



REDUCING OUR WATER FOOTPRINT

Reducing water use at home and work is important. Canadians are among the highest users per capita globally. Water is renewable but finite. Pollution in fresh water bodies along with the negative effects of climate change means there are limits to availability of clean water even in countries such as Canada, considered far richer in water resources than others.ⁱ

Conservation vs. Efficiency

Water conservation refers to reducing water by avoiding certain activities or changing behaviour so that a given activity requires less water. For example, by shutting off the water while soaping hands, water use is avoided.

Water efficiency refers to use of less water without an avoidance or change in activity or behaviour. For example, using a low flow toilet uses less water for the same activity. Thus, the use of an efficient fixture enables us to save water for the same function but with an alternative product / technology.



Water Conservation

There are several ways you can reduce water at work and home. Here are eight ideas:

1. Turn the tap off when soaping your hands and brushing teeth
2. Install a water filter instead of purchasing bottled water. Some bottled water is withdrawn from sensitive aquifers that are slow to replenish. You will also reduce plastic bottle waste and save money
3. Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is coolⁱⁱ
4. Defrost food overnight in the fridge instead of thawing it under running waterⁱⁱⁱ
5. At home, design your garden so it includes native species of plants which require less water and care, since they are best adapted to regional soil and climate. To find native plant species in your region, [click here](#)
6. Dispose of facial tissues and paper towels in the trash instead of flushing them down the toilet;^{iv} it will avoid clogging pipes, as well as save water.
7. When in a hotel, opt to reuse your towels to avoid daily laundering
8. Avoid washing your car with a water hose. Dirty oils and chemicals from cars flow into lakes and streams. Consider visiting a car wash where water use is typically more efficient and is recycled. To learn more, [click here](#)

Water Efficiency

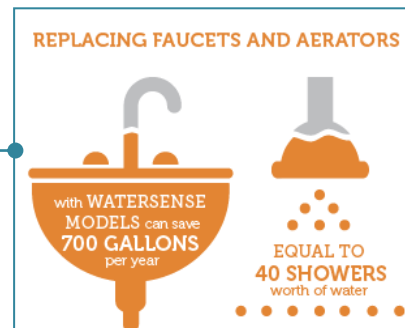
There are several ways to increase water efficiency at work and home. Here are five ideas:

1. Install water aerators on all faucets. Low flow shower heads and faucet aerators are inexpensive and can reduce water consumption by as much as 50%^v
2. Run your washer and dishwasher only when full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month^{vi}
3. Consider installing WaterSense certified fixtures which meet water efficiency criteria of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To learn more, [click here](#)
4. At home, install a water meter and check for leaks. An average home loses approximately 13% of water to leaks. Check hoses, connectors and faucets^{vii}
5. When watering your garden, consider the use of drip irrigation technology which distributes water to the plant root. Drip irrigation requires 20-50% less water than sprinklers.^{viii} To learn more, see Water Efficient Landscaping by [clicking here](#)



Replacing old, inefficient faucets and aerators with WaterSense labeled models can save the average family 700 gallons of water per year, equal to the amount of water needed to take 40 showers.

Source: U.S. EPA



More Information

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End Notes

ⁱ Image: Canada Water Week: Canada Water Week 2012-Water Footprint Infographic, by Brittany Campbell, March 19, 2012 <http://gordonfoundation.ca/publication/693>

ⁱⁱ Water Use It Wisely: 100+ Ways To Conserve Water, Tip #60. <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to- conserve/?view=list>

ⁱⁱⁱ Metro Vancouver: We Love Water, Indoor Tips. <http://www.metrovancouver.org/welovewater/indoor- tips/defrost-food>

^{iv} Water Use It Wisely: 100+ Ways To Conserve Water, Tip #40. <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to- conserve/?view=list>

^v Earth Easy: Low-Flow Aerators/Showerheads http://eartheasy.com/live_lowflow_aerators.htm

^{vi} Water Use It Wisely: 100+ Ways To Conserve Water, Tip #60. <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to- conserve/?view=list>

vii Metro Vancouver: Tips to Conserve Water at Home
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/water/conservation-reservoir-levels/water-conservation-home/Pages/default.aspx>

viii U.S. EPA: Water-Saving Technologies <https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor/tech.html>