












Saving Water



Ouch! Just received the latest water bill and it hurts? Know the feeling? Well, here are a few painless tips that might help!

-  You didn't finish that big glass of water you had by the bed in case you got thirsty in the night? How about taking it to brush your teeth in the morning, or back to the kitchen and popping it into the kettle for your morning cuppa?
-  When you get home from a day out, you can do the same with the water left in that bottle you carried with you while enjoying the sun and fresh air. Or use it to water your precious houseplants, or maybe save it to clean your teeth before bed!
-  And while you're at it, remember to only fill the kettle with enough water for the number of cups you're making (some kettles can help you out here with special cup measurement gauges – look for power-saving temperature controlled ones too, and save yourself some more pennies!).
-  What do you do with the bowl of water you used for washing up or cleaning vegetables, etc? Well, here's one idea – how about saving it to flush the loo?
-  Run your washing machine only on full loads, or choose a short economy cycle. And when you finally need to buy a new machine, look for one that uses low temperatures and less water – this will also save you pounds off your energy bill.
-  Oh, by the way, here's how I do the washing-up (as taught by my mum when we were spending our summer holidays in a secluded chalet in the mountains): put a clean washbowl in your sink. Pour in a little bit of warm water – you can use that tiny bit of water that was boiled in your kettle and didn't make it into your cuppa! Add a little squirt of washing-up liquid. Now, putting more washing-up liquid in **won't** clean better – just a little 'elbow-grease' will do the trick! Start by washing the cleanest dishes. Rinse them quickly by running them under the tap over the bowl, remembering to turn it off between uses. I usually start with glasses and cups/mugs, then crockery, then cutlery, then pots and pans. If you don't have a washbowl to hand, what about using that huge pot you usually use to cook the spaghetti in?
-  In the bathroom, do you remember to turn the taps/shower off whilst you soap your hands and body or brush your teeth? You'd be amazed how much water can be saved! If you have a power shower though, then make it a quick one. (Just as an example, you can use between 25 and 40 litres of water in a normal shower, a bath can use an average of 100 litres, but a power shower can consume **even more!**)
-  Speaking of showers, here's another idea: when I visited India, we used to stand in a bigish tub while showering, which harvested the water that had barely touched our bodies. This was then used to flush the loo. Clever, huh?
-  Do you have an old-fashioned or water-thirsty loo? Did you know they can use nine litres or more per flush? (New loos use just six!) Why not save some of that water by hunting out a Hippo or a Hog to fit in your cistern!*
-  Or another controversial idea: if you have to nip out of bed at night for a quick wee and you don't want to wake the whole household, why not just leave it unflushed till the morning? We won't tell if you don't!
-  Does your cheeky monkey know that taps and switches aren't to be played with? Yes, that's right, we mean **you**, little one!

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🗨️ If you don't have a water meter, then you might want to consider having one installed. It will help you keep tabs on your family's water use if you check it regularly. Should you suspect there is a leak, you could try taking readings in rapid succession.

Now for a little piece of a dream: aboard sailing ships, the taps are usually of the press/pull for water kind. This means that the moment you stop pressing/pulling, the flow stops. In fact, you'll find there are many water-saving appliances available:

- 🗨️ Nifty spray nozzles for taps (it feels like it's using the same amount of water as a conventional tap, but it actually only uses half as much!).
- 🗨️ For 'techie' types there are tap controls that automatically switch water off after a pre-determined time, or sensors that detect when your hand is underneath the tap and switch it on.

So try looking out for these, plus the loads of other devices available to help you be both greener and more energy efficient, which in turn saves you money!

And finally:

If you have a drip, remember to get those leaking taps fixed!

Most of these inspiring ideas, for which we give our thanks, have been borrowed from the following websites:

American website with a fantastic and comprehensive list of tips for everyone: www.h2ouse.org

Information on how to save water from the Environmental Information Exchange (EIE), a partnership which provides small and medium-sized businesses in the Oxfordshire region with information and support for resolving environmental concerns www.brookes.ac.uk/eie/qwatersave.htm

South West Water: this local water supplier is working with its customers to use water efficiently and safely www.swwater.co.uk

Don't forget to check out your local water supplier's website and speak to your plumber about the more technical tips above.

*A Hippo (or Hog) is a special bag that fits inside your cistern and reduces the amount of water per flush. Speak to your local water supplier for more information about getting one.