



Sharing what we know... Sheet : Reducing Water Use

The average domestic use of water in the UK is 150 litres per person per day, but it is easy to reduce this to 70-80 litres per day.

B

Behaviour changes, at little or no cost

- Taps run at between 5 and 20 litres per minute, so turn the tap off while brushing your teeth, avoid rinsing vegetables under a running tap, and so on.
- Turn the shower flow off when not needed – e.g. when using shampoo/soap.
- Wash your hands under a cold tap rather than running the hot tap until it is warm.
- Use a washing bowl rather than filling a large sink, and use as little hot water as is needed each time.
- Whenever possible, wait for a full load in the washing machine or dishwasher, rather than using half-load cycles (these can use three-quarters as much energy and water as a full wash).
- Gradually make changes in your garden to reduce how much watering it needs.
- In some households, not flushing the toilet every time after urinating may be OK.

Water saving gadgets and technical fixes

- Make sure all your hot pipe runs are insulated.
- Fix leaking taps by replacing washers, because a slight drip can waste 30 litres per day. Tap & ball valve washers are cheap and easy to fix.
- Many water companies supply free aerators you can fit to existing taps to reduce flow and save water. Check with your water company for this or other offers.
- For older toilets that use about 9 litres (2 gallons) or more, add a 'cistern displacement device' to reduce flush volume. This could be an expanding bag (often available free from your water company) or a plastic bottle filled with water. Avoid using a brick because these can crumble and cause problems. Check the device/bottle does not obstruct the mechanism, and the toilet still flushes OK with the reduced volume.
- Some toilets could have a new siphon unit or flush lever added to give low flush options.
- Check the flow rate of your shower with a container and stopwatch, and consider reducing the flow rate if appropriate. Although many showers will use less water than a bath, some can use quite a bit more. Power showers or old mixer showers can have a high flow of about 20 litres per minute. A flow restrictor or modern shower head can reduce this to 5 or 6 litres per minute and still perform well. Flow restrictors are sometimes free from your water company.

A few higher cost options

- Install a new low flush toilet.
- When looking at the plumbing in more depth, minimise 'dead legs' in pipes.
- Consider alternative toilets, such as composting loo or a waterless urinal.

Further information

To help you find water efficient products there is an EU energy label for water efficiency. You can read more about this at <http://www.europeanwaterlabel.eu>. That website includes a 'find a product' section, through which you can search for those that have the best rating.

Or you could ask your local suppliers which products they supply with an 'A' rating on that water efficiency label.