Pool chemicals: the order card

Print it, keep it with your test kit. One product at a time, pump running, retest after a few hours of circulation.

The order

1. **Test** free chlorine (FC), pH, total alkalinity (TA), calcium hardness (CH), cyanuric acid (CYA).
2. **Algae or cloudy? Shock first** to the shock level for your CYA and hold it until clear.
3. **Total alkalinity** (baking soda raises, acid lowers). Fix before pH.
4. **pH** (soda ash raises, muriatic or dry acid lowers). Small steps.
5. **Calcium hardness** (calcium chloride, dissolved in a bucket first).
6. **Stabilizer / CYA** (in a sock or bucket; retest after 1-2 days).
7. **Chlorine last** to its target for your CYA.

Typical targets

What	Pool	Salt pool	Hot tub
Free chlorine	7.5% of CYA, at least 1 ppm	about 4.5% of CYA, at least 1 ppm	3 ppm or more
pH	7.2 to 7.8 (aim 7.5)		
Total alkalinity	60 to 100 ppm	50 to 90 ppm	50 to 80 ppm
Calcium hardness	150 to 400 ppm (plaster 250 to 650)	same as pool	100 to 250 ppm
CYA	30 to 50 ppm	60 to 80 ppm	20 to 40 ppm

Test log

Date	FC	pH	TA	CH	CYA	Added (product, amount)

Never mix chemicals or add water to acid; follow each product label. These are common ranges, not a rule for your pool; check your manufacturer and any local rules. Free card by Pulad Labs, puladlabs.com/guides/pool-chemicals-order/