

The CoverCorner

Answers to frequently
asked cover questions
for Hot Spring[®],
Tiger River[®], Hot Spot[®]
and Solana[®] covers

What makes Watkins' covers a Safety Cover?

All Watkins covers and child-resistant safety locks are UL Classified in accordance with the ASTM F1346-91 Standard for Manual Spa Safety Covers. The UL Classification number is E-173712. Watkins covers meet the requirements for the ASTM Standard static load bearing. Watkins is committed to delivering safe products for consumer use.

How often should I clean my cover?

We recommend monthly cleaning and conditioning to maintain the beauty and health of your vinyl cover.

What's the best way to clean my cover?

- Take a garden hose, and spray your cover to loosen and rinse away dirt and debris. Using a large sponge or a soft bristle brush and a very mild soap solution (1 teaspoon dishwashing liquid with 2 gallons of water) or baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), scrub the vinyl top in a circular motion. Don't allow the vinyl top to dry with a soap film on it before it is rinsed clean. Scrub the perimeter and side flaps then rinse clean. Rinse off the underside of the cover (use no soap), and wipe clean with a dry rag.

What's the best way to clean my cover?

- **TIP:** Be sure to avoid getting any soap into your spa.
- **NOTE:** If you have a spa with a real redwood cabinet rather than the synthetic redwood, you will need to either remove the cover from the spa prior to cleaning, or use only water to clean the cover. This will allow you to avoid getting soap or baking soda on the wood cabinet, which may cause black spots on the redwood

How should I condition my cover?

- After cleaning your cover, apply a thin film of Hot Spring FreshWater® Cover Shield to the vinyl surface with a soft cloth, then buff to a high luster. Be sure to condition at least once before every season change.
- **TIP:** It's important to use a cover conditioner that is formulated to work with the vinyl properties. Many vinyl products actually deteriorate the vinyl.

What's the best way to remove tree sap, paint, grease and grime from my spa cover?

- Tree sap can be removed carefully with the use of lighter fluid. You should use it sparingly, then buff with saddle soap or Hot Spring FreshWater® Cover Shield conditioner, immediately afterwards, then wipe dry.

What's the best way to remove tree sap, paint, grease and grime from my spa cover?

- Do not use charcoal lighter fluid! Paint cannot be removed once dry, as solvents used to remove paint will damage the vinyl. Grease and grime may be removed with a thorough washing using a mild liquid dishwashing soap (or baking soda), and water.

**My cover is smelly.
I suspect it may have mildew.
What should I do?**

- It's crucial to maintain proper water chemistry for the health of both your spa and your cover. Even when your spa is closed and not in use, your water chemistry is important.
- If your cover has mildew, there is a simple recipe to eliminate it. We recommend you consult your dealer first, if you have a Hot Spring approved cover lifter attached, before you follow the recipe below.
- If your cover is not attached to one of our lifters, first, remove the foam cores from the vinyl encasement.
- Mix a teaspoon of mild dishwashing soap with one cup of bleach in a gallon of water.

My cover is smelly. I suspect it may have mildew. What should I do?

- Using a soft bristle brush, scrub the inside of the encasement. Then, using a washcloth, wipe down each of the foam cores, on all sides. Rinse these, and the inside of the encasement, thoroughly.
- Place the encasement "inside out" in the sun to allow it to dry completely. Place cores in the shade. Do **not** put them in the sun or they will melt!
- When the cores and encasement are completely dry, spray both with a mildew inhibitor, allow to dry, then reassemble.
- **TIP:** Before placing the cover back on your spa, be sure to check your water chemistry. When in doubt, take a water sample to your Hot Spring® dealer for evaluation.
- If your cover is less than a year old, you may be able to purchase a replacement encasement. Consult with your Hot Spring® dealer.

The bottom vinyl of my cover is sagging and looks like it has blisters. What is wrong?

- Unfortunately, these are symptoms of improper water chemistry. You will need a new cover, as there is no way to repair the vinyl. Check with your dealer as to whether your foam cores are still in good condition, in which case you may be able to replace just the encasement.
- Other signs of improper chemical balance can be a drastic color change on the bottom vinyl, the vinyl looks like burlap, or it tears apart easily and falls into the water.
- It is critical that you get your water chemistry in balance, both for your own health, and the health of your spa. Talk to your local Hot Spring® Dealer.

We just found a small slit in the vinyl of our spa cover. Is there a way we can repair this easily?

- Call your Hot Spring Dealer, or your local hardware store to obtain a vinyl repair patch kit. It's usually an easy process, and most probably won't even show once repaired.

The foam core is broken on one side of the cover. Can I replace the core, only?

- Your Hot Spring Dealer can order a replacement core for you; however, if your cover is past the warranty period, it may be wiser to replace your entire cover. It really depends on the age and condition of the vinyl encasement. Your Hot Spring® Dealer will be able to give you the best advice.

My spa cover has puddles on the top, even after changing out the foam inserts. What can you suggest?

- If you have already replaced the cores, and tried turning them, we suggest you check to make sure your spa is sitting on level ground. It is possible that when you re-level the spa, the puddling problem will go away.

I have noticed that the underside of my spa cover has faded it looks a little white. Is this normal?

- Some bleaching of the bottom vinyl is normal. If, however, you notice a drastic color change, check your water chemistry. This is the first sign of a problem. This is not healthy for your spa cover, you nor your spa. We suggest you ask your Hot Spring® Dealer how to maintain healthy water chemistry.

We live in a cold climate. Is there anything special I should do to protect my spa cover against the snow and ice?

There are several things you can do to protect your spa cover during the winter.

- Make sure your water chemistry is healthy to avoid mildew in the spring. Test your water on a regular basis to maintain clean water and a good pH. This will go a long way to maintaining a healthy cover, spa, and you!
- Be sure to condition the top of your vinyl cover at least once before the first snow or ice, and if possible, monthly during the winter. This will keep the vinyl supple and keep it from drying out under harsh winter conditions.

We live in a cold climate. Is there anything special I should do to protect my spa cover against the snow and ice?

- Remove snow accumulation to avoid stress and breakage of the foam cores. It is important to do this gently, by using a soft broom. When removing snow, ice or leaves, avoid damaging the vinyl - do NOT use sharp tools like rakes or shovels.
- Be careful when handling tie-down straps and handles. While our vinyl is well rated for cold crack, the vinyl won't stretch in extreme cold conditions.

My dog loves to chew on my cover - he thinks it's his favorite dog toy! Do you have any suggestions as to how I can stop him from eating my cover every year?

We hear this a lot from pet owners. First, we want to be sure you do not do anything that will harm your pet.

- According to what we have heard from other pet owners, some of the following steps may help to deter pets from eating the cover:
- Dust some cayenne pepper all around the spa perimeter or just place some cayenne pepper inside a small baggie or other plastic container, cut tiny holes, and place it on the cover. Most pets do not like the smell and this may encourage them to avoid the spa area.
- Check with your veterinarian for spray-on products that discourage pets from chewing on furniture, etc.

Important Care Tips

A healthy spa cover is essential in keeping your spa always clean and ready for your enjoyment.

In addition to the care recommendations

in the *CoverCorner*, we urge you to follow the following tips.

DO!

- Always lock cover straps in place, to secure the cover when the spa is not in use.
- Treat your spa cover like you would a piece of custom crafted furniture.
- Use only the reinforced handles to move your cover. Straps, flaps and seams can tear if you use them like a handle.
- Clean and condition your spa cover on a monthly basis. It's always good to do this before the start of a new season.
- Remove snow buildup to avoid breakage of the foam cores.
- Maintain proper water chemistry. It will extend the life of your cover and your spa!

DO NOT!

- Drag or lift the spa cover using either the flaps or the cover lock straps.
- Walk, stand, sit, or jump on the cover.
- Place anything on the cover, or place any type of plastic tarp or drop cloth over the cover. This may result in melted foam cores, which are not covered under warranty.
- Leave foam cores which have been removed from the vinyl encasement in the sun.
- Use any retractable cover systems, chemicals or cleaners except those recommended by Watkins Manufacturing Corporation.
- Leave a Hot Spring® retractable cover system in an open position, with a wind condition above 10 mph and/or occasional gusts up to 20 mph.
- Allow children on top of the cover, or alone in the spa without parental supervision.
- Allow pets to jump on, chew on, or claw on the cover.