

A Guide to Water Conservation

Every day we need water to drink, wash our face, brush our teeth, wash the dishes, flush the toilet and water the garden. We go about our daily lives, sometimes unaware of the amount of fresh water we are using.

In New Zealand, we're surrounded by water. It's easy to think of it as a free resource that will never run out. But that just isn't the case. Increasingly, towns and cities throughout New Zealand are facing water shortages. Some will have to invest in costly new infrastructure in coming years to ensure that supply can keep up with demand.

Already, many New Zealanders pay directly for the water they use. That trend is set to continue. The good news is that reducing your demand for water can be simple. Something as basic as fixing a leaky tap can make a difference. The costs of reducing water use can be minimal, yet the benefits are significant.

This Guide to water conservation will provide you with simple ideas for things that you can do on a daily basis to help reduce the amount of water that you use.



In the garden

During summer our gardens need extra attention to make it through the hot weather. This is where water usage can become an issue if garden watering is not controlled.



- Water your garden only once every few days, when the soil is dry. This encourages roots to grow deeper and become more tolerant of hot, dry weather. Water your garden in the early morning or evening between, this will minimise water evaporation.
- A great way to conserve water when gardening is to use a trigger nozzle on your hose. This way you can manoeuvre about the garden focusing on areas that require the most attention without wasting water. Remember to turn off the tap once finished and storing a hose on a reel reduces the chance of it splitting or deteriorating.
- Use mulch everywhere, it can retain moisture by up to 70% and reduce the need to water. Try using stones, bark chips and compost; they all do a great job.
- Favour local natives when planting your garden and buy plants that require less water.
- Pull weeds regularly, as they compete with plants for water.
- Don't mow your lawn too short. Five centimetres is a good length. This length will help grass grow longer roots, keep sun off the soil, and help retain moisture.

In the kitchen

- When preparing meals rinse or peel vegetables in a large bowl filled with water. By not running the tap to carry out this five minute task, you can save 10 Litres of water a minute.
- Keep a large jug of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap until the water is cold. This will save up to 2 litres of water per glass.
- Wait until you have a full load before starting your dishwasher and when possible use the eco-setting.
- Put in the plug to wash fruit and veggies or for rinsing dishes.
- Use only as much water as you need to cover vegetables when boiling them. Reuse the boiled water in soups and casseroles (this also adds extra nutrients to meals).

In the laundry

- When washing clothes, run full loads or be sure to set controls for a partial load if you are doing less.
- Replace washers on dripping taps. A small regular drip can waste a hundred litres of water a week.
- Always turn off all taps when not in use.

In the bathroom

Typical water use at home is about 25% in the bathroom.

- Turn off the tap when cleaning your teeth or shaving, you can save 10 litres of water a minute. This small change in behaviour can make a big difference.
- Installation of a low-flow showerhead can save 1,000 litres of water per week.
- Showers are the best way to reduce water usage, but only if they are short. Keep shower time to 3 minutes or less.
- Keep baths to a minimum and when filling a bath, only fill it as much as required.
- Install a flush saver device or dual flush system to your toilet. This can save up to 10 litres of water per person, per flush.
- Check your toilet for leaks. Put a few drops of food colouring in your toilet tank. If it appears in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak that needs repairing.

Outdoors

- Use a broom to sweep sidewalks and paved areas. Using a hose for this can waste as much as 1,000 litres of water per hour.
- When washing the car, use a bucket. Limit use of your hose to a quick spray at the start to loosen dirt and grime and when you're done to rinse off soapy water. If you can, wash the car on a lawn to soak up the run-off water.
- Check your garden hose regularly for leaks. Store it on a reel to prevent kinking and damage.



Swimming Pools

Refilling of swimming and spa pools uses a large volume of water at a time when the river is at its lowest. By treating the water in your swimming pool, you will maximise its use and minimise health risks.

- To avoid water borne health risks it is vital that you add chlorine in the right dose to pool water. Chlorine levels can be easily maintained in the ideal range of 1 to 3 parts per million by using inexpensive testers or pool test kits. These kits will also tell you the acidity (or alkalinity (pH)) of your pool and enable you to keep this around 7.5.
- Chlorinating pool water will keep it cleaner for longer and reduce the need and frequency of refilling, as will a filter system.
- Always cover swimming and spa pools when not in use. A pool cover will greatly reduce the amount of chemicals you need to add to the water, and can also minimise loss of water through evaporation by up to 90%.
- Encouraging swimmers to keep splashing to a minimum and keep as much water inside the pool as possible to reduce the need for top-ups.
- To avoid the cost and effort associated with maintaining a pool at home, consider visiting the Te Kuiti Swimming Pool which is open during the summer season and provides a safe and fun swimming environment.
- Did you know a swimming pool cover can cut evaporation by as much as 90%, reducing the need for top-ups in the dry summer season.
- To check for swimming pool leaks use a pencil to mark the water level at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later to see if it's gone down.



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Waitomo
District Council