

Planetary Wellbeing

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Cut Your Biggest Indoor Water Consumption Hogs

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Conserving water indoors is a key component in running a green home and saving a little cash on your monthly utility bills. Learning how to save water is simple, and it really does make a big difference. By updating your plumbing, choosing the best energy-efficient appliances, and adopting a few simple green lifestyle changes, you'll enjoy streamlined indoor water consumption that is planet-friendly and much less expensive. Keep reading to hear Hearts' top picks for how to slash indoor water consumption.

Quick Guide: 6 Biggest Water Wasters in the Home

- 200 gallons/day from old, leaky toilets:** Toilets tend to lose water from their flappers (the rubber devices inside of toilet tanks), leaking as much as 200 gallons of water every day.^[i] Old toilets installed before 1992 are very inefficient, wasting 3.61 gallons per flush, or three times that of new, efficient toilets.^[ii]
- 27 gallons/day from dripping faucets and showers:** Leaking toilets, faucets, showerheads, and pipe leaks are the biggest source of water waste in the home – they can add 10,000 of waste gallons to your **water footprint** every single year.^[iii] Every 4,000 drips equals up to a 1/4 of a gallon of wasted water.^[iv]
- 25 gallons/day for showering:** When showering you could be flushing 25 gallons of water down the drain per day with an inefficient showerhead that consumes 2.5 gallons of water per minute.^[v]
- 15 gallons per person/day for washing laundry:** The washing machine is the second biggest water user in the home (second only to the toilet), consuming on average 15 gallons of water per person daily.^[vi]
- 35% more washing dishes by hand vs by machine:** Compared to an efficient fully loaded dishwasher, washing dishes by hand may consume up to 35% more water if you let the water run the entire time.^[vii]
- 1.3 gallons/minute for teeth brushing, shaving, drinking water:** Running the water until it gets cold for drinking or warm for cooking wastes 1.3 gallons per minute. Running the tap for 3 minutes while shaving or brushing your teeth will literally waste almost 4 gallons of water.^[viii]

Take Action! Tricks for How to Save Water and Money

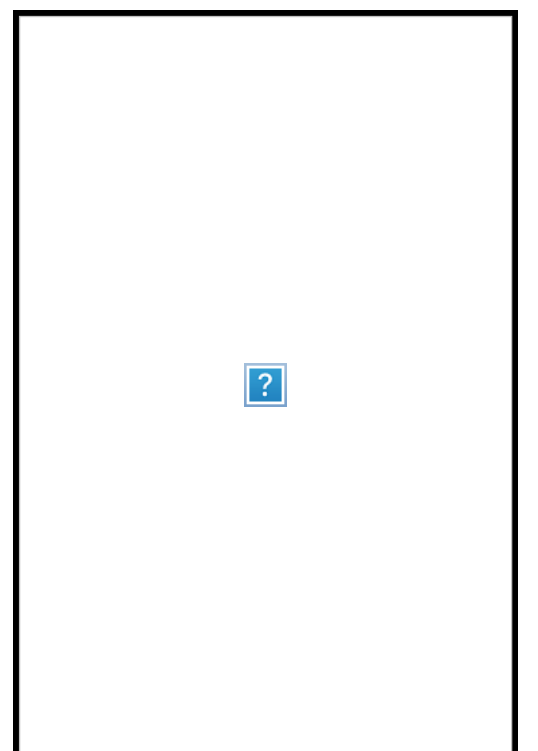
1. **Fix leaky toilets:** Have a plumber check out your toilet to repair or replace its leaking flapper (or any other trouble spots). Paying for a plumber will save you money over the long term. Check out [Find a Plumber](#) to locate a good toilet expert near you.

- DIY toilet fixes: If you're handy, check out the EPA's [Fix a Leak: Toilets](#) for tips and tricks. Just make sure that you understand a repair or replacement procedure thoroughly before taking action, or you may create even more water-wasting toilet problems.

2. **Fix dripping faucets and shower heads:** First, calculate how much water you're wasting by using the USGS's [Drip Calculator: How much water does your leaking faucet waste?](#) Then have your plumber do a check of your shower pipes, shower head and faucets for leaks. Some plumbers offer free check-ups to clients or free quotations for check-up services. [Find a Plumber](#) will also help you locate someone to assess your faucets and showerheads.

- DIY faucet and showerhead fixes: Fix these leaks without expert assistance, again using the EPA advice: [Fix a Leak: Faucets](#) and [Fix a Leak: Showerheads](#), or check out [ConserveH2O.org](#).

3. **Replace water hogs:** Replace old toilets, shower heads faucets, washing machines, and dishwashers with those that conserve water. Find the best options with the EPA's [WaterSense Product Search](#) or look for the WaterSense or ENERGY STAR labels when eco shopping. If you install all WaterSense products in your bathrooms, you could reduce your water consumption by 500 gallons annually.^[ix]



4. **Opt for a front loading washer:** Front load washing machines use 50% less water than top loading models and consume 68% less electricity.^[x] Just be sure your new machine has ENERGY STAR Certified credentials to get the greatest water savings possible.

5. **Replace hand washing with a dishwasher:** An ENERGY STAR Certified dishwasher will use 5,000 gallons less water than comparative dishwashing by hand alone.^[xi] However, to access the water-saving power of your energy-efficient dishwasher, you must use it only when it's fully loaded.

6. **Adopt water saving habits:** It's one thing to update your equipment, you also need to use it efficiently to get the most water-saving benefits.

- **Turn the tap off for brushing and shaving:** Only run the water to wet your brush, and rinse when you're done. This can save as much as 3,000 gallons of water every year.^[xii]
- **Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the fridge:** This way you'll always have cool, refreshing water on hand, and you'll save water, too.
- **Use a five minute shower timer:** A shower timer will make your efficient showerhead even more effective. There are all kinds of models for shower times (check out [Amazon.com's many options](#))— from simple hourglass shower timers to digital shower timers to integrated timers that shut the water off after the time has elapsed!

Dig Deeper: How to Save Water at Home

- Check the official [ENERGY STAR Buyer's Guide](#) to get more information about choosing the perfect ENERGY STAR Certified, water-saving appliances for your home kitchen.
- Use the USGS's [How much is your daily indoor water use?](#) survey to calculate your domestic water consumption. Then discover how much you'll save on utility bills with the [Water Savings Calculator](#) by making some simple home improvements from ConserveH2O.org.
- Explore the [Water Smart House](#) to find out more about where you may be wasting water.
- Test your knowledge of the water cycle with this [Where does the water cycle begin?](#) Quiz.


Images by [Joe Shlabotnik](#) and [Jer Kunz](#)

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