



You can save a lot of water, energy, and money by

using household water more efficiently. Consider this: U.S. indoor residential water use is estimated at about 80 gallons per day in the average home—and that doesn't count outdoor water use!



Conserving household water is as good for the environment as it is for your pocketbook. Water not consumed can save a river from a dam and wetlands from destruction, while water not heated with fossil fuel means oil or gas not depleted, coal not burned, carbon not released to cause global warming, and sulfur not deposited as acid rain. By decreasing the amount of water your home uses every day, you also take dollars off your utility bill and put them back in your pocket.



For more ideas about water conservation or to get information on ways your community as a whole can save water, visit the Rocky Mountain Institute's web page at www.rmi.org or contact your local water management district.

The Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) is committed to maintaining our water resources. If you would like more information, contact us toll free at 1-877-552-3482.

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Seven Ways to Conserve Water

practical ways
to trim your
water utility bill

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There are many ways you can **conserve water** in your home and use your water more wisely. For instance, most new homes have water-efficient plumbing fixtures and toilets. Retrofitting these fixtures in older homes can decrease your utility bill by reducing the amount of water you use every day. Besides changing plumbing hardware, there are many ways you can save water at home.

1 Fix leaky faucets. Just one slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons of water a day! With each repair, you'll save about 6,000 gallons of water each year. The constant dripping is not only wasteful; it also significantly increases the energy costs in your home over time. The good news is this problem is not difficult to correct. Most faucets leak because the washer and seal (also called the O-ring) is worn out. These washers are made of a hard rubber-like material, which over time becomes worn and will not properly seal the faucet valve. To fix most faucets, remove the faucet handle, unscrew the valve stem assembly under the handle cap, and pry off the old washer. Then, place the new washer on the valve stem and reassemble the faucet. Be sure to ask an expert at the hardware store or find a do-it-yourself guide on the Internet if you need help doing this simple repair.



2 Fix leaky toilets. Your toilet may be leaking so slowly you don't even realize it. Put a few drops of dark food coloring in the toilet tank to test for leakage. Without flushing, watch for a few minutes to see if the color appears in the bowl, indicating a leak. It's not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons of water a day from a toilet leak—which means you'll save more than 30,000 gallons a year for each repair! If you do find a leak in your toilet, take another look in the tank. If water is flowing into the overflow tube, the ballcock (the float-controlled valve that

lets water into the tank) isn't closing properly—it's either worn out or needs adjustment. Try bending the float arm down. If the ballcock still doesn't close before water runs down the tube, you need to replace it. If the ballcock isn't the problem, the flapper valve is probably worn out. First check to make sure there are no mineral deposits or grit preventing the flapper from closing properly. If not, replace the flapper with another from a local hardware store.

3 Plan your lawn and garden watering. Follow local watering regulations and advice from lawn and garden experts. Proper watering not only cuts water consumption by 20–50%, but it can also maintain or improve the health of your lawn. Most lawns don't need watering as often as many people think. Grass grows best when watered evenly, deeply, and only when it needs it—no more than once every three days in any climate. You can tell when your lawn needs watering by just walking across it. If the grass springs up after you lift your foot, it's not time to water yet. If it stays flat, however, it's time to water again. When you have only a few dry spots, watering them by hand saves water and makes the color of your lawn more even. Water your lawn in the early morning to reduce wasteful evaporation and avoid mold problems. Watering during the day can also "burn" your grass and plants. Closely watch the amount of time you water your lawn, as well. If the soil doesn't absorb water as fast as the sprinkler applies it, puddles will accumulate or you'll get runoff; both are wasteful and may harm your lawn, your driveway, your sidewalk, or your house. To increase the rate of water absorption, you can poke holes in the soil with an aerator from your local nursery.



4 Choose native plants that are naturally adapted to the Florida environment. Plants that are native to our area have adapted their water needs according to the natural rainfall pattern in the state. Before purchasing greenery, determine each plant's needs for sun, shade, soil, and water. Use mulch in gardens to help retain moisture and reduce weeds that can compete with other plants for water.

5 Limit garden hose use. Consider a "drip-irrigation" system or "micro-sprinkler" for your shrubs and flower beds if they need watering. Soaking hoses and strategically-placed small sprinklers can water flowers and shrubs directly instead of wasting water on large portions of your lawn. For children's recreation, opt for pools instead of sprinklers. Clean driveways and walkways with a broom or blower instead of hosing with water. Finally, stop drippy hose bibs and hose connections by replacing washers when they start to fail.



6 Think "five" for showers and baths. Limit shower time to five minutes. You can turn the water off while you're "soaping up" and turn it back on to wash off. For baths, fill the tub with about five inches of water. This also helps reduce the risk of drowning for small children.

7 Wash dishes and laundry in full loads. Even when shorter run cycles are available for small loads, waiting to run automatic dishwashers and clothes washing machines at full capacity uses water (and soap) more efficiently. If you're in the market for a new washing machine, consider choosing a "front-load" washer that spins on a horizontal axis—these new machines use much less water than conventional "top-load" models that spin on a vertical axis. You'll notice a savings over time on your utility bill.

