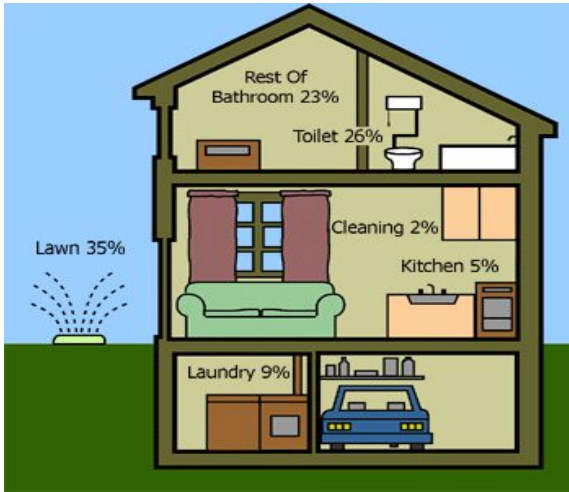


# SIMPLE WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

## Where does all your water go?

### TYPICAL HOME WATER USE\*



Source: TWDB, *A Homeowners Guide to Water Use and Conservation* (1990)

\*These percentages can vary considerably depending on season, yard composition, irrigation system type, geographic region, installation of water efficient appliances and plumbing fixtures, and individual habits.

The following list includes some simple ways to curb your water use around the house: indoors and outdoors.

## INDOOR WATER USES:

### BATHTUB/SHOWER

- ◆ Make sure that you have installed a water-efficient showerhead in all of your bathrooms.
- ◆ Take shorter showers.
- ◆ Turn off the water while soaping up or shampooing.
- ◆ Only fill the bathtub to a maximum of six inches (bathing small children and pets requires much less water).
- ◆ Make sure that your bathtub drain plug doesn't leak.

### TOILETS

*Toilet use is typically the largest category of indoor water use and there is substantial room for water savings.*

The single best thing you can do to improve toilet efficiency is to replace an old inefficient toilet with a new toilet (check to see if your water utility offers any rebates for replacing old inefficient toilets).

In addition, you can:

- ◆ Flush less frequently.
- ◆ Check your toilet for leaks by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank and seeing if the bowl-water changes color.
- ◆ Replace the flapper if necessary; make sure it is the correct flapper for your toilet model.



### CLOTHES WASHER

The single best thing you can do to improve clothes washer efficiency is to replace an old inefficient machine with a new high efficiency washer.

In addition, you can:

- ◆ Use the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled loads.
- ◆ Pretreat stains to avoid rewashing.
- ◆ If your washer has a variable water volume setting, select the minimum amount required per load.
- ◆ Operate the washer with full loads only - even if the machine has an adjustable load setting.

## Savings From Water-Efficient Fixtures

The American Water Works Association has demonstrated the difference that ultralow-flush toilets, low-flow shower heads, and other water savers can make in a household. Water consumption by the toilet, typically the leading water user, falls by half. Clothes washers with the tub on a horizontal axis also are more efficient.

Plumbing Fixture or Water-Using Appliance	Households NOT USING Water-Efficient Fixtures		Households THAT DO USE Water-efficient Fixtures	
	Gal./person/per day	% of total daily use	Gal./person/per day	% of total daily use
Toilets	20.1	27.7%	9.6	19.3%
Clothes washers	15.1	20.8%	10.6	21.4%
Showers	12.6	17.3%	10.0	20.0%
Faucets	11.1	15.3%	10.9	21.9%
Leaks	10.0	13.8%	5.0	10.0%
Baths	1.2	1.7%	1.2	2.4%
Dishwashers	1.0	1.4%	1.0	2.0%
Other uses	1.5	2.1%	1.5	3.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72.6</b>		<b>49.8</b>	

Source: reproduced from *Natural Outlook*, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

### DISHWASHER

- ◆ Run the dishwasher only when it is full of dishes (in most cases running your dishwasher with a full load will use less water than washing the same number of dishes by hand).
- ◆ Many newer dishwashers require little or no advance rinsing of dishes.

### FAUCETS

- ◆ Install water-efficient faucet aerators on all your household faucets.
- ◆ Do not run the faucet continuously while washing dishes, brushing your teeth, shaving, etc.
- ◆ Keep a plastic basin in your sink and collect faucet water for use on your landscape.
- ◆ Avoid using the garbage disposal; instead dispose of food scraps in the garbage or in a compost pile.

## OUTDOOR WATER USES:

Consider installing a rainwater harvesting system; it can be an easy, effective way to save water outdoors. Check with your local provider to see if they offer rebates on rainwater harvesting barrels and larger systems.

### SPRINKLERS

- ◆ Avoid oscillating sprinklers and sprinkler heads that produce mists or fine sprays (they result in evaporation losses). Drip systems or soaker hoses are most efficient.
- ◆ Use buckets rather than a hose or automatic system to water small gardens, flowers, plants, and shrubs (you have more control over where the water goes).
- ◆ Only water your yard. Concrete sidewalks and gutters don't grow!
- ◆ Adjust your irrigation controller at least once a month to account for changes in the weather.
- ◆ Request an irrigation system audit from your local utility (many water providers offer this as a free service and it's a great way to learn how you can more efficiently operate your sprinkler system).
- ◆ Less frequent, longer irrigation cycles can promote deep percolation; install a rain shut-off valve to avoid unnecessary watering.
- ◆ Only water your landscape after the sun has gone down to reduce evaporation losses.

### *Train your lawn:*

- ◆ Mow as infrequently as possible, and when you do mow, set the mower on its highest setting (cutting the grass too short causes stress, forcing the roots to work harder and use more water).
- ◆ By spreading out your watering you can help your lawn to establish deeper roots that will help it survive drought periods. Most types of grass (even thirsty St. Augustine) need only 1" of water every five days.
- ◆ Use mulch around plants and flowers. The mulch reduces evaporation and keeps water near the roots where it's most beneficial.
- ◆ Minimize fertilization (heavily fertilized lawns use more water, are more susceptible to drought stress, and create run off that pollutes the water supply).
- ◆ Minimize turf-covered areas in your lawn - be creative and add a variety of vegetation!
- ◆ Convert to native grasses, plants, shrubs, and trees in your landscape (native plants contribute to wildlife habitat, are more drought-resistant and require less water than turf grasses). See [www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat](http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat) for information on how to create a water conserving landscape that will also benefit wildlife.
- ◆ Group plants according to water needs.

### USING THE HOSE

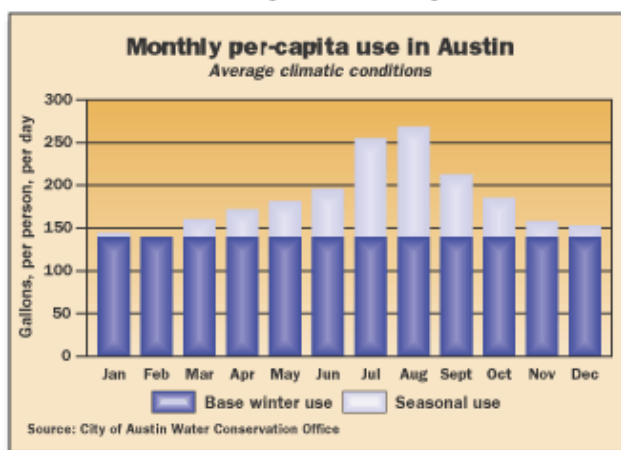
- ◆ Rake and sweep leaves -- don't hose them away (using the hose to wash down sidewalks, driveways, and pavements is a wasteful and unnecessary practice).

### *For activities that require using a hose:*

- ◆ Fill a bucket with water for washing your car at home.
- ◆ Use a spray nozzle with a cutoff handle on your hose so water doesn't flow continuously.

## Demand Peaks in Hot Weather

Like most cities, Austin's water consumption soars with the temperatures as residents turn the hoses on parched lawns, shrubs, and trees. That's why many municipalities are urging residents to landscape with drought-tolerant plants and to water only when necessary.



### SWIMMING POOLS

- ◆ Use a pool cover (it will reduce water loss due to normal evaporation).
- ◆ Repair any swimming pool leaks.
- ◆ Manually clean your filter.
- ◆ Plug the overflow line when the pool is in use and always when adding water.
- ◆ Turn off the tile-spray device on your automatic pool cleaner.

*Want more info on water conservation?*

Visit the Texas Living Waters Project website at:

<http://www.texaswatermatters.org>

For additional information visit:

<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us>

For excellent rebate programs available to City of Austin customers, see:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/>