many dealers also offer maintenance contracts, but make sure the firm is a warranty center certified by the manufacturer.



Mistake #6: Overlooking the critical importance of a warranty.

When you inspect your hot tub warranty, make sure it covers all of the following areas:

Shell Structure, Shell Surface, Leaks, Equipment, Cabinetry, and the Heater Element. **NOTE: The heater element is the most fragile part of your hot tub.** Therefore, make sure your warranty has at least three years of coverage on the heater element.

Full Warranties include parts and labor! One of the “fine print” items that some hot tub dealers don’t divulge is that the warranty is “pro-rated,” meaning that you pay a certain percentage of any repair. Full Warranty includes 100% coverage for items specified under the warranty, including the service tech’s trip to your house.

Is your dealer a certified warranty center? If something goes wrong, does your dealer have the expertise to do the repairs? Be sure you know who will be responsible if something does go wrong.



Mistake #7: Not choosing a reputable manufacturer and certified dealer.

We suggest you research online to see what owners of hot tubs say about their experience. Consumer Reports and other comparison websites can be an excellent resource to view various manufacturers, see feature comparisons, and read reviews.

Choosing the right dealer is as important as choosing the right hot tub manufacturer. Ask how long they have been in business, meet the service team and review the warranty carefully. Be sure they are listed with the Better Business Bureau or other consumer protection site with a clean record.

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Use this as your personal “Hot Tub Checklist”

- When the hot tub is not in use, does the water remain hot and clean?
- Can you customize the jets individually, in groups, or not at all?
- Are the jets and the pump excessively loud?
- Are the filters top loaded and easy to get to?
- Is 220v electricity available? (Less expensive than 115v)
- Do you like the seating, is it easy to move around?
- Are the controls easy to reach and simple to operate?
- How is the spa insulated? Is the bottom totally sealed?
- Can you do a “wet-test” to try out the hot tub?
- Does the hot tub have foot jets?
- Does the hot tub cover have a safety locking system?
- Is the entire spa backed by a Full Warranty, not the pro-rated kind?
- Has the dealer been in business for at least five years?
- Are staff technicians available year round?
- Are there any “red flags” on the internet about the manufacturer or dealer?

We wish you well in realizing your dreams of spa ownership and we welcome inquiries about our line of top quality Sundance® Spas.

B&B is proud to be an authorized dealer and certified Warranty Center for

Sundance® Spa



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