



South Staffs Water



# Tips to help save water



## Use water wisely, don't waste it

The best way to reduce the amount of water we use is if we work together. Whatever your reasons for wanting to reduce waste, we can help you by providing support and advice.

If you have a water meter, you'll want to reduce how much water you waste to keep your bills as low as possible. If you don't have a water meter, you may want to reduce waste to minimise the impact on the environment.

Using water more efficiently does two things. It reduces the amount of water wasted and helps to reduce the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. It can also save you money on your utility bills. Reducing the amount of hot water you use will save you the most money. Spending less time in the shower or reducing the amount of water in your bath reduces how much hot water you use. So as well as saving the energy used to get the water, you also save the energy you use to heat the water in your home.

Reducing the amount of water you use is easy. You can do it without affecting your health and hygiene by making a number of small lifestyle changes.

### How do we use water?

Many people do not know how much water we use in our everyday lives. We use water:



In the bathroom



In the kitchen



When we wash our cars



In the garden



If the pipes in our houses or gardens are leaking

# Top 10 water-saving tips

## In the bathroom



**Save water when you flush the toilet.** The average toilet is flushed five times each day per person in the household. Each flush uses about nine litres, therefore each day 180 litres of water is used by an average family of four. New toilets are designed to use less water when you flush. In older toilets (that is, those manufactured before the year 2000), you can reduce the amount of water you use when you flush by fitting a **'Hippo'** or a **'Save-a-flush' bag**, which can save 1.2 litres each time, equalling a saving of 6 litres per person each day.



**Have a shower instead of a bath.** A full bath uses around 80 litres of water, while a four-minute shower uses about 35 litres in a gravity-fed shower. So, as long as you don't take too long in the shower, you can save water and time. Remember, running the shower before you step in also wastes water and energy. Average water and gas use when showering accounts for one-quarter of household water use. The **Shower Save** can save you money on your utility bills, even if you're not on a water meter. The simple devices 'aerates' the shower stream and regulates at a constant eight litres per minute.



**Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.** If you use a glass of water to rinse your mouth instead of running the tap you can save around four litres of water each time you brush your teeth. We have a very simple but effective way of reminding us to do this. Check out our **'Toothy timer'**, which can save up to 12 litres every time you brush by turning off the tap in between rinses. Brushing twice a day for the recommended two minutes (British Dental Health Foundation) soon adds up to a saving of around £20 per person per year by turning off the tap.



**Use the plug in your wash basin.** Using the plug in your wash basin can save around two litres of water each time you wash your hands or face - water that goes from the tap straight down the drain is a waste. We supply a handy **'Universal Sink Plug'** made from silicone, designed to provide a water-tight seal to block the drain hole for kitchen/bathroom basins.

## In the kitchen



### **Choose water efficient washing machines and dishwashers.**

Washing machines and dishwashing are some of the largest users of water in the home, so when buying new machines choose water-efficient models. You will also save money on your energy bills as new machines are more energy efficient. Wait until you have a full load before switching on your machine. This uses less water than two half-loads.



### **Use a bowl when preparing fresh vegetables instead of rinsing them under the tap.**

You can save around five litres of water each time. And you can re-use the water in the garden. Also, using a bowl when you do the washing up rather than rinsing plates and dishes under a running tap saves around five litres of water each time. Steaming vegetables also saves on water as well as the number of pans that need to be washed. It is also a great way of keeping more of the vitamins in the vegetables.



### **Fill a jug of water and put it in the fridge for when you want a cool drink.**

Running the tap until the water is cold enough to drink wastes a lot of water. Also, when using your kettle, only fill it with the water you need.

## When we wash our cars



### **Use a bucket rather than a hosepipe to wash your car.**

Using a hosepipe or a pressure washer to wash your car uses a lot of water. Much of this falls on the ground and is wasted. But if you must use a hosepipe, make sure it's fitted with a trigger nozzle that stops the flow of water when it is released. There is a wide range of 'waterless' car cleaning products on the market and this helps reduce the amount of water used for washing cars.

## In the garden

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**Save water in the garden.** There are a number of ways you can do this. For example:

- you can collect rainwater in a water butt to use for garden watering
- use a watering can rather than a hosepipe, and direct the water straight to the roots of your plants, where it will be most effective
- don't water your plants or lawns in direct sunlight. As well as the risk of damaging your plants, you'll also lose a lot of water through evaporation, so your plants and lawns won't benefit from it anyway
- use mulch to cover the soil in your flower beds. The mulch holds water, which helps to keep your soil moist. It also reduces the effects of evaporation, so you need less water to keep your plants healthy.

Remember that if you wish to use a garden sprinkler or leave a hose unattended, then you must have a water meter fitted.

When thinking about what to plant remember that shrubs do better in dry periods than bedding plants, they require less attention and they last longer. Why not think about planting a deciduous tree to give that extra bit of shade and a great natural screening effect as well.



## If the pipes in our houses or gardens are leaking

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**Stop any dripping taps or leaking overflows.** Dripping taps and leaking overflows can waste a lot of water, especially if they are just left to drip for a long time. If you have any dripping taps, replace the washers immediately. If your overflow is leaking, adjust the ball valves. If that doesn't stop the leak, then replace the washers in the ball valves.

Beware the leaky loo! Some more modern toilets can leak from the cistern into the toilet and go unnoticed causing a significant loss of water. Check out our **leaky loo strips**; they're easy to fit and could save a lot of water. Wait for half an hour after the last flush, wipe the back of the pan dry with toilet tissue, peel back the adhesive cover and place the strip horizontally across the back of the pan just above the overflow hole. Leave it a while and make sure the toilet isn't flushed, then you'll be able to see if your cistern has a leak.

## Further information

### Do you want to claim free water-saving devices?

Find out how to apply for a free water-saving device by visiting our website.

### Have you considered having a water meter fitted?

If you choose to have a free water meter fitted, you can potentially reduce your water bill. You'll also help the environment. Your future water bills will be based on how much water you actually use. If you don't see any benefits within two years of the meter being fitted, you can go back to your previous way of being charged.

### What else can you do to be water wise?

Encourage your family, friends and colleagues to be more water-efficient. Use the information on our website. If you want more information on saving water, see the Waterwise website at: [www.waterwise.org.uk](http://www.waterwise.org.uk).

### Do you or your children wish to learn more about water?

See our website for games and educational information about water.

### **What should you do if you spot a leak from our water mains?**

If you spot a leak, don't assume someone else has reported it. We'd rather have lots of people tell us about the same leak than have nobody report it at all. Call our free leak line on **0800 24 33 52** or visit our website.

### **What should you do if you have a leak in your home?**

It's advisable to check your stop tap regularly to make sure it isn't leaking and that it will operate, if you need to use it in an emergency. Make sure everyone in your home knows where the stop tap is and keep the name and phone number of a local plumber handy. If you think you have a leak, get it checked and repaired straight away. As well as saving water, you may avoid the leak damaging your property.

### **How can you prevent burst pipes?**

Some pipes can freeze during very cold weather and burst when the ice in them thaws. Good insulation, especially in unheated parts of your home, such as the loft, reduces this risk.

### **Do you wish to learn more about us?**

Find out what we do to provide your drinking water and the services we offer at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).



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