

# Seven Water Smart.<sup>®</sup> Tips



to lower your water  
bill and save water  
in your home



# Seven Water Smart Tips

1.

Install a low-flow shower head.

It takes 25 gallons of water to fill the average bathtub halfway. Taking a short shower will use less water.

A standard shower head uses five to ten gallons of water per minute. Devices called flow limiters, restrictors, or controllers, can cut your water use. An efficient low-flow shower head will have a flow rate of 3.5 gallons per minute or less. That's plenty of water for a refreshing, cleansing shower.

## 2.

Insert a displacement device in the toilet tank.

The average toilet uses five to seven gallons of water per flush. Reducing this amount, however, is easy.

Cut the top off a plastic gallon jug. Add a few clean stones to the jug to weight it down, and place it in the toilet tank away from the flushing mechanism. With each flush, you save the amount of water that remains in the jug.

You can also buy an inexpensive toilet tank insert or dam to reduce the amount of flush water by one to two gallons. The inserts actually dam up part of the water in the tank, keeping it from flowing into the bowl.

This method doesn't reduce the water level or the force of the water needed for complete flushing.

Never place a brick in the tank. It can crumble and cause problems.

When buying a toilet, choose a water-conserving unit that uses 3.5 gallons or less per flush. Several models are available at home supply stores.

## **3.** Stop all leaks.

A toilet which "runs" after being flushed will waste two gallons of water per minute.

A silent leak in a toilet can waste up to 7,000 gallons of water per month. To find silent leaks, put food coloring in the tank. Do not flush. Check the toilet bowl ten minutes later. If you see color in the bowl, the tank has a silent leak.

A faucet leaking a slow steady drip--100 drops per minute--wastes 350 gallons per month. A faucet leaking a small stream wastes 2,000 to 2,700 gallons of water per month.

Look for hidden leaks. Turn off all running water in the house. Check the reading on your water meter. Don't use any water for 30 minutes, then read the meter. If it shows water used, then you have a hidden leak that needs repair.

## **4.** Install a faucet aerator.

The standard faucet flows five gallons a minute. Installing a low-flow faucet aerator can save up to one-half of the water used in the bathroom.

# 5.

Wash only full loads in the dishwasher.

When buying a new dishwasher, choose a water-saving model. These models can cut water use by 25 percent and cost no more than nonconserving models. Also, newer models save water because they don't require pre-rinsing of dirty dishes.

# 6.

Adjust washing machine water level.

Washing machines use 14 percent of water used inside the home.

Yours uses between 32 to 59 gallons per cycle. Adjust the water level to match the size of the load. If the machine doesn't have an adjustment, wash only full loads.

When buying a new machine, choose a water-saving model. Water conservation models cost about the same as other models but reduce water by as much as 30 percent.

# 7.

Change your water ways.

While brushing your teeth, turn off the tap and save 14 gallons of water. Rinse

using a cup for water; run the tap only to rinse the toothbrush.

When showering and washing hands, wet your body. Turn off the water, apply soap, and then turn on the water to rinse.

Instead of running water to rinse dishes, fill the kitchen sink and dip dishes in water to rinse.

Fill the sink or a bowl with water to wash fruits and vegetables.

Keep a container of water in the refrigerator rather than running tap water for a cool drink.

Operate the garbage disposal only when necessary.

Insulate hot water pipes where possible to avoid wasting water while waiting for the hot water to arrive.

For more information, contact your county Extension office.

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