



Conserving Water at Home

Saving water at home is perhaps the easiest thing you can do to protect our watershed's limited supply of water. Much of the clean water that goes to residences is needlessly wasted, but you can help preserve our water supply by consuming water efficiently. Here are a few ideas:

- Be familiar with reading your water bill to find out your monthly water usage.
- Fix any leaks that may exist in your home. To test for leaks in:
 - Toilets:** Add food coloring to the tank. Without flushing, check to see if any color appears in the bowl after 30 minutes.
 - Faucets:** Place a measuring cup under the tap to determine how much water leaks in a half-hour. Multiply by 48 to determine how much water leaks per day.
 - At the meter:** If you use public service water, it is possible to determine the magnitude of any household leaks by turning off all water fixtures and reading the meter. If the dial still moves, you have a leak.
- If you have an older toilet, put a water dam in your toilet tank: two half-gallon plastic bottles filled with water work very nicely to save a gallon per flush. (It is not a good idea to use bricks because they gradually break down and cause plumbing problems.) An even better solution is to install low-flow toilets, which use 1.6 gallons per flush as opposed to the old standard of 3.5 gallons.
- Take shorter showers and install a reduced-flow showerhead. It can decrease the amount of water used in the shower by 25 percent.
- While you are waiting for your shower to heat up, try catching the cold water and saving it for other uses, such as watering plants.
- Avoid running the water while you shave, brush your teeth, and wash your face.
- Run dishwashers and clothes washing machines only with a full load.
- If the water is left running, washing dishes by hand can use more water than a dishwasher cycle. Fill the sink to soak and wash, and run the water only when rinsing.
- Wash your car only when absolutely necessary. Using as little water as possible, wash it over grass instead of pavement to prevent runoff. A better option is to go to commercial car washes because they recycle water in order to achieve efficient use and reduce runoff.



FUN FACTS

- 61% of Americans rely on lakes, rivers, and streams for drinking water.
- An individual uses up to 100 gallons per day, 50 – 75% of which is used in the bathroom.
- If you include the water used in the industrial production of goods that an individual uses, food production, services and recreation, an American consumes approximately 1,500 gallons of clean water every day.
- Leaks can account for 10-20% of the water bill.
- In New Jersey, ground water recharge replaces 5-10 inches of water per year. On the other hand, water is being consumed at 24-36 inches per year.

Appliance

Shower: 4-7 gal/min

Toilet: 2.5 - 3.5 gal/flush

Washing machine: 45-55 gal/cycle
20-25 gal/cycle

Dishwasher: 12-17 gal/cycle

Faucet: 3-5 gal/min

Alternative

Low-flow shower: 2.5 gal/min

Low-flow toilet: 1.6 gal/flush

Front-loading or water-efficient machine:

Efficient dishwasher: 7-12 gal/cycle

Faucet with aerator: 2-4 gal/min

How you irrigate may also help to conserve water and prevent runoff into waterways. Slow, deep, and efficient application of water, as opposed to frequent, shallow applications, promotes deep root growth and prevents loss to runoff and evaporation.

For efficient watering:

- Avoid sprinklers. Drip irrigation kits, available at your local garden supply store, efficiently direct water at plants' roots.
- Mulch flower, vegetable, tree and shrub beds to help them retain moisture and to keep them healthy. Mulching also increases infiltration, controls weeds, and improves soil conditions.
- Water your yard in the early morning to reduce loss to evaporation. Watering at dusk is the second-best option.
- Plan around weather conditions. Remember that rainfall may sometimes provide sufficient amounts of water for plants.
- Avoid watering on a windy day.