

How to SLAM Your Pool

Shock, Level, And Maintain — the reliable way to clear algae and reset your water. Powered by My Crystal Clear Pool.

What SLAM does

SLAM stands for **Shock, Level, And Maintain**. It clears algae by raising your free chlorine (FC) to a specific high level set by your stabilizer (CYA) — and, crucially, **holding it there** by testing and re-dosing several times a day until the algae is gone. A one-time dump of chlorine doesn't work; the *maintaining* is what kills the algae. This is also the reset for a pool whose chlorine has been overwhelmed — common in late summer, when CYA has crept up all season and normal chlorine levels can no longer keep up.

Why your CYA sets the level

Cyanuric acid (CYA, stabilizer) protects chlorine from sunlight — but it also weakens how hard that chlorine works. The higher your CYA, the more FC you need. For a SLAM, you raise and hold FC at about **40% of your CYA level**. Find your CYA first, then target the matching SLAM FC level below.

CYA (ppm)	SLAM FC target (ppm)
30	12
40	16
50	20
60	24
80	31
90	35

If your CYA is very high (over ~90), a SLAM needs a very high FC and a lot of chlorine — lowering CYA first (partial drain & refill) is often the better path. Test CYA to be sure.

The steps

1. Test and balance first

Test FC, pH, and CYA. Bring pH down to about 7.2 before you start — chlorine works better and you're about to add a lot of it. Confirm your CYA so you know your target FC from the table above.

2. Brush everything

Brush the walls, floor, steps, and any corners where algae clings — before and during the SLAM. Brushing exposes the algae so the chlorine can reach it.

3. Shock up to your SLAM level

Add liquid chlorine (plain, unstabilized) to raise FC to your target from the table. Do it near dusk so the sun doesn't burn it off. Run the pump 24/7 for the whole SLAM.

4. Maintain the level (this is the real work)

Test FC several times a day and add more chlorine to bring it back up to target each time. Keep FC at or near the SLAM level continuously — do not let it drift down. This can take days; that's normal.

5. Keep the filter running and clean it

Run the pump continuously and clean/backwash the filter as pressure rises. Dead algae has to be filtered out, so the water may go cloudy/gray before it clears — that's progress.

How to know you're done — all three must be true

Test	Pass when...
Overnight FC loss	You lose 1 ppm or less of FC overnight (test at dusk, again at dawn, before sunrise)
Combined chlorine (CC)	CC is 0.5 ppm or less
Clarity	The water is clear — you can see the bottom cleanly

Only stop when **all three** pass on the same day. If any one fails, keep maintaining your SLAM level and re-test.

A few cautions

- Use **plain liquid chlorine** (sodium hypochlorite) for a SLAM — not stabilized (tri-chlor/di-chlor) products, which keep raising your CYA and make the problem worse.
- Don't swim during a SLAM — FC is well above normal.
- Keep pH around 7.2 throughout; very high FC can make pH tests read falsely.
- This guide is for chlorine pools. Bromine/spa chemistry differs.

Once you're clear — keep it that way

Most algae outbreaks trace back to CYA creeping up (from stabilized chlorine tablets) until your normal chlorine could no longer keep up. After a SLAM, watch your CYA, keep FC in the right range for it, and test regularly. Crystal Water Monitor tracks your water continuously and warns you before it slips — so you catch the drift long before it becomes another green pool.

This guide is educational and based on the widely used SLAM method. It is not a substitute for professional service on severe or persistent problems. Always follow product label directions and your local regulations. • mycrystalclearpool.org