

## 15 Ways to Reduce Your Water Bill

By Eddie Edwards

Did you know that as a nation, we consume 450 billion gallons of water every day? Ninety-seven percent of the Earth's supply is contained in our oceans, and 2% is frozen. We get our water from the 1% that is left, which comes from one of two places: the Earth's surface (rivers, lakes and streams) or from groundwater. So, ask yourself... What have I done today to save water? (*"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little."*) -- Edmund Burke

Following are water-- and energy-- saving ideas to consider. Some are obvious; some unique. However, drop by drop, we should all do what we can to conserve this most valuable resource:

**RESTROOMS, BATHROOMS & KITCHEN--** which accounts for about 75% of the water use in commercial & residential properties.

1. Install a water saving toilet. This will save water every time you flush. **Saves 2½ to 4½ gallons per flush.**

2. Install a "displacement device" which reduces the amount of water your tank will hold. A glass or plastic bottle filled with water works well, but don't use a brick. Small pieces may break off and damage your plumbing. **Saves 1 to 2 gallons per flush.**

3. Check toilets for leaks by dropping dye tablets into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there is a leak that should be repaired. **Saves 200 to 5,000 gallons per month.**

4. Install a low-flow showerhead or a flow restrictor. You'll save money by saving water and the energy used to heat it. **Saves 50% each time or 3 to 4 gallons per minute.**

5. Install "low-flow faucet aerator" on kitchen and bathroom sink faucets. While reducing the flow by 50%, it will actually seem stronger because air is mixed into the water as it leaves the tap. **Saves 1½ to 2½ gallons per minute.**

6. Check faucets for leaks. Leaks can be the biggest single water waster in your home. Most are fixed by simply replacing a washer. **Saves 1,500- 33,000 gallons a month.**

7. Turn your water heater down from 140° to 130° -- hot enough to kill bacteria and still save energy.

### Landscaping

Most established lawns need about 1" of water a week, applied slowly to prevent runoff. This is considerably more effective than shorter, more frequent sprinkling.

8. Avoid over-watering. **Saves 12% of summer water usage or about 50 gallons a week.**

9. Water your lawn long enough for water to seep down to the roots where it is needed. A light sprinkling that sits on the surface simply evaporates. Don't water on a windy day to reduce evaporation. **Saves 200-300 gallons each time.**

10. Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on some grass. If it springs back when you move your foot, it doesn't need water. Water in the early morning or early evening only. In a drought, don't waste water on grass beginning to turn brown. It's dormant and will revive once normal rainfall returns. **Saves 200--300 gallons each time.**

11. Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps. Using a hose wastes hundreds of gallons of water. **Saves Several 100's of gallons each time.**

12. Use drought-resistant plants, which are native to your geographic region, rather than "imported" varieties. **Uses 50% less water.**

13. Set lawn mower blades one notch higher, because longer grass means less evaporation. **Saves 500 -- 1,500 gallons a month.**

14. Cover your swimming pool when it is not being used -- this will reduce evaporation. **Saves 1,300 gallons a month.**

15. Use your meter to detect leaks. If there is a leak in your system you could be wasting thousands of gallons of water every day. **Saves 1,000's of gallons daily.**

Saving water isn't just something to do during a drought, when the resource is especially scarce. Water conservation also reduces the amount of chemicals and energy used in water and sewage treatment. It reduces the amount of energy needed to get the water to your facility or heat the water once it's there. Heating water is generally the second largest energy user in a residential building which amounts to a large expense over time. And finally, it reduces the sewer service charges associated with water usage, whether the water is used productively or simply wasted.

Conservation, it turns out, does not mean "freezing in the dark," as Ronald Reagan once said. Conservation can be accomplished by simple, cost effective measures that require little change in life-style.

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water."

-- Poor Richard's Almanac.

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