General advice
fact sheet 3

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SevernWye
energy agency

A guide to reducing your water use



SevernWye energy advice

Why save water?

With each household in the UK using an average 360 litres of water per day*[1], we can all take some simple actions to reduce our water use.

Of course, if you are on a water meter, this will help to reduce your water bills. Even if you are not on a water meter, reducing your water use can help to reduce your energy bills and protect the environment.

As much as 25% of a household's energy bill may be from heating water for showers, baths and hot taps*[2], costing up to £140 per year*[3].

Reducing your water use will also help to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions that arise as a result of water being treated, pumped and heated.

This leaflet will provide you with some simple tips to reduce water use in different areas of your home.



References

*For details of the references used in this document please scan the QR image, visit **www.warmandwell.co.uk/warm-and-well/advice-materials.html** or call us on **0800 500 30 76**

Saving water in the bathroom

Taps

- **Turn off the tap whilst brushing your teeth.**

  A running tap wastes over 6 litres of water per minute*[4]. This means a typical household could be wasting up to 4,000 litres per year*[5].

- **Fit aerators to taps.**

  Aerators are simple devices that fit into the end of your taps. They mix air in with the water meaning you get the same power using less water.

- **Fix dripping taps.**

  A dripping tap can waste up to 5,500 litres per year*[6].

Remember to turn the tap off whilst brushing your teeth.





Fix aerators to your taps and get the same power using less water

Baths and showers

- **Have a shower rather than a bath.**

  A typical bath will use 80 litres of water whereas a short efficient shower can use as little as a third of this*[7]. The Energy Saving Trust estimate that if everyone in a family of four replaced one bath a week with a five minute shower, this could save up to £20 a year on a family's gas bills and £85 a year on their water bills (for those that have a water meter)*[8].

  However, with showers using anything between 6 and 45 litres of water per minute*[9], some power showers may actually use more than a bath if you are showering for long periods of time.

- **Run your bath an inch lower.**

  Where you do have baths, running your bath an inch lower could save 5 litres of water every time*[10].

- **Re-use your bathwater.**

  Used bathwater can be used to water your garden. However, this should be done immediately afterwards and it should not be used on fruit and vegetables.



If you do have a bath, try filling it an inch lower. This could save 5 litres every time



Having a shower usually uses less water than having a bath

- **Be quicker in the shower.**

  The recommended shower time is four minutes and you can obtain shower timers to help with this (see section on water saving products).

  It is estimated that if everyone in a family of four reduced their shower time by two minutes the family would save approximately 10,000 litres of water per year*[11].

- **Fit an aerating showerhead.**

  An aerating showerhead mixes air in with the water to reduce the amount of water used without reducing the pressure. It is estimated that this could save a family of four up to £65 on their gas bills and £100 on their water bills (for those that have a meter)*[12]. However, these should not be fitted to electric showers as they could potentially damage the shower unit.

Toilets

- **Fit a water Hippo or save-a-flush device.**

  These reduce the amount of water that is used every time the toilet is flushed. They typically save 1.2 litres per flush*[13]. Approximately 30% of the water used by an average home is used for flushing toilets and it is estimated that fitting save-a-flush devices could save the average family 5,000 litres per year*[14]. Save-a-flush devices are very easy to install and are available free of charge from most water companies (see section on water saving products).

  However, they are not required for modern dual flush toilets and may actually prevent them from working effectively. Dual flush toilets typically use just 4-6 litres per flush compared to up to 13 litres for older style single flush toilets*[15].

- **Check your toilet cistern isn't leaking.**

  Most new cisterns overflow into the toilet bowl meaning that they can be leaking without you realising. You can add some food colouring into the cistern and if any of this enters the toilet bowl without flushing you will know that it is leaking.



Fit a Hippo (left) or save-a-flush device (right) to save 1.2 litres every time you flush



Dual flush systems are great for saving water and don't need to have save-a-flush devices installed

Saving water in the garden

- **Avoid watering your lawn.**
  Even when a lawn becomes brown and dry it will quickly bounce back once it rains.
- **Get a water butt.**
  Collect rainwater in a water butt to use for watering your garden.
- **Use a watering can rather than a hosepipe or sprinkler.**
  A hosepipe can use 1,000 litres of water per hour – more than a family of four typically uses in a whole day*[16].
- **Water plants early in the morning or in the evening.**
  This will reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation.
- **Use a mulch layer.**
  A layer of mulch on top of the soil will also help to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation.
- **Incorporate an area of drought resistant plants.**
  This will reduce the amount of water needed for watering.
- **Check the weather forecast before watering.**
  Avoid watering your plants if rain is on its way.



Use a watering can rather than a hosepipe or sprinkler



Use water from a water butt to water your plants

Saving water in the kitchen

Appliances

- **Purchase appliances with low water consumption.**
  When purchasing water-consuming devices, such as dishwashers and washing machines, check the label to see how much water they use and look for products with a Waterwise Recommended label.
- **Wait until you have a full load.**
  Make sure you have a full load and, if not, ensure you use a half load setting where available.
- **Avoid pre-rinsing dishes.**
  Simply scraping them off will be fine – the dishwasher will take care of the rest.





Wait until you have a full load before putting washing machines and dishwashers on

When purchasing appliances look out for the Waterwise recommended label

Taps

- **Fit aerators to taps.**

  Aerators are simple devices that fit into the end of your taps. They mix air in with the water meaning you get the same power using less water.

- **Avoid leaving water running.**
  - Use a bowl of water for washing vegetables or rinsing utensils rather than running a tap.

    You can also use the left-over water for watering your plants.
  - Avoid wasting running water from hot taps whilst you are waiting for it to warm up.
  - Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge to save having to wait for a tap to run cold.



Wash fruit and veg in a sink or bowl rather than under running water

FREE water saving products

Most water companies provide free water saving devices to their customers. The table overleaf shows the devices available to customers of the main water companies in the areas we serve. If your water company is not shown, check their website or give them a quick ring as they are keen to help you reduce your water consumption.

Company	FREE water-saving products available	Contact
Severn Trent Water	• Save-a-flush devices • Four minute shower timer • Aerators for taps and showers • Toilet leak detection tablets • Water saving gel for your garden	**www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk/severntrent/free-water-saving-products** 0345 371 0728
Welsh Water	• Up to 3 save-a-flush devices per household	**www.dwrcymru.com/en/Contact-Us/Hippo-Bag-Request.aspx** 0800 052 0145
Bristol Water	• Water-saving shower head • Aerators for taps and showers • Garden hose spray gun • Save-a-flush devices • Four minute shower timer • Child's tooth brushing timer • Water saving gel for the garden • Dual flush labels	**www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk/bristol/free-water-saving-products** 0345 702 3797
Wessex Water	• Aerators for taps • Water saving shower heads • Four minute shower timer • Save-a-flush devices • Garden hose spray gun • Water saving gel for the garden • Child's tooth brushing timer	**www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk/wessex/free-water-saving-products** 0345 371 0728
United Utilities	• Aerators for taps and showers • Save-a-flush devices • Four minute shower timer • Child's tooth brushing timer	**www.unitedutilities.com/shop-and-save.aspx** 0345 371 0728

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Severn Wye Energy Agency is a not-for-profit company and charity (charity no. 1083812), established in 1999 under the European Commission SAVE programme to promote sustainable energy and affordable warmth through partnership, awareness-raising, innovation and strategic action.

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Warm &Well

a fitter home for a healthy future

Warm and Well has been running for over 10 years and has helped thousands of people tackle their energy bills and make their homes more comfortable. Our friendly advisors provide free advice on reducing energy use and on the grants and incentives available.

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www.warmandwell.co.uk

This fact sheet is part of a series that includes information on heating and hot water, home power generation, lighting and electrical appliances and reducing heat loss.
The full series of fact sheets can be found at:
www.warmandwell.co.uk

Large print copies are available on request

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