



## Revive Your Old Hot Tub

Hot tubs are not cheap. Newer tubs are even more expensive, and don't be fooled by bargains, because you definitely get what you pay for. We service a lot of 15-20 year-old hot tubs, and many users are just fine with the 'old school' models they own.

I typically make the analogy between an old tub and an old car: If you own an older Southern (read: no rust) car, and you love the body style, the color, the big comfy bench seats it has, and it drives fine, then you have a justified sentimental attachment to it.

The following list will help you preserve and repair your older spa, as well as perform some basic preventative maintenance. All ideas and suggestions put forth can be achieved with basic hand tools, and if in doubt, call your local service tech.

Remember the golden rule: fixing something sooner is always better than later.

### Structure

This one is usually fairly obvious, as wood rot deteriorates the framework and cabinet.

Best done in summer, during a dry week, in a period when you can drain your tub.

The first step is to verify the levelness of the base, or platform your tub sits on. If it's concrete, don't assume it's still level after 15 years.



If not level, just be aware that you'll measure up from it to determine the top edge of the tub height, making it equal all the way around the perimeter.

Remove all cabinet panels if possible, and inspect the inner framework. Usually the base perimeter boards are rotten first, and need to be replaced. Rarely do the verticals rot, as they keep dry.

To fix this, borrow some friends to tip your tub on edge, and replace the worst baseboards with new, and reinforce complete bottom by adding pressure treated plywood across the whole thing.

We've seen some insect/rodent damage that essentially destroyed all the wood on the base. The detrimental issue with letting this fix go is the tub shell will become stressed with the water weight, and deform and possibly crack.

## **Cabinet**

If you have all the pieces and it's cedar, you have a good chance to reconstruct it and make it last another decade.

The best way to achieve this is to screw and glue old pieces on new board.

1/4 inch pressure treated plywood is best, but that may be too thick to fit nicely back on and look good.

You can use 'luan' board which is a backer board for flooring and cabinetry work. It's very thin and fairly strong.

To make it last long term, stain or paint BOTH sides with an oil-based product to prevent delaminating. It's too thin for nails or screws, unless you can go through the back into your cabinet pieces, granted they are thick enough.

'Liquid Nails' or other polyurethane-based caulk will work best to bond the wood to these panels, and resist moisture. Last resort is trash your old panels all together and go new.



The best idea is pre-made panels of cedar 'wainscoting' found at home fix-it stores. They are typically 1/2 inch thick and come pre-sealed on one side.

MAKE SURE to seal the other side with an oil-based stain to prevent warping of the panels. Then it's just cut & apply.

## Pump & Motor

To maintain your [pump](#), it's a visual inspection at beginning of every season, or twice a year.

The single most expensive service issue that arises is main seals leaking. This happens after 3-4 years or more when water slowly starts leaking from your pump head where the motor shaft enters it.

The leak will be a drip a month, drip a week, drip a day, and then after a few months, is leaking enough that the motor shaft flings it off at speed and your motor vent sucks it right in and rusts it up.

The other failure to look for is the front bearing on the [motor](#) seizing up from being wet. Inspecting closely to catch the first few drips is the key to stopping a big loss. Seals are cheap, and simple hand tools can change them out.

The spinning wheel in the pump (impeller) is accessed by removing the front, or face, of the pump and unscrewing it counter-clockwise. The motor shaft can be held from spinning on the opposite end of the motor.

This is found under the cap, and a wrench or screwdriver can be used depending on your design. Be sure to see how old seal is installed to put in new. Do not touch seal surfaces or dirty them as this shortens their service life.

## About CNY Hot Tubs

CNY Hot Tubs is a family owned and managed small business located in Lansing, NY. We have been serving the Central New York area since 1997 and have been making our customers happy via our online store since 1999.



We stock a huge selection of hot tub parts, supplies and chemicals for all makes and models - and specialize in [Emerald Spas](#), [Softub](#) and [Saratoga Spas](#). We are hot tub enthusiasts ourselves, realize how important your hot tub is to you, and want to make sure you are using the right products for your spa!