



# Home Water Audit Checklist

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This home audit helps you identify things that you can do **RIGHT NOW** to help reduce water use in your home and to keep our waters clean and safe.

## Reduce Your Personal Water Impact at Home:

### Kitchen

- [x] When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run in between rinsing. Fill one sink or tub with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- [x] Don't rinse your dishes before placing them in the dishwasher. This saves the planet 6,500 gallons of water per year and you \$30 per year.
- [x] Only run your dishwasher when it is completely full.
- [x] When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.
- [x] When boiling water for cooking, use a measure cup to ensure you are not using more water than is necessary to prepare the dish. Also be sure to cover the pot to save energy too!
- [x] Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.
- [x] Collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables, and then reuse it to water houseplants.
- [x] Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
- [x] Avoid highly processed beverages like soft drinks. They can require up to twice as much water during production as is found in the end product.
- [x] Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- [x] For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of

running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.

- [x] Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
- [x] Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.

### Bath

- [x] Take showers (10-15 gallons of water used) rather than baths (30 or more gallons used) for one person.
- [x] Give your young children baths one after the other, rather than drawing separate baths for them.
- [x] Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month. Try using an egg timer to shorten your shower.
- [x] When running a bath, plug the tub before turning the water on, and then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.
- [x] Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save up to 240 gallons a month.
- [x] Turn off the water while you wash your hair to save up to 150 gallons a month.
- [x] Turn off the water while you shave and save up to 300 gallons a month.
- [x] Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.
- [x] Replace your showerhead easily and inexpensively with a water-efficient model, and save up to 750 gallons a month.

- [x] Repair leaky faucets or toilets. A single dripping hot water faucet can waste up to 200 gallons of water a month.
- [x] Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fix it to save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- [x] Upgrade older toilets with water efficient and dual flush models.

### Laundry and Appliances

- [x] Run your clothes washer only when it is full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- [x] Rather than using a humidifier, put moisture in the air by hanging your clothes inside to dry (and save energy too!).
- [x] Front load washing machines can save as much as 40 cents per load.
- [x] When buying new appliances, consider those that offer cycle and load size adjustments. They're more water and energy efficient.
- [x] When upgrading appliances replace water cooled refrigerators, air conditioners, etc. with air cooled ones for significant water and energy savings.

### General Household

- [x] Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks.
- [x] Listen for dripping faucets and running toilets. Fixing a leak can save 300 gallons a month or more.
- [x] Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive, and



you can save up to 140 gallons a week.

- [ x ] Teach your children to turn off faucets tightly after each use.
- [ x ] Know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save water and prevent damage to your home.
- [ x ] Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- [ x ] Wash pets in the yard where run off can be used to water the lawn.
- [ x ] Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.

### Yard & Garden

- [ x ] Stay tuned to the weather forecast. Don't water your lawn or garden if it will be raining that same day.
- [ x ] Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn and plants are watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- [ x ] Remember to check your sprinkler system valves, outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses periodically for leaks.
- [ x ] Let your lawn go dormant during the summer. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three weeks or less if it rains.
- [ x ] Spread mulch around outdoor plants in order to conserve more water.
- [ x ] Allow some leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- [ x ] Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- [ x ] To decrease water from being wasted on sloping lawns, apply water for five minutes and then repeat two to three times.
- [ x ] Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site and region.
- [ x ] Plant a rain garden with native plants and flowers.
- [ x ] Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.
- [ x ] Replace impervious (hard) surfaces with pervious surfaces.
- [ x ] Direct water from rain gutters and HVAC systems toward water-loving plants or gardens for automatic water savings.
- [ x ] Purchase or build a rain barrel or rain catchment device to harvest roof

runoff for watering your yard and flower gardens.

- [ x ] Have your plumber re-route your gray water to trees and gardens rather than letting it run into the sewer line. (Check with your city codes and, if it isn't allowed in your area, start a movement to get that changed!)
- [ x ] Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps to avoid evaporation.
- [ x ] Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation than those spraying water into the air.
- [ x ] Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with re-circulating pumps.

### Plant and Garden Care

- [ x ] Water only when necessary. More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering.
- [ x ] Water your garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
- [ x ] Check the root zone for moisture before watering and if it's still moist two inches under the soil surface, enough water remains.
- [ x ] Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
- [ x ] Spreading a layer of organic mulch around plants retains moisture and saves water, time and money.
- [ x ] Plant in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.
- [ x ] When adding or replacing a flower or shrub, choose a low water use plant for year-round color and save up to 550 gallons each year.
- [ x ] Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped.
- [ x ] Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.
- [ x ] Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
- [ x ] Don't water your lawn on windy days when most of the water blows away or evaporates.
- [ x ] Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid over watering some while under watering others.
- [ x ] Use the minimum amount of organic or slow release fertilizer to promote

a healthy and drought tolerant landscape.

- [ x ] Use a rain gauge, or empty tuna can, to track rainfall. Then reduce your watering accordingly.
- [ x ] Set a kitchen timer when watering your garden to remind you when to stop. A running hose can discharge up to 10 gallons a minute.

Send to your friends and family!  
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### Community

- [ x ] Encourage your school system and local government to develop and promote water conservation.
- [ x ] Design and install a rain garden for your school to capture rainwater and reduce stormwater pollution. Ask your local nursery for design help.
- [ x ] Make suggestions to your employer about ways to save water (and money) at work.
- [ x ] Support projects that use reclaimed wastewater for irrigation and industrial uses.
- [ x ] Share water conservation tips with friends and neighbors (like this checklist!).
- [ x ] Report broken pipes, open hydrants and errant sprinklers to your neighbor or water provider.

Check the Do It Green! Minnesota website for more water tips and water-related articles at [WWW.DOITGREEN.ORG](http://WWW.DOITGREEN.ORG).



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