

Ways to Conserve Water

First Things First:

Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks.

Know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save water and prevent damage to your home.

Share water conservation tips with friends and neighbors.

Kitchen:

When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.

Use the garbage disposal sparingly; compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.

For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.

When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.

Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.

Collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables, reuse it to water houseplants.

Run your dishwasher only when it is full. You can save up to 500 gallons a month.

Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.

Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.

Throw trimmings and peelings from fruits and vegetables into your yard compost to prevent using the garbage disposal.

If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.

Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.

Install an instant water heater near your kitchen sink so you don't have to run the water while it heats up. This also reduces energy costs.

If your dishwasher is new, cut back on rinsing. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.

Bathroom

Bathe your young children together.

Drop your tissue in the trash instead of flushing it and save water every time.

Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.

When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.

If your toilet was installed before 1992, reduce the amount of water used for each flush by inserting a displacement device in the tank.

Listen for dripping faucets and running toilets. Fixing a leak can save 300 gallons a month or more.

Turn off the water while you wash your hair to save up to 150 gallons a month.

Turn off the water while you shave and save up to 300 gallons a month.

If your shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a water-efficient model.

Use a water-efficient showerhead. They're inexpensive, easy to install, and can save you up to 750 gallons a month.

If your toilet flapper doesn't close after flushing, replace it.

When running a bath, plug the tub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.

Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.

Upgrade older toilets with water efficient models.

Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.

To save water and time, consider washing your face or brushing your teeth while in the shower.

Laundry Room

Washing dark clothes in cold water saves both water and energy while it helps your clothes to keep their colors.

When shopping for a new clothes washer, compare resource savings among Energy Star models. Some of these can save up to 20 gallons per load, and energy too.

Have your plumber re-route your gray water to trees and gardens rather than letting it run into the sewer line. Check with your city codes, and if it isn't allowed in your area, start a movement to get that changed.

Run your clothes washer only when it is full. You can save up to 500 gallons a month.

When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.

Around the Yard

When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.

When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.

Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.

Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.

To decrease water from being wasted on sloping lawns, apply water for five minutes and then repeat two to three times.

Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while under watering others.

Use a layer of organic material on the surface of your planting beds to minimize weed growth that competes for water.

Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.

Do your planting in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.

Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.

Spreading a layer of organic mulch around plants retains moisture and saves water, time and money.

Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk and save water every time.

If water runs off your lawn easily, split your watering time into shorter periods to allow for better absorption.

We're more likely to notice leaks indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.

If you have an automatic refilling device, check your pool periodically for leaks.

Check the root zone of your lawn or garden for moisture before watering using a spade or trowel. If it's still moist two inches under the soil surface, you still have enough water.

Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped.

Use sprinklers for large areas of grass; water small patches by hand to avoid waste.

Walkways and patios provide space that doesn't ever need to be watered. These useful "rooms" can also add value to your property.

Collect water from your roof to water your garden.

Rather than following a set watering schedule, check for soil moisture two to three inches below the surface before watering.

Use a trowel, shovel, or soil probe to examine soil moisture depth. If the top two to three inches of soil are dry it's time to water.

If installing a lawn, select a turf mix or blend that matches your climate and site conditions.

When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.

Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps.

Consult with your local nursery for information on plant selection and placement for optimum outdoor water savings.

Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.

Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed..

Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site and region.

Remember to check your sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the sprinkler heads in good shape.

Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.

Use a rain gauge, or empty tuna can, to track rainfall on your lawn. Then reduce your watering accordingly.

Learn how to shut off your automatic watering system in case it malfunctions or you get an unexpected rain.

Set a kitchen timer when watering your lawn or garden to remind you when to stop. A running hose can discharge up to 10 gallons a minute.

Winterize outdoor spigots when temperatures dip below freezing to prevent pipes from leaking or bursting.

When back flushing your pool, consider using the water on your landscaping.

Wash your car on the lawn, and you'll water your lawn at the same time.

Direct the water from rain gutters and HVAC systems toward water-loving plants in the landscape for automatic water savings.

Use a hose nozzle or turn off the water while you wash your car. You'll save up to 100 gallons every time.

Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.

Report broken pipes, open hydrants, and errant sprinklers to the property owner or your water provider.

Let your lawn go dormant during the summer. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three weeks or less if it rains.

Do your planting with finished compost to add water-holding and nutrient-rich organic matter to the soil.

Use sprinklers that deliver big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller water drops and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.

Water only when necessary; more plants die from over-watering than from under-watering.

Adjust your watering schedule each month to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements.

Wash your pets outdoors in an area of your lawn that needs water.

Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it.

Aerate your lawn at least once a year so water can reach the roots rather than run off the surface.

Catch water in an empty tuna can to measure sprinkler output. One inch of water on one square foot of grass equals two-thirds of a gallon of water.

Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low water use plant for year-round landscape color and save up to 550 gallons each year.

Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later to see if you have a leak.

Don't water your lawn on windy days when most of the water blows away or evaporates.

Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.

Use a minimum amount of organic or slow release fertilizer to promote a healthy and drought tolerant landscape.

Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation than those spraying water into the air.

Around the House

For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.

Teach your children to turn off faucets tightly after each use.

Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive, and you can save 140 gallons a week.

Make sure there are water-saving aerators on all of your faucets.

Insulate hot water pipes for more immediate hot water at the faucet and for energy savings.

Setting cooling systems and water softeners for a minimum number of refills saves both water and chemicals, plus more on utility bills.

Look for products bearing the EPA WaterSense Label for items that have been certified to save 20% or more without sacrificing performance.

Out and About

Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.

While staying in a hotel or even at home, consider reusing your towels.