

# Saving water to save money

The average person in the UK uses 145 litres of water a day (almost enough to fill two baths).

By reducing the amount of hot water you use, you'll also cut your bills for gas, electricity or oil. And those on a water meter will save money that way, too.

## Save on hot water costs

Around a quarter of the water we use is for showers and baths, and heating the water for these accounts for about 10-20% of a typical household's energy bills. Add to this the energy it takes to heat water for washing-up or doing the laundry and you get an idea of how much water heating contributes to your energy bills.

Taking a shower instead of a bath saves around 40% of the water, and therefore the cost of heating that water. This will depend on the type of shower and how long you run it for, as some power showers can use as much water as a bath. To reduce costs:

- Use a timer to monitor how long you spend in the shower (4-minute timers are often free from your water company). Cutting showering time to 4 minutes will save the average user around £186 a year.
- Consider replacing your showerhead for an energy efficient version (costs start from £20). These will either aerate the water or reduce the flow, but shouldn't compromise on pressure. They typically cut the flow



of water by a third, and can save over £100 per year on your fuel bills if you have a mains-fed showers. (Be aware these showerheads are not usually compatible with electric showers, which are often already water efficient.)

- You can also buy low flow or aerating taps, or you can fit an aerating device to your existing taps (these cost around £5).





## Aeration

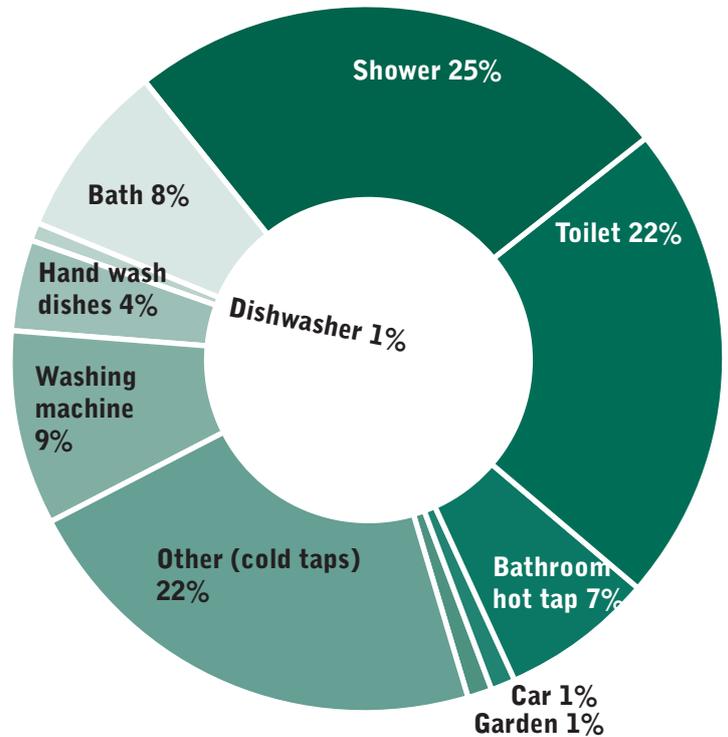
Fitting a tap aerator can save £25 a year, according to the Energy Saving Trust. Aeration forces air into the water stream, which reduces the volume of water passing through but not the pressure.

### More ways to save on water heating

- 1) Only run washing machines and dishwashers when they are full. It's much more cost-effective to do a full wash once every two days, than a half-full wash every day. If the appliance has an economy setting this will use less water and less electricity as well.
- 2) Wash clothes at 30 degrees wherever possible, most detergents work perfectly well at this temperature, and you'll save around £20 a year.
- 3) Only boil as much water as needed in the kettle.
- 4) If your home has a hot water cylinder, you can save up to £100 a year if it's insulated. And make sure it is set to the correct temperature. See our [hot water cylinder factsheet](#) for more information.

## Water consumption by use

(from Energy Saving Trust)



“Go to [savewatersavemoney.co.uk](http://savewatersavemoney.co.uk) to find out if your water company gives out free or discount water saving devices”





## Save on general water costs

Cutting your total water consumption is particularly important if you pay for your water using a meter. A water meter reflects your actual usage and your bills will therefore be lower if you use less water.

### In the bathroom



Around 70% of our domestic water use is in the bathroom. Water can be saved through a combination of a few simple changes in behaviour and through installing water saving devices.

A running tap uses more than 10 litres of water a minute, so turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing.

Check that your toilet cistern is working properly and not leaking water into the bowl. You can buy toilet leak detection tablets, or try this DIY method: pour a few drops of food colouring or similar into your toilet cistern, wait 15 minutes, and if the water in the bowl has changed colour it means you need to adjust the stop-cock in the cistern

Fix any dripping taps. Taps can drip around 90 litres of water every week - that's a whole bathful!

30% of the water you use comes from flushing. If you don't have a dual flush toilet consider installing dual flush controls, or placing a water saving bag (sometimes called a 'hippo') inside the cistern.



### In the kitchen



Wash up in a bowl, not the sink.

Wash fruit and veg in a bowl instead of under a running tap.

Thinking of a new washing machine or dishwasher? While all new appliances use much less water (and energy) than old ones, some are better than others, so check the small print to find the most efficient model. On average, you'll save £80 a year by replacing an old appliance with a new B or C rated one

Keep a bottle of tap water in the fridge. Waiting for the tap to run cold can waste more than 10L of tap water a day.



### In the garden



Water use in the garden increases in the spring and summer, which is also when water is scarcest.

The main 'culprit' is the hosepipe which can use up to 1,000 litres in an hour - that's more than most families use in a day. So get a water-saving trigger for your hosepipe or use a watering can instead.

Fit a water butt to collect rain water. Many plants prefer rainwater to tap water, and some water companies can provide water butts quite cheaply, from around £20.

When washing your car use a bucket and a sponge.

Watering your plants in the morning or evening and using mulch around them will reduce evaporation.



## Other ways to cut the cost of your water bill

You can't choose your water supplier, but there may still be ways to lower what you are currently paying.

How you chose to pay will not affect your bill, and so it can be a matter of personal preference. Most people pay in weekly, fortnightly, or monthly instalments. You can use a payment book, pay individually each time, or opt for direct debit.

### Unmetered or metered?

If you're unmetered you pay a fixed amount for your water regardless of how much you use. Rates are calculated in roughly the same way as council tax with bills based on a home's size, or 'rateable value'.

If you're metered you pay only for water you actually use, measured by a water meter in cubic metres or cubic feet.



You could save money by having a water meter installed, depending on how much water you use and how much you currently pay. As a rule of thumb, if there are fewer people than bedrooms in your house, consider getting a meter. Most water companies operate a 2-year trial period during which you can switch back to unmetered billing if you prefer. If a water meter can't be fitted, your bill may be reduced based on an 'assessed charge' of your household situation.

### Sewerage

Sewerage charge is for taking away waste water and surface water (i.e. rain water that falls around your house and runs down the drain). Some people don't need to pay for this or may be entitled to a rebate, as they do not use the public sewerage system.



In most places water and sewerage are billed together, meaning that you only pay one company for both services. However, in some areas you may receive two separate bills.

### Social tariffs

Many water companies have special tariffs for customers struggling to pay their bills. You should contact your water company about these tariffs if:

- Your household receives benefits or is on a low income.
- You have a large family.
- Someone in the house has a medical condition that requires more water.
- You are in debt to your water company.

Your water company may also hold a list of households who would be particularly affected if their water supply is disrupted. This list is usually called the Priority Services Register, and the support offered will vary. Speak to yours for more information.

## Help with bills

If you live in the Wessex Water area (Bristol, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire) and have a water debt or are struggling to afford your repayments please contact us as we can help you apply for support.



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We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to people in central southern and southwest England.

### Contact us:

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