



An Extended Guide · No. 1886

Robotic Pool Cleaners — Corded, Cordless & What They Miss

A calm, no-jargon guide
to the poolside helper

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A robot that scrubs the pool while you relax

A robotic pool cleaner can take one of the hottest, most tiresome summer chores off your hands — quietly vacuuming and scrubbing the pool while you enjoy the afternoon. This guide helps you pick the right kind and set honest expectations about what it will and won't do.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the gear around their homes, patiently and in plain language. Think of this as me sitting at your kitchen table, helping you weigh it one question at a time.

There is no single 'best' pool robot — only the one that suits your pool, your deck, and how much fuss you want. So we won't chase specifications. We'll start with how these machines actually work and go calmly from there.

★ You don't have to decide alone

If you'd like a second opinion before you spend a dollar, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I don't sell these machines and earn no commission, so the advice is just honest advice — with nothing to sell you.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you're already most of the way to a smart choice.

- ❑ Two main kinds: corded (plugged into a power supply) and cordless/battery (free-roaming).
- ❑ Corded runs as long as you like with strong, steady power — but you manage the cord and its tangles.
- ❑ Cordless has no cord to fuss with — but it's limited by battery run time and needs recharging.
- ❑ Depending on the model, they scrub and filter the floor, the walls, and the waterline.
- ❑ They do not skim the surface — you still need a skimmer and your pool's pump for leaves and bugs on top.
- ❑ Daily care is simple: lift it out and rinse the filter basket.

✓ One rule to hold onto

A pool robot is a hard-working helper, not your whole pool system. It scrubs and vacuums beautifully, but it doesn't replace skimming the surface or running your pump and filter.

How a pool robot actually works

Unlike the old suction and pressure cleaners that ran off your pool's plumbing, a robotic cleaner is its own little machine with its own motor, wheels, brushes, and filter.

You lower it into the water and it drives itself around, scrubbing the surfaces with rotating brushes and sucking debris up into a filter basket or bag that it carries inside. It works independently of your pool pump, so it cleans whether or not the pump is running.

Better models build a sense of the pool's shape so they cover it methodically rather than bumping around at random. When the cycle ends, you lift the robot out, empty and rinse its filter, and let it dry.

✓ It filters as it drives

Because the robot filters the water through its own basket, it actually takes some of the load off your pool's main filter — a nice bonus on top of the scrubbing.

The big choice: corded or cordless

This is the first real fork in the road, and it comes down to how you'd rather trade power for convenience.

Corded

A corded robot is powered through a cord that runs to a power supply sitting at the poolside. The upside is strong, steady power and a cleaning run that can last as long as you like. The trade is the cord itself — you manage it, and it can tangle or wrap as the robot turns.

Cordless / battery

A cordless robot runs on a built-in rechargeable battery, so there's no cord to tangle and it roams freely. The trade is run time: it cleans until the battery runs low, then it needs recharging before the next run.

✓ Match it to your pool and your patience

A big pool, or a wish to just set it and forget it, leans corded for the run time. A smaller pool, or a strong dislike of fussing with a cord, leans cordless. Neither is 'better' — they're different trades.

Living with the cord

If you lean toward a corded robot, the cord is the one thing worth understanding up front — it's the most common little annoyance owners mention.

As the robot turns and climbs walls, its cord can slowly twist on itself or drape across the pool. A tangled cord can snag the robot or keep it from reaching the far end. Most folks learn to lay the cord out straight before a run and give it a shake to untwist it now and then.

The flip side is real: a corded robot never stops mid-pool for a dead battery. For a large pool that takes a long time to clean, that steady power is a genuine comfort.

✓ A floating cord helps

Many corded models use a cord designed to float, which keeps it up off the pool floor and out of the robot's way. It's a small thing that makes the cord much easier to live with.

Battery life and run time

For a cordless robot, the battery is the whole story. It's freeing not to have a cord — but you trade that freedom for a clock.

A battery robot cleans for a set stretch and then needs to recharge. On a smaller pool that may be plenty to finish the whole pool in one go. On a larger pool, you might run it, recharge, and run it again to cover everything — or simply accept that one charge cleans part of the pool.

Recharging takes time, so a cordless robot suits someone who's happy to run it on an unhurried schedule rather than demand a finished pool in the next hour.

! Batteries wear over the years

Like any rechargeable, a pool robot's battery slowly holds less charge as the seasons pass. It's worth favoring a brand whose battery you can actually replace down the road, rather than tossing the whole machine.

Floor, walls, and waterline

Not every pool robot cleans every surface. How far up the pool a robot reaches is one of the biggest differences between models.

- **Floor only:** the simplest robots vacuum and scrub the pool floor. For many pools that's where most of the dirt settles.
- **Floor and walls:** stronger robots climb the walls too, scrubbing the sides as they go.
- **Floor, walls, and waterline:** the most capable models climb right up to the waterline — that greasy ring of scum where the water meets the tile — and scrub it as well.

✓ Decide how high you need it to reach

If the waterline ring is your pet peeve, make sure the robot you're weighing actually says it cleans the waterline — not every one does. Match what it cleans to what bothers you most.

The filter basket is the daily chore

The one bit of regular hands-on care a pool robot asks for is emptying its filter — and the good news is it takes a minute.

Everything the robot picks up — leaves, dirt, sand, the odd bug — collects in a basket or bag inside the machine. After each run you lift the robot out, pop the basket open, tip the debris into the trash or your garden, and rinse the basket with a hose.

A clogged basket is the number-one reason a pool robot cleans poorly. A basket caked with last week's leaves can't pick up this week's, so rinsing it is the single habit that keeps the robot working well.

★ Let's find one that's easy on your hands

Lifting a wet robot and opening a basket can be awkward if your grip or back isn't what it was. Some models load from the top and lift lighter than others. Tell me your situation and I'll help you pick a kind that's kind to you. Call (330) 200-8042.

A pool robot's daily routine

Once you know the rhythm, living with a pool robot is simple. Here's what a typical run looks like start to finish.

- **Drop it in:** lower the robot into the water and let it sink and settle.
- **Start the cycle:** turn it on (or start it from the app or remote, if it has one) and let it drive its pattern.
- **Let it finish:** a corded robot runs as long as you set; a cordless one runs until the battery's done.
- **Lift it out:** draw it to the edge and lift — tipping it to drain the water as you go.
- **Rinse the basket:** empty and hose the filter, then set the robot somewhere shaded to dry.

✓ Shade is your friend

Storing the robot and its cord out of direct sun when it's not working helps the plastics, seals, and cord last far longer. A shaded shelf or a bin near the pool does the trick.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

The right robot for a small, simple above-ground pool is often not the right one for a big in-ground pool with steps and a tile waterline. Picture your own pool as you read.

A smaller or above-ground pool

If your pool is modest in size with a simple shape — or an above-ground pool — your needs are simple, and you can save real money by not overbuying.

- A cordless robot's run time easily covers a smaller pool.
- No cord to manage means less fuss poolside.
- A floor-and-wall cleaner is often plenty.
- Lighter machines are easier to lift in and out.

A big in-ground pool with a waterline

A larger in-ground pool — especially with steps, curves, and a tile waterline that rings up — is where the stronger, longer-running robots earn their price.

- A corded robot's steady power finishes a big pool in one run.
- Look for a model that climbs walls and scrubs the waterline.
- Methodical, map-style coverage suits a large or odd-shaped pool.
- A bigger filter basket means fewer mid-clean empties.

★ Somewhere in between?

Most pools are. Tell me the size, the shape, and whether that waterline ring drives you crazy, and I'll help you land on the right robot without overspending. Call (330) 200-8042.

The honest part: what they miss

I'd be doing you a disservice if I let you think a pool robot does everything. It's a fine scrubber and vacuum, but it has real blind spots.

The biggest one is the surface. A pool robot works underwater, so it does not skim leaves, pollen, and bugs floating on top. That job still belongs to your skimmer and your pool's pump — the robot and the skimmer are partners, not substitutes.

Robots also tend to struggle with steps and benches, tight corners, and very large debris. A big wad of leaves or an acorn pile can be more than the robot's basket wants to swallow — scoop the worst of it out by hand first and let the robot handle the fine stuff.

! It is not your whole pool system

A pool robot does not test or balance your water, run your filter, or skim the surface. Think of it as the floor-and-wall scrubber on your team — a valuable one — not the whole crew.

Steps, corners, and the tricky spots

Every pool has a few places that give robots trouble. Knowing them in advance keeps you from blaming the machine for the pool's shape.

Steps and swim-out benches are hard for a wheeled robot to climb and scrub reliably, so dirt can linger there. Tight corners, narrow coves, and the exact spot where two walls meet are also easy for a robot to brush past rather than dig into.

None of this makes the robot a bad buy — it just means a quick pass with a hand brush on the steps and corners now and then finishes what the robot can't quite reach. Think of it as touching up, not re-doing.

✓ Give it a clear run

Pull the pool toys, the floats, and the hose out of the water before a run. A robot wastes time and battery bumping around clutter, just like a robot vacuum trips over cords on the floor.

Storing the robot and its power supply

A pool robot spends more of the year out of the water than in it, so a little thought about where it lives pays off.

A corded robot's power supply is an electrical box that belongs in a dry, shaded spot — never where it can sit in a puddle or the rain. The robot itself wants to dry fully before storage so the inside doesn't grow mildew, then live somewhere cool and out of the sun.

Over the winter here in Ohio, the robot and its power supply come indoors to a spot that won't freeze — a basement or a heated garage. A season of hard freezes is no friend to batteries, plastics, or seals.

★ I'll help you set up a tidy poolside spot

A simple shaded shelf or a lidded bin near the pool, with the power supply safely up and dry, makes the robot a pleasure to use all summer. Happy to help you sort it on a visit. Call (330) 200-8042.

Apps, remotes, and schedules

Some pool robots are plain on-off machines; others add a remote control, a phone app, or a schedule. Here's how much that matters.

A basic robot you simply switch on and lift out when it's done. That's genuinely all many folks want. Fancier models let you steer the robot to a missed spot with a remote, pick a cleaning pattern, or set it to run on a schedule from your phone.

These extras are conveniences, not necessities. If a phone app feels like a chore, a simple-button robot will clean your pool just as well. If you enjoy a bit of control, the remote and app can be handy.

✓ Set up the app once

If you do choose a robot with an app, the setup — connecting to Wi-Fi and picking a schedule — is a one-time job. After that it just runs. It's exactly the sort of thing I'm glad to handle for you on a visit.

What your money actually buys

Pool robots span a wide price range. Rather than quote numbers that change with every sale, here's what tends to come with spending more.

At the gentler end, you get a capable robot that vacuums and scrubs the floor well. Spending more buys, in rough order: wall climbing; waterline scrubbing; smarter, more methodical coverage; a bigger or easier-to-clean filter; and conveniences like a remote, an app, or a caddy to store and charge it.

There are small ongoing costs too — the filter basket or bag, brushes, and eventually a battery on a cordless model all wear over the years. None of it is dear, but favor a brand whose parts you can actually get a few seasons from now.

✓ Check the current price

Pool-robot prices swing a lot, especially at the start and end of the pool season. Because deals and models change constantly, always check the current listing before you buy — and don't let a sale sticker rush you.

A simple shopping checklist

Keep this open while you shop, online or in the store. Check each box before you buy.

- ☐ I've chosen corded (steady power, manage the cord) or cordless (no cord, watch the battery).
- ☐ It cleans as high as I need — floor, walls, or right up to the waterline.
- ☐ Its run time or battery suits my pool's size.
- ☐ The filter basket is easy for me to lift out and rinse.
- ☐ It fits my pool's shape — steps, corners, and all.
- ☐ I know where the robot and (if corded) its power supply will live and dry.
- ☐ Its replacement parts — basket, brushes, battery — are easy to get.
- ☐ I checked the current price rather than trusting an old sticker.

✓ Buy where returns are easy

Even the right robot can surprise you once it meets your actual pool. Buying somewhere with a friendly return window takes the pressure off the decision.

Common mistakes people make

A handful of avoidable slip-ups account for most pool-robot regret. Now you'll know them in advance.

- **Expecting it to skim the surface** — then being surprised leaves still float on top. That's the skimmer's job.
- **Letting the filter basket clog** — a caked basket can't pick up anything, so the robot seems to 'stop working.'
- **Buying floor-only** when the waterline ring was the real complaint.
- **Ignoring the cord** on a corded model, then fighting tangles every run.
- **Leaving it in the sun and water all season** — which wears the plastics, seals, and battery far faster.

! Winter is the big one here

The most expensive mistake in Ohio is leaving a robot and its power supply out through a hard freeze. Bring them indoors to a spot that won't freeze and they'll give you many more summers.

Setting honest expectations

A pool robot is a wonderful helper. Knowing what it is — and isn't — keeps you happy with your choice.

A robot keeps your pool's floor and walls scrubbed and vacuumed between your regular pool care. Run it a few times a week and the pool stays clear and inviting with far less effort on your part. What it won't do is skim the top, balance your water, or scrub every last step and corner.

Think of it like a robot vacuum for your pool: it takes the daily drudgery off your plate, but you still skim, test the water, and give the tricky spots a touch-up now and then. Owners who expect a helpful routine, not a miracle, are the ones who love their pool robots.

✓ The magic is in the routine

A robot run on a steady schedule keeps the pool so consistently clean that the water never gets ahead of you. Set the rhythm and the pool stays swim-ready all season.

A word on safety and electricity

Water and electricity ask for a little respect. A few plain habits keep a pool robot perfectly safe to use.

Never put the robot in — or pull it out — while anyone is swimming. Unplug the power supply before you lower the robot in or lift it out, and keep that power supply up off the ground and well away from puddles and spray. Plug it into a properly grounded, GFCI-protected outdoor outlet.

If a cord looks nicked or a power supply has been rained on or dropped, stop and have it checked rather than risk it. These are simple precautions, and they're the whole of it.

★ Not sure your poolside outlet is right?

If you're unsure whether your outdoor outlet is properly grounded and GFCI-protected, that's a job for a licensed electrician — not a guess. I'm not an electrician, but I'll gladly line up a trustworthy local one for you. Call (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask before you buy

Whether you're talking to a salesperson or to me, these are the questions that get you to the right machine.

Q: Is this corded or cordless, and which suits my pool?

Corded gives steady power and long runs but you manage the cord; cordless roams free but is limited by battery. Big pool leans corded; small pool or cord-hater leans cordless.

Q: What surfaces does it clean — floor, walls, waterline?

Not every robot climbs walls or scrubs the waterline. Match what it reaches to what bothers you most about your pool.

Q: How easy is the filter basket to empty and rinse?

This is the one regular chore. A top-loading basket that lifts out easily is far kinder on your hands and back.

Q: How easy is it to get parts a few seasons from now?

Favor an established brand with baskets, brushes, and (on cordless models) a replaceable battery you can actually buy.

✓ There's no silly question

If a salesperson makes you feel rushed or foolish for asking, that's a reason to walk away, not to buy. A good answer to a plain question is the least you should expect.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks weighing their first robotic pool cleaner, answered plainly.

Q: Does a pool robot replace my skimmer and pump?

No. It scrubs and vacuums the floor, walls, and (on some models) the waterline underwater. It doesn't skim leaves off the surface or run your filter — your skimmer and pump still do that.

Q: Corded or cordless — which should I get?

Cordless gives strong, steady power and runs as long as you like, but you manage the cord. Cordless has no cord to tangle but is limited by battery run time. Pick by your pool's size and your patience.

Q: How often do I empty the filter?

After every run is the habit to build. A clogged basket is the top reason a robot seems to stop cleaning well — a quick rinse keeps it working like new.

Q: Why does it miss the steps and corners?

A wheeled robot struggles to climb steps and dig into tight corners. That's normal — a quick pass with a hand brush there finishes what the robot can't quite reach.

★ Still weighing it up?

Choosing a pool robot is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's find the one that fits your pool without overspending.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made choosing a robotic pool cleaner feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. I'll help you choose the right machine, get it set up and mapped, connect it to your Wi-Fi and your phone, and show you how to run it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — app settings, schedules, a quick question — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for a ladder, wiring, or digging, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro rather than risk it.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Corded vs Cordless Pool Robots

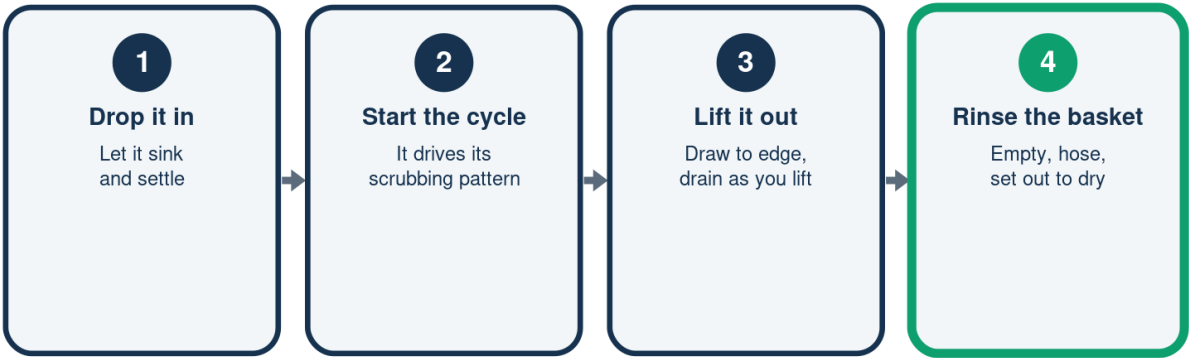
Two ways to trade power for convenience

	Corded	Cordless
Power	Steady, strong	Battery-limited
Run time	As long as set	Until battery low
The cord	You manage it	None to tangle
Best for	Big pools	Smaller pools
Downtime	None	Recharging

Neither is better -- they're different trades.

A Pool Robot's Routine

The simple rhythm of a cleaning run



Rinsing the basket every run is the key habit.

What It Cleans vs What It Misses

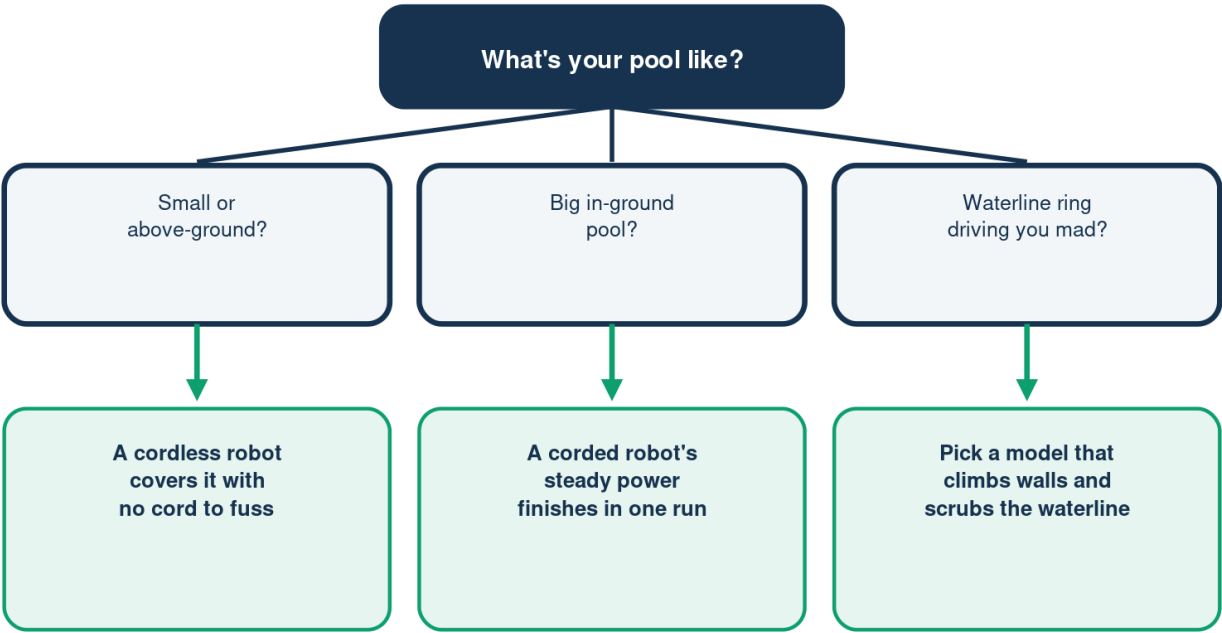
A scrubber on your team, not the whole crew

	Handles well	Tends to miss
Floor	Yes	--
Walls	Many models	--
Waterline	Top models	--
Surface	--	Skimmer's job
Steps/corners	--	Hand-brush them

You still skim the top and balance the water.

Which Kind Fits Your Pool?

Let your pool answer the question



They don't skim the surface -- keep your skimmer and pump running.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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