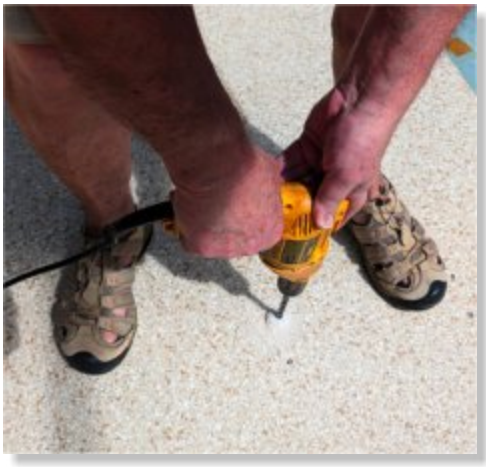
Tool Talk



Entering or exiting in-ground pools without railings is rolling the dice. It's a no-brainer that navigating wet, slick steps, railings are critical for providing secure footing. Without them, you face an increased risk of slips or falls, joint or muscle strain, or a very awkward public display of complete loss of balance.

For this project, tools you'll need: railing kit, drill, hammer, ruler, ½ inch socket wrench. The railing kit, a beautiful, welded stainless steel construction, was purchased online. The shape shown is pretty much the best for most pools. As you can see, we set it off towards the edge of the steps. No firm and fast rules there.







Now, drilling. Many of the male of our species make noises about having a drill for concrete with some 'beef', namely, the muscular 'Half Inch', preferably an official 'Concrete' drill, one with a 'hammer drill' function. These are strictly two-handed affairs, big, and heavy. And satisfying to use. Here, I used my trusty 30 year-old ⅜ inch drill, no fancy hammer-drill function, just 'spinny-spin'. Since most pool deck is 'cool deck', a lighter mix of concrete, this was like drilling butter: no big deal. After measuring and marking the four holes for the base, the drilling was kind of a buzz-kill.

The railing kit included the fasteners, ¼ stainless lag screws, and the anchors to hold it all down. These are hammered into the holes you drill. Regardless of drill used, the dust fills the holes, and must be removed before you can hammer in the anchors. I used one of Karla's fancy vacuums with a skinny attachment that sucked all the dust out instantly. A shop-vac would do just fine. Important: make sure the anchor hole is deep enough for the anchor! Once you hammer one in, there's hell to pay to try to get it out to go 'just a little deeper'. Like, impossible! Either mark the drill bit with a piece of tape, or send a lag screw down the hole to test the depth. Then, bang each anchor down to its hole, and get your pool float on notice.

We specify '½ inch' socket wrench. That means 'big'. Getting the last little bit of these bolts 'home' should really put your muscles to the test. If you don't have a wrench that big, and know what a 'breaker bar' is, get one on standby.

Everyone in the pool!

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR