

Tips for the sustainable domestic use of water.

Behaviour change:

In the kitchen:

- 💧 Always use a plugged sink or bowl. Don't let the tap run.
- 💧 Soak pots & pans. Don't let the water run while you scrape them clean.
- 💧 Fill a jug with tap water and keep it in your fridge.
Don't leave the cold tap running for the water to run cold before you fill your glass.
- 💧 Put only as much water as you need in your kettle. This will reduce your electricity bill too.
- 💧 A fully packed dishwasher using an economy cycle uses less water than washing by hand¹.
- 💧 Read up about 'virtual water' and start eating and drinking wisely.

In the bathroom:

- 💧 Take a shorter shower. Showers can use anything between 6 and 45 litres per minute².
- 💧 Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth – this can save 6 litres of water per minute³.
- 💧 Place bricks or water filled soda bottles in the toilet cistern.
This alone can save 20% of your total water consumption⁴.
- 💧 Shower, instead of bathing and save up to 400 litres a week⁵.
- 💧 Share a shower with your partner.
- 💧 Run the hot tap into a bucket to get the water to the shower warm, and avoid wasting that 'plug' of cold water in the pipes.
- 💧 Shower in a basin and turn off the water while you soap yourself.
Recycle the 'grey' water to flush the loo.
- 💧 If you have to bath, don't fill up the tub.
Taking a bath can use between 80 and 150 litres of water per bath⁶.
- 💧 Bathe young children together.
- 💧 Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily ("if it's yellow, let it mellow, if it's brown, flush it down"). Flush with grey water where possible.
- 💧 Dispose of tissues, insects and other waste in the trash rather than the toilet.

In the laundry:

- 💧 Always use full loads in your washing machine – this cuts out unnecessary washes in between.
- 💧 Read your appliance (washing machine & dishwasher) manuals for water saving cycles.
- 💧 Cut back on washing your towels and linen as frequently.

Around the house:

- 💧 Check your toilets for leaks:
Put a little food colouring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the colour begins to appear in the bowl within 30 minutes, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately.
- 💧 Create motivational notes and place them at strategic points in your house to remind family and friends to conserve water.
- 💧 Read your water bill, set your household a target, find and read your water meter, and motivate your family to work towards the target.
- 💧 Know where the tap to your main water supply is located and make sure you can shut it off.
Were a pipe to burst, this could save litres of water and prevent damage.

¹ <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/9-tricks-save-tons-water>

² * <http://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/water-saving-tips>

³ * <http://www.waterwise.org.uk/pages/faqs.html>

⁴ <https://www.dwa.gov.za/Drought/docs/water-saving-tips-english.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.dwa.gov.za/Drought/docs/water-saving-tips-english.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.dwa.gov.za/Drought/docs/water-saving-tips-english.pdf>



- 💧 When ice cubes are left over from your drink, don't throw them out, pour them on a potplant.

In the garden:

- 💧 Water your garden with a watering can rather than a hosepipe. A hosepipe can use 1,000 litres of water an hour⁷.
- 💧 Mulching your plants (with bark chippings, heavy compost or straw) and watering when it is cool and not windy will reduce evaporation and save water.
- 💧 Backwash your pool into a drum and allow the dirt to settle before reusing all but the very bottom water in the drum.
- 💧 Use a bucket rather than a hose to wash your car. If you have to use a hose, use a sprayer that can be turned off in-between spraying the car. A hosepipe can use 1,000 litres of water an hour⁸.
- 💧 Do not pour paint and chemicals down the drain – this can affect the recycling of water.
- 💧 Keep toxic insecticides and oil away from water sources and streams. The underground aquifer is our last resource of water - protect it.
- 💧 Always water your plants during the early morning hours or in the evening, when temperatures are cooler. Between 10h00 and 15h00 one can lose up to 90% of water to evaporation⁹.
- 💧 Don't water when it is windy. Wind results in increased evaporation.
- 💧 Plant waterwise plants. Ask your nurseryman for advice on what plants are best.
- 💧 Sweep outside areas instead of hosing with water.
- 💧 Learn about water-wise gardening.
- 💧 Check your pool for leaks, especially if it is covered and the level still drops.

At the shops:

- 💧 Avoid buying bottled water. If need be, invest in a water filter to filter the tap water. 1 litre of bottled water can take up to 3 litres to manufacture¹⁰.
- 💧 Use eco-friendly soaps and cleaning products.
- 💧 Support hotels, restaurants, and businesses that are clearly making an effort to conserve water.
- 💧 Buy one less t-shirt and save 2,700 litres of water.¹¹ Make yourself aware of 'virtual water'.

Out and about:

- 💧 Report public water leaks to the Municipality. (Cape Town: 0860 103 089, SMS 31373, or email watertoc@capetown.gov.za with the issue & address)
- 💧 Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- 💧 Share water saving tips with your social media contacts.
- 💧 Motivate water-wasters. This doesn't have to be confrontational if handled in the right way.
- 💧 Report those willfully ignoring water restrictions. (Cape Town: 0860 103 089, SMS 31373, or email watertoc@capetown.gov.za with the issue & address)
- 💧 Ask your employer to encourage water savings among employees, customers and suppliers.

DIY

In the kitchen:

- 💧 Install aerators and low flow taps.

In the bathroom:

- 💧 Install aerators and low flow taps.
- 💧 Install a low-flow shower-head.

⁷ * <http://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/water-saving-tips>

⁸ <http://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/water-saving-tips>

⁹ <http://www.rainharvest.co.za/2011/03/south-africa-is-a-water-scarce-country/>

¹⁰ <http://pacinst.org/publication/bottled-water-and-energy-a-fact-sheet/>

¹¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/27/cottons-water-footprint-world-wildlife-fund_n_2506076.html



- 💧 Collect "grey water" - from baths, washing machines & other safe sources - to flush your toilet.

In the laundry:

- 💧 Switch to a water-efficient washing machine.

Around the house:

- 💧 Fix dripping taps or toilets. A dripping tap can waste 15 litres of water a day¹².
- 💧 Invest in taps that turn themselves off.
- 💧 Use low-flow showerheads, dual-flush toilet mechanisms and water-efficient washing machines.

In the garden:

- 💧 Catch rainwater to water your plants, clean your car and wash your windows.
- 💧 Divert your bath and basin outlets (grey-water) onto your lawn or garden.
- 💧 Invest in a pool cover to reduce evaporation.
- 💧 Invest in drip irrigation for your plants.
- 💧 Remove invasive alien plants on your property.

At the shops:

- 💧 Invest in water-efficient goods (showerheads, taps, toilets, washing machines, dishwashers) when you need to replace household products.

Professional Interventions

In the kitchen:

- 💧 If you don't like drinking tap water, install an under-sink filtration system rather than buying bottled water. 1 litre of bottled water can take up to 3 litres to manufacture¹³.
- 💧 Install a Grey Water system and route the bath, basin and sink outlets into it.

In the bathroom:

- 💧 Install a dual-flush or low-flush toilet.
- 💧 Insulate hot water pipes to reduce time waiting for water to heat up.
- 💧 Install an instant water heater for immediate hot water.

Around the house:

- 💧 Install a water meter. When you're paying your utility provider for exactly how much water you use, laid out in an itemised bill, there's an incentive to waste less of the stuff.

In the garden:

- 💧 Invest in a grey-water system to fill the toilets or water the garden.
- 💧 Invest in a well-point or borehole to supply your non-potable water needs.
- 💧 Consider replacing lawn that is not used often with gravel, stones or indigenous plants.
- 💧 Replace water-hungry grass types (like kikuyu) with hardier types (like buffalo or kweek).

When building a house or garden:

- 💧 Use porous material for walkways and patios to prevent wasteful runoff.
- 💧 Install rainwater tanks to capture as much of the rain water as possible.
- 💧 Invest in dual reticulation systems to capture and use grey water for toilet cisterns and irrigation, while only using potable water for cooking and drinking.
- 💧 Install aerators on all taps
- 💧 Install low flow shower heads
- 💧 Install dual flush toilet cisterns.

Water. There is no alternative.

¹² <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/activity-drip.html>

¹³ <http://pacinst.org/publication/bottled-water-and-energy-a-fact-sheet/>

