

Tips to Save Water and Money

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Water is a valuable resource. We can help save water and reduce the amount of money we spend on it by making simple changes in our daily lives. One way to reduce our water use is to purchase low-flow plumbing fixtures, such as high-efficiency showerheads, toilets, and faucets. Another way is to be aware of our daily activities and the amount of water we're using.

The top users of water in the home include:

1. Toilets
2. Showers
3. Faucets
4. Washing machines

The following are tips to save both water and money in your daily life.

TOILETS

- **Install a low-flow toilet** if your home does not have one. These may also be called high-efficiency or low-flush toilets depending on the maker.
- **Only use toilets to dispose of human waste and toilet tissue.** All other materials should be placed in the trash.
- **Check for slow leaks by adding food coloring,** such as red, to the water in the tank. If the colored water appears in the toilet bowl, it means there is a leak that needs to be fixed.

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SHOWERS/BATHING

- **Shorten shower times.** A shower uses 2 to 5 gallons of water per minute.
- **Install a low-flow/high-efficiency showerhead.**
- **Use an all-in-one shampoo,** hair conditioner, and body wash to shorten shower times.
- **Wash your hair less frequently.** Try using dry shampoo products between washings.
- **When the shower water is warming up,** catch the water in a bucket or other container and use it to water plants, flush toilets, or for household cleaning.
- **Make baths an occasional treat.** The average bath uses 35 to 50 gallons of water. A 10-minute shower with a low-flow showerhead uses about 25 gallons.



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FAUCETS

- **Keep a pitcher or bottle of drinking water** in the refrigerator. This will avoid running the faucet to get cold water.
- **When running a faucet,** catch the overflow water in a bowl or container and use it to water garden plants or houseplants.
- **When using the dishwasher,** don't use the faucet to rinse food particles from plates and utensils before loading them. Instead, scrape the food into the garbage. Only run the dishwasher when you have a full load.
- **When brushing your teeth,** save water by using these steps:
 1. Wet the toothbrush and turn off the water.
 2. Apply toothpaste and brush your teeth.
 3. Turn on the water to rinse.
- **When shaving,** use a bowl of water to rinse the razor instead of running the faucet.

WASHING MACHINES



- **Buy a washing machine with the Energy Star label.** Energy Star washing machines use about 25% less energy and 33% less water than other types of washing machines.
- **For older machines with manual controls,** adjust your setting based on the size of your washing load:
 - Small load – the load fills 1/4 of the machine
 - Medium load – the load fills 1/2 of the machine
 - Large load – the load fills more than 1/2 the machine
 - Extra-large load – the load fully fills the machine (not available on all machines)
- **Only wash clothing and household laundry when it's needed.**
 - Clothing made of denim, like jeans, can be worn more than once between washings.
 - Bath towels don't need to be washed every day. Hang them to dry after using.
 - Clothing items can often be worn more than once between washes.
- **Use the cotton wash setting** instead of synthetic wash. The synthetic wash setting uses 50% more water than the cotton wash setting.



ADDITIONAL WATER-SAVING TIPS

- **Run swamp coolers** only when people are at home. There's no purpose in cooling an empty house.
- **When cooking**, steam food instead of boiling; it uses less water and is healthier.
- **Avoid using the garbage disposal** whenever possible. Compost food waste or dispose of it in the trash.
- **Use a broom to sweep indoor floors.** Mop only when needed.
- **Dry your clothes on a drying rack or a clothes line.** When you save energy, you also save water because power plants use a lot of water to produce electricity.
- **At restaurants**, only order water if you intend to drink it.
- **Extend times between car washes.** When washing is necessary, use a commercial car wash that uses recirculated water.
- **Use a broom to clean dirty sidewalks** instead of spraying with a garden hose.
- **Install low-flow spray nozzles** on outdoor water hoses.
- **Install a rain barrel** to catch runoff water to use on flowerbeds or gardens.
- **Adjust lawn sprinklers** so they are not watering driveways, sidewalks, or patios. For more landscape water-saving tips, see NMSU Extension Guides H-504, *How to Water Your Lawn* (https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H504.pdf), and H-707, *Landscape Water Conservation: Principles of Xeriscape* (https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H707.pdf).

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