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# VINYL LINER CARE & REPAIR

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## INTRODUCTION

Improper water balance can cause your liner to lose its elasticity and become brittle, causing it to tear. Bringing a water sample to Ultra Modern Pool & Patio to be tested and balanced at least twice a year can help avoid this happening. Suntan oils can also cause a liner to become brittle and tear at the water line. Regular use of BioGuard's Natural Result™ will help prevent this problem.

## CARE & MAINTENANCE

The pool should be kept clean and free of hard, sharp objects — such as glassware, metal ware, ladders without ladder bumpers (check condition of bumpers annually) — that could tear or puncture the liner.

Floating lounges and similar accessories, if not taken care of, also can develop sharp edges that will puncture or rip a liner. Even sharp toenails and claws from pets or uninvited wildlife may cause damage.

Also, only poles and other maintenance equipment with smooth, rounded edges should be used in vinyl-lined pools. And make sure any automatic vacuums used are specifically designed for vinyl liner pools. Be aware that vacuums also can get caught behind rails or ladders and wear down the vinyl. Use pool tile & vinyl cleaner on tile line to help keep material pliable.

## REPAIRS

Here are the basic steps and some hints for applying adhesive patches above the water line, (if it is possible to reach the tear from the back of the liner, that is the best option. Ideally it is best to make repairs dry. This is easiest when the damage occurs up near the lip of the pool or along the wall.

However, if the damage is down deep in the pool, it's always better to try a repair without draining whenever possible. Emptying the pool carries numerous

risks. Lifting due to hydrostatic pressure, collapsing of the walls and wrinkles in the liner are some of the problems that can occur.

If the liner is torn or cut deep below the waterline and the damage is not extensive, a sample vinyl patch can be employed. Use underwater patches only on small holes and tears that are a few inches in length. Plus, if the damage is in a high-stress area, such as corners within the deep end, a patch is unlikely to hold.

Use simple repair kits that come with a sheet of vinyl patch, adhesive and applicator. While the vinyl patches usually come in various colors, blue, clear and white, liner manufacturers usually will have patterned vinyl swatches available that can be made into custom patches.

Before applying the patch, be sure the tear is as clean and as flush as possible, checking behind the liner for anything that might cause further damage.

For repairs near the lip of the pool or along the wall, snap the liner out of the track and apply the vinyl patch to the back of the liner using the follow steps:

**STEP 1:** Match up the patch material with the liner. If the original vinyl is not available, vinyl repair kits usually include blue, white, or clear patches. Also, many manufacturers provide liner samples. Repair kits are available at Ultra Modern Pool & Patio.

**STEP 2:** In general, cut a patch that is double the size of the tear area.

**STEP 3:** Cut the patch in a round or oval shape (depending on the appearance of the tear). The idea is to avoid any edges that might be pulled on or come loose.

**STEP 4:** Clean the vinyl surface to remove old algae and scum with a mild solvent or rubbing alcohol

and sand lightly with fine grid paper or fine side of an emery board. This is vital. If the patch area is not clean, the adhesive won't take. Check behind the liner for anything that might cause further damage.

**STEP 5:** Apply the adhesive evenly and follow directions. (Some are intended to be applied to both surfaces, others to just one surface.) make sure not to use too much adhesive, otherwise, the adhesive will spread out from under the patch and discolor the surrounding surface area.

**STEP 6:** Apply the patch and press out any air spaces. Also, make sure the patch is spread evenly to the edges. Otherwise a corner could come loose. Next, clean off any extra adhesive with a cloth or use alcohol.

**STEP 7:** Apply even pressure to the patch for at least 30 seconds to ensure it adheres well.

When doing repair under the water line, clean using a detergent-based product, such as a vinyl-liner surface cleaner. When possible, it is best to lower the water level. Do not drain more than 2 feet of water from the pool. When a vinyl liner pool is drained more than 2 feet there is a tendency for the vinyl to shrink. If you do drain more than two feet from the pool - do not drain it in the heat of the day. This could cause shrinkage. Consult Ultra Modern Pool & Patio's service department if you need to drain more than two feet of water from your pool.

Do not take the liner out. Once you remove a liner it is extremely difficult to line it up again properly.

There are two types of patching kits for repairing holes and tears: wet kits and dry kits. These patch kits are designed to repair vinyl liners underwater.

- a) A wet vinyl repair kit consists of underwater glue and a patch. You apply the glue to the patch (some instruct both patch and surface), and then place the patch over the tear or hole.

- b) A dry vinyl repair kit consists of a patch that has an adhesive already applied to it, similar to a Band-Aid. To apply patch, the back is peeled off and the patch is placed over the leak.

There is also a Liquid Vinyl Weld for use only when repair can air dry. No patch is required. If you want to weld your liner with liquid vinyl weld, drain water first ... be certain surface is dry and clean. Remember, do not drain more than two feet of water from the pool without first consulting Ultra Modern Pool & Patio's professional service department.

### THE SUN'S EFFECT

The sun also can take its toll on a vinyl liner. The UV rays of the sun will degrade the vinyl (and all plastics for that matter) over time. Vinyl manufacturers can retard this process by formulating pigments (titanium dioxide white pigment is a common UV absorber) and UV inhibitors into the vinyl. This will slow the degradation considerably.

However, while most liners incorporate a UV inhibitor within the vinyl, the inhibitor will slowly begin to break down once it is unrolled, leaving the liner vulnerable.

UV inhibitors usually last about 10 years, less when the northeast or sunny corners are installed tight.

In northern parts of the county, degrading of the liner due to the sun is most severe on the north wall of the pool above the waterline, where the liner is subjected to the most direct light. This can cause the liner to "burn" or dry out and crack, which can lead to tearing of the liner. To help protect your liner, use tile and vinyl cleaner.

### REPAIR OR REPLACE

With a torn or damaged liner, the question then becomes whether to try and fix the damage or replace the entire liner. Of course, repairing a liner will save you the cost of an entire new liner plus the time and inconvenience of fitting and hanging the replacement.

However, whether to repair or replace will depend greatly on the extent of the damage. Simple punctures and small tears can easily be patched, but if the liner is older and is starting to show wear and tear (look for signs of deterioration besides the obvious damage) it may be best to replace it.

### LIFE EXPECTANCY

The average life expectancy of a liner is roughly five (5) to ten (10) years, depending on the liner's quality, the accuracy of installation, environmental conditions and other variables. Above-ground pool liners, because they are made from thinner material, usually fall in the shorter life-expectancy range. While some manufacturers will offer warranties of 15 years or longer on their liner's seams, which, if the liner is properly installed, will outlast the material.

Replacing an older liner often will save the necessity of making constant repairs. Plus, with the constantly changing patterns and color designs available in vinyl liners, you may desire to upgrade the look of the pool with a new liner. Yet, if a replacement is outside your budget, a quality repair job can allow you to squeeze a few more years from the liner.

### TOOLS NEEDED FOR REPAIRS:

- Extra matching vinyl when possible.
- Patch kit.
- Lint-free cloth & rubbing alcohol and/or mild solvents for cleaning vinyl surfaces.
- 320-grade wet/dry sandpaper for prepping surfaces to be patched.
- A rolling pin such as those used for hanging wallpaper. This will smooth out patches, helping to push out any air bubbles.
- Duct tape.

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**NOTE:** Always follow label directions and manufacturer's instructions for each product used. Conditions may vary from pool to pool. Ultra Modern Pool & Patio does not assume any responsibility or liability for the results that may be obtained through utilization of this or any other program, procedure or product.

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### Ultra Modern Pool & Patio

[www.ultramodern.com](http://www.ultramodern.com)

E-mail: [ultra@ultramodern.com](mailto:ultra@ultramodern.com)

8100 W. Kellogg  
Wichita, KS 67209  
316-722-4308

Toll Free: 800-888-5872

E-mail: [west@ultramodern.com](mailto:west@ultramodern.com)

5620 E. Kellogg  
Wichita, KS 67218  
316-681-3011

Toll Free: 888-258-5872

E-mail: [east@ultramodern.com](mailto:east@ultramodern.com)

1420 Nelson Dr.  
Derby, KS 67037  
316-788-1122

E-mail: [derby@ultramodern.com](mailto:derby@ultramodern.com)