

POOL TABLE BUYER'S GUIDE

For most families, a pool table purchase for the home is a significant investment. It's important to shop and compare quality, dependability and price to get the best value for your money. This guide will walk you through some of the major factors to consider in selecting the perfect pool table for your home.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

WHAT SIZE IS BEST?

Pool tables range from 7 to 9 feet long — first and foremost, don't get a table too large for the space. After room size, player skill level is the next consideration.

For beginners and casual players, smaller tables may offer more enjoyment because it's easier to make shots — more success equals more fun for players of all ages. Competitive or advanced players will want the largest table your space can accommodate because pocket openings seem smaller (even though they're the same size) which provides more challenge.

Adults: 8- or 9-foot table, but remember a 9-foot table will be more challenging.

Children: 7-foot table. A smaller table is easier for smaller players because of the shorter shooting distance. Also, get shorter cues for kids (48" or 52").

Adults + Children: A 7- or 8-foot table is the best choice — go for 8 feet if you have space.

WHAT STYLE SHOULD I GET?

Pool tables come in a variety of styles to match any setting: modern or traditional decor, indoor or outdoor location. People without a dedicated pool room often opt for tables that can be converted to other uses — dining and ping pong table conversions allow you to quickly adapt to different types of entertaining.

WHAT MAKES A QUALITY TABLE?

For durability and stability, a quality pool table requires three important components:

- The frame and cabinet should be in hardwood or steel construction.
- The slate should be in three, one-inch thick pieces.
- The cushion rubber should be 100% gum rubber.

DO I NEED SPECIAL LIGHTING?

Lighting is the second-most important consideration after the pool table itself. Ambient lighting is insufficient — there must be enough bright light over the table to see the entire playing surface without shadows. Fortunately, there are many lighting options that are both effective and stylish.

HOW DO I INSTALL THE TABLE?

The wrong installation can ruin your table, so it is best to have a professional installer handle it. Pool tables are delivered in pieces and require proper assembly and leveling, and if the slates aren't leveled properly, your table won't be playable.

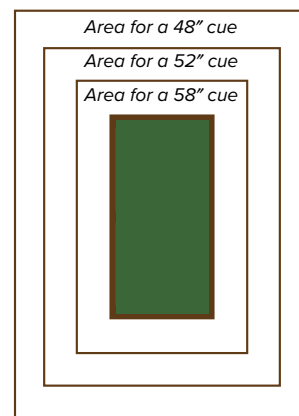
WHAT SIZE IS BEST?

Room size and player ability are important considerations in choosing the right table.

Room Size

Room size is the most important factor in selecting the right table size. Remember you need room for both the table AND cue length during play.

Minimum Recommended Room Size			
Cue Length	7 foot	8 foot	9 foot
58" (standard)	13'6" x 16'8"	13'11" x 17'4"	14'6" x 18'4"
52"	13' x 16'2"	13'5" x 16'10"	14' x 17'10"
48"	12'8" x 15'10"	13'1" x 16'6"	13'8" x 17'6"



If your desired table doesn't quite fit, you can play with shorter cues.

Player

Ages

- **Adults** Get an 8- or 9- foot table. For more of a challenge, get a 9-foot table.
- **Children** A 7-foot table is easier for smaller players because the shooting distance is shorter and it's easier to get shots into pockets. Also, get shorter cues for the kids (48" or 52").
- **All ages** A 7- or 8-foot table is the best choice; go for 8 feet if you have the space.

Player

Skill Level

- **Beginners and casual players** Smaller tables may be more fun because the ratio of pocket size to table size means it's easier to make shots.
- **Competitive or experienced players** Get the largest table for your space. Larger tables offer more challenge as pocket openings seem smaller even though they're the same size.

More Tips

- You might think "bigger is better," but a smaller table in a bigger room is better than a bigger table in a smaller room that cramps your playing style. When in doubt, opt for a smaller table.
- Don't get a 9-foot table just because you have the space — consider the players. Children and casual players may have more fun with a smaller table.
- In a room with load-bearing supports, place them at the table's side. If you must locate the table at an end, place it so the support is at the break end (vs. the foot or rack end).
- Let the table be the focus of the game play area. Don't place other large pieces of furniture close by (like a sofa) that players must maneuver around. Keep the surrounding area clear of other clutter that could inhibit play, like small plants or floor lamps.

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

Your pool table can be both stylish AND multi-functional.

Table style is a purely personal choice, and whether you opt for a modern, traditional, or convertible table of comparable quality, the play is the same. More and more people are choosing pool tables that can do double or triple duty. Pool tables can be converted to dining tables or game tables (like ping pong) to maximize space, and outdoor tables let you enjoy your favorite game on your deck or patio without fear of the elements.

Convertible Dining Table



Spencer Marston Cheyenne

Convertible Outdoor Table



Spencer Marston Newport

Convertible Outdoor Table



Spencer Marston Tucson

Traditional Pool Table



Spencer Marston Catania

Ping Pong Table Top



WHAT MAKES A QUALITY TABLE?

A finely crafted table will provide years of enjoyment when you pay careful attention to workmanship details

STANDARDS

Seek out pool tables built to meet or exceed Billiard Congress of America (BCA) specifications.

TABLE BED

Look for a table bed with a one-inch-thick slate, the minimum thickness required by the BCA for the truest and most accurate play. A table bed with three matched sections of slate offers the best performance, as each piece can be leveled individually to achieve a perfect level.

FRAME

A strong frame will support one-inch slate and ensures a solid, level playing surface. Look for quad-beam construction (two long center beams and two cross beams) to stabilize the frame and provide additional slate-leveling contact points. These beams should be made of 2" x 6" 100% solid hardwood lumber. Avoid cheap tables that cut corners with fiber or particleboard in their frames.

RAILS

There are several parts of the rail system to evaluate. The most critical aspect of the rail system, rail cushions, should be made of 100% gum rubber. Rail cushions made with synthetic fillers can dry out and lose their bounce. The sub-rails, an internal component, should be made of solid hardwood for maximum structural strength. Finally, the top rails should also be made of hardwood to enhance the visual appeal and withstand cue abuse.

WARRANTY

Pool tables of high quality construction usually come with a lifetime warranty against issues in materials and workmanship.

CLOTH

If you want your table to play like a professional table you need professional grade cloth. The right table cloth affects the look, feel, playability, durability and enjoyment of your table.

Look: Consider overall room décor and color tones, in addition to the pool table wood when choosing cloth color. Keep in mind that the table bed is large, so the color will be prominent.

Feel: The feel affects how the balls roll and react. Fuzzy and soft cloth typically plays slower, which makes it more forgiving for inexperienced players. Smooth and tightly-woven cloth plays faster—balls go a long way with just a little force.

Grade:

- Recreational: with higher nap it feels softer and plays slower, making it more forgiving for amateur players or kids
- Intermediate: plays faster and is more durable than recreational grade
- Professional: high wool content and tight weave makes it very smooth, so play is very fast

Durability: Higher grade cloth is more durable and is often treated to resist spills and stains. Durability ultimately depends on the player, how they play on the table, and how well the cloth is maintained.

PRICE

Pool table prices run the gamut, but do you really need to spend top dollar to get a well-made table? Happily, the answer is no. If you find a table with all the quality workmanship details mentioned here, regardless of the price, you can be confident that you're getting a quality table.

WHY IS LIGHTING IMPORTANT?

Lighting for your pool table is the second-most important purchase after the pool table.

Ambient light isn't sufficient—there must be enough bright light over the table to see the entire playing surface without shadows. If the room is too dark, the players eyes might get tired as well.

Size: A properly sized light illuminates the entire playing surface and eliminates all shadows, including under the rails.

Pool Table Size	Recommended Light Size
7 foot	35" to 55" length
8 foot	40" to 60" length
9 foot	60" to 80" length

Style: There are two main table light types: a single shade, or a long bar with multiple shades; both come in a variety of styles. Some pool table lights direct all the light to the table and some allow light to escape above the lamp or through certain transparent materials in the lamp. If you have a very dark space consider a pool table light that provides the extra light.



Bulb: A fluorescent bulb, whether a tube or energy efficient bulb, provides the most even lighting across the playing surface.

Height: The goal is to light the entire surface of your table including the top of the rails and also allow enough room to shoot and maneuver under the light. The distance from the bottom of the lampshade to the top of the table should be 36 to 42 inches above the playing surface.



HOW IS A TABLE INSTALLED?

Buying a pool table is exciting! However, there's a lot to think about. It helps to work with actual humans during your research, buying, and installation process.

POOL TABLE INSTALLATION

The wrong installation can ruin your table

The accuracy and playability of your table depends on proper installation. Pool tables are delivered in pieces and require assembly and slate leveling — not something you can learn by watching a few YouTube videos. You can buy the most expensive pool table, but if the slates aren't leveled properly, it won't be playable. Sometimes, self-installation even voids the manufacturer's warranty.



How to find a pool table installer

It's best to buy your pool table from a company that maintains its own network of vetted, qualified installers, which will give you the peace of mind that from shipment to delivery to installation, your table will be handled by professionals.



What to look for in a pool table installer:

- Vetted and graded by a pool table company
- Provides references from previous customers
- Receives pool table components on your behalf and inspects them to ensure they're damage-free
- Delivers and completes installation in one visit
- Has you confirm the install is to your satisfaction
- Provides care and maintenance instructions



WHEN ORDERING A POOL TABLE ONLINE

Choose a vendor who:

- Has actual human beings who can answer all of your questions and ensures you order the right size table for your space and player ability
- Connects you with a vetted installer in your local area and provides support during and after the installation
- Bonus: knows the history and genuinely loves the game of billiards!

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? TALK WITH A PRO

Let the Pooltables.com team help you get the most from your investment.

Spencer Marston pool tables are sold through PoolTables.com, either online or through nationwide showrooms. Our team has a combined 100 years in the business, so we can answer any question about billiards. We'll walk you through every step of the pool table selection and purchase process. And, our white glove installation service by a vetted pool table installer means zero setup stress, all you have to do is enjoy your table!



The friendly pool table experts at our Portland, Oregon showroom.

Call (800) 682-9280, visit us online, or stop by a showroom.



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