

Conserving water saves money - in many cases, very large amounts of money.

In order to save on water use in your home you need to understand where water is used.

Most people use up to 75 gallons of water each day. During spring and summer months that usage can more than double. Outside, lawn and garden watering and car and bike washing account for most of the water used.

Because such a large amount of the water you consume is used in the bathroom, that's where water conservation efforts need to be focused. You can install a few simple, inexpensive devices in the bathroom that can save water with little or no change in your regular routine.

Toilet dams: These devices reduce the amount of water flowing out of the toilet by up to 25 percent. They do not affect its flushing ability.

Low flow, water-saving shower heads: This piece of plumbing reduces the amount of water flowing through your shower by up to 50 percent, but increases its velocity so the shower feels the same. This also saves hot water.

Faucet aerators: This device restricts the amount of water going through your faucet by up to 50 percent. They add bubbles so the flow appears the same. These can be installed on all of your faucets, not just the ones in your bathroom. Here are some other helpful hints for saving on water usage:

- Repair leaky faucets and toilets. A leaky faucet can waste 20 gallons or more per day. Leaky toilets, even though they are usually silent, can waste hundreds of gallons per day. To find out if your toilet has leaks, put a little food coloring in the tank. If, without flushing, color appears in the bowl, you have a leak that should be repaired. Repairing a faucet is usually as simple as changing an inexpensive washer. Leaky toilets can often be repaired by adjusting the float arm or plunger ball.
- Take short showers instead of baths. A four or five minute shower can use as little as 8 gallons of water, while a bath needs up to 60 gallons.
- Avoid unnecessarily flushing your toilet. Never use it just to dispose of tissue paper.
- Turn off the faucet while you are shaving or brushing your teeth or washing dishes.
- Avoid running water in the shower while you are shampooing or soaping. Newer water-saving shower heads come with a button to shut off the flow without changing the mix of hot and cold water.
- Another simple way to conserve on water is to change the settings on your washing machine for smaller loads instead of leaving it on large loads all the time.

- Many new appliances now offer energy saver options; this is especially true with dish washers and washers. When replacing old appliances look for these energy saving appliances.
- Watering the yard or garden early in the morning or late at night helps to conserve on water usage and is better for the plants. Make sure to water only when necessary instead of every day. Water yards only when they begin to wilt, and remember that to water a 1000 square foot yard effectively can use as much water as you normally consume in one week.