



# WATER CONSERVATION T

## *Household Hints to Conserve Water and Money*

### **Why Conserve?**

Water conservation is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to reduce our demand for water. This stretches our supplies farther, and protects places like Mono Lake. For example, the city of Los Angeles has grown by 1 million people since the 1970s, but still uses the same amount of water. Using less water also puts less pressure on our sewage treatment facilities, and uses less energy for water heating.

### **The Water and Energy Connection**

Saving water also saves energy. 6.5% of the energy used in the state of California is for pumping and treating water--in fact, pumping water south (and uphill) in the State Water Project accounts for 2-3% of all the electricity used in the state. And for your personal energy bill, using less hot water saves on water heating. On the flip side, saving energy and using alternative energy saves water--electricity production from fossil fuels and nuclear energy is responsible for 39% of all freshwater withdrawals in the nation.

### **What Can I Do?**

There are many effective ways to conserve water in and around your home. Look through this list for ways that will work for you. Many of these tips were gleaned from materials published by the [Metropolitan Water District of Southern California](#) (MWD). Indoor savings are based on a family of two adults and one child.

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## **Ten ways that will save the most:**

1. Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on your grass. If it springs back, when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. So set your sprinklers for more days in between watering. **Saves 750-1,500 gallons** per month. Better yet, especially in times of drought, water with a hose.



2. Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints. **Saves 20 gallons** per day for every leak stopped.
3. Don't run the hose while washing your car. Use a bucket of water and a quick hose rinse at the end. **Saves 150 gallons** each time. For a two-car family that's **up to 1,200 gallons** a month.

4. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors. **Saves 500 to 800 gallons** per month.
5. Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher. **Saves 300 to 800 gallons** per month.
6. Shorten your showers. Even a one or two minute reduction can **save up to 700 gallons** per month.
7. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks. **Saves 150 gallons** or more each time. At once a week, that's **more than 600 gallons** a month.
8. Don't use your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket. **Saves 400 to 600 gallons** per month.
9. Capture tap water. While you wait for hot water to come down the pipes, catch the flow in a watering can to use later on house plants or your garden. **Saves 200 to 300 gallons** per month.
10. Don't water the sidewalks, driveway or gutter. Adjust your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden where it belongs--and only there. **Saves 500 gallons** per month.



### **In the bathroom:**

1. Put a plastic bottle or a plastic bag weighted with pebbles and filled with water in your toilet tank. Displacing water in this manner allows you to use less water with each flush. **Saves 5 to 10 gallons** a day. That's **up to 300 gallons** a month, even more for large families. Better yet, for even greater savings, replace your water-guzzling five to seven gallon a flush toilet with a one and a half gallon, ultra-low flush model.
2. If you're taking a shower, don't waste cold water while waiting for hot water to reach the shower head. Catch that water in a container to use on your outside plants or to flush your toilet. **Saves 200 to 300 gallons** a month.



3. Check toilet for leaks. Put dye tablets or food coloring into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's a leak that should be repaired. **Saves 400 gallons** a month.

4. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. **Saves three gallons** each day.

5. Turn off the water while shaving. Fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of water to rinse your razor. **Saves three gallons** each day.



### **In the kitchen:**

1. If you wash dishes by hand--and that's the best way--don't leave the water running for rinsing. If you have two sinks, fill one with rinse water. If you only have one sink, use a spray device or short blasts instead of letting the water run. **Saves 200 to 500 gallons** a month.

2. When washing dishes by hand, use the least amount of detergent possible. This minimizes rinse water needed. **Saves 50 to 150 gallons** a month.

3. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This beats the wasteful habit of running tap water to cool it for drinking. **Saves 200 to 300 gallons** a month.

4. Don't defrost frozen foods with running water. Either plan ahead by placing frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or defrost them in the microwave. **Saves 50 to 150 gallons** a month.

5. Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables. Rinse them in a filled sink or pan. **Saves 150 to 250 gallons** a month.

6. Use the garbage disposal less and the garbage more (even better--compost!). **Saves 50 to 150 gallons** a month.



### **Outside:**



1. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Chunks of bark, peat moss or gravel slows down evaporation. **Saves 750 to 1,500 gallons** a month.

2. If you have a pool, use a pool cover to cut down on evaporation. It will also keep your pool cleaner and reduce the need to add chemicals. **Saves 1,000 gallons** a month.

3. Water during the cool parts of the day. Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus. **Saves 300 gallons.**

4. Don't water the lawn on windy days. There's too much evaporation. **Can waste up to 300 gallons** in one watering.

5. Cut down watering on cool and overcast days and don't water in the rain. Adjust or deactivate automatic sprinklers. **Can save up to 300 gallons** each time.

6. Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation. **Saves 500 to 1,500 gallons** each month.

7. Have an evaporative air conditioner? Direct the water drain line to a flower bed, tree base, or lawn.

8. Drive your car onto a lawn to wash it. Rinse water can help water the grass.

9. Tell your children not to play with the garden hose. **Saves 10 gallons** a minute.

10. If you allow your children to play in the sprinklers, make sure it's only when you're watering the yard--if it's not too cool at that time of day.

11. Xeriscape--replace your lawn and high-water-using trees and plants with less thirsty ones. But do this only in wet years. Even drought resistant plantings take extra water to get them going. That'll **save 750 to 1,500 gallons** a month.

12. When taking your car to a car wash--a good idea for saving water--be sure it's one of the many that recycles its wash water.

13. Dispose of hazardous materials properly! One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water, effectively eliminating that much water from our water supply. Contact your city or county for [proper waste disposal options](#). And [don't flush prescription medications](#)!



## While Shopping

(Information below from [\*Last Oasis\*, by Sandra Postel](#), and [\*California Water Facts\*, by the Water Education Foundation](#))

Water is an essential ingredient in most manufacturing operations. Especially for those 1 billion of us in the high-consumption class, cutting down on our purchases of material things--from clothes and shoes to paper and appliances--**conserves and protects water supplies as effectively as installing a low-flush toilet does.** As with so many natural resources, as long as prices in the marketplace fail to reflect full social and ecological costs, voluntary changes in consumption patterns will play an important role in the quest for sustainability.

- We rarely think about water when we see an automobile, for example, but producing a typical U.S. car requires more than 50 times its weight in water (39,090 gallons)! Choosing a fuel-efficient model will help--it takes 44 gallons of water to refine one gallon of crude oil.
- A kilogram (2.2 lbs) of hamburger or steak produced by a typical California beef cattle operation, for instance, uses some 20,500 liters (5,400 gal.) of water.
- Producing 1 serving (8 oz.) of chicken requires 330 gallons of water.
- Growing one cotton T-shirt requires 256 gallons of water (source: *The King of California*, by Arax and Wartzman)
- Producing 1 serving (8 fl. oz.) of milk requires 48 gallons of water.
- Producing 1 serving (2 oz.) of pasta requires 36 gallons of water.
- Producing 1 serving (4.6 oz.) of oranges requires 14 gallons of water.
- Producing 1 serving (4.3 oz.) of tomatoes requires 8 gallons of water.