



BRIGHTON PEACE & ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

WATER

“Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink”. Water scarcity has become a major issue on the global agenda. The infamous British hose-pipe bans will be well known by most; the profound effects of water shortages in sub-Saharan Africa by many more. It has been said that where the 20th century was the century of oil wars, the 21st will be that of water wars.

It's not the time for our global epitaph yet though! There are many cheap and simple ways we can reduce water consumption; as a start towards developing an environmental lifestyle, changes in your water habits can be both painless and profound. And if you're really good, the odd water fight might even be in order.



Taps

- Make sure taps are completely turned off when not in use
- Aerators can be purchased and fitted to existing taps which reduce the amount of water and energy used by around 50% - visit www.h2ouse.org for more details
- Don't run the water continuously while brushing your teeth, shaving and washing. Leaving the tap running can waste almost 9 litres a minute. When you brush your teeth use a glass of water. Prepare fruit and vegetables in a bowl of water or partially filled sink and rinse them before using
- Replace worn tap washers. DIY, hardware shops or plumbers' merchants sell washers with instructions,

or a plumber can replace them for you. Remember to take the old washer along to the shop to get the correct replacement

- Check for leaks by turning off all your taps and checking that your meter isn't going round. If you have an unmetered supply, listen for hissing sounds at night and look out for damp patches in the garden or drive

Kettles

Don't overfill kettles when making hot drinks. Heat up only the amount of water you need. If you are using an electric kettle, make sure you cover the elements. Jug-type kettles need less water as they have smaller elements. **Ecokettles** are specifically designed with environmental aims in mind - www.ecokettle.com.

Washing Machines

- If you are buying a new washing machine, look out for the eco-friendly models using only 56 litres of water per wash compared to around 80 litres for older models
- Before switching on your washing machine, wait until you have a full load even if it has an adjustable load setting
- Use the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled loads
- Pre-treat stains to avoid rewashing
- Check the hoses regularly for cracks that could result in leaks
- Use less detergent or an environmentally friendly detergent. For environmentally friendly detergents, see our 'Household Cleaning' factsheet

Dishwashers

- Wait until you have a full load before switching on the dishwasher. If you have to use it only partly filled, use the economy programme if it has one
- If you are buying a new dishwasher, look out for the eco friendly models using only 15 litres compared to around 22 litres for older models. Also many newer dishwashers require little or no advance rinsing of dishes

Toilets

- If you have a dual flush toilet, use the light flush whenever you can. If not, you can retro-fit an **Interflush** device which stops the toilet flushing when you let go of the handle - www.interflush.co.uk
- Another option is a **Save a Flush** bag which fits into your cistern to save one litre of water per flush. These bags are available free from Southern Water. Call 0800 0276152 or email flushsavers@southernwater.co.uk
- Other displacement methods such as a plastic bottle or bag full of water in the cistern can also be used
- For best results buy an eco-friendly toilet. Older cisterns use as much as 13 litres per flush, whereas the latest models use only 7 litres
- Avoid using caustic toilet bowl cleaners such as toilet tank tablets as they alter the pH of the water and may damage plastic and rubber toilet parts causing leaks
- Repair any toilet tank bowl or base leaks
- Don't use your toilet as a bin; flushing waste uses 12 or more gallons of water per day. Cotton wool and tissues should be put in a waste bin

Showers

- Take a shower instead of a bath and take shorter showers. Turn off the water while soaping up or shampooing
- Keep a bucket in the shower to collect excess water and use to water your plants
- An aerating shower-head reduces the flow by up to 30% without any reduction to the force
- Go for a 'water saver' shower instead of a power shower

Baths

- Reduce how often you have a bath and only fill the bathtub as much as you need. Babies, small children and pets require much less water. Don't overfill only to force the unneeded water into the overflow drain
- Replace your bath plug if it leaks
- Reuse bath water outdoors on your garden. However, bath water with high concentrations of phosphates, nitrates and boron from soap may harm sensitive plant types such as citrus

Rainwater harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is the collection of water that would otherwise have gone down the drain, into the ground or

been lost through evaporation.

- Large surfaces such as roofs or driveways are ideal for rainwater harvesting. This water can be used to flush toilets, water gardens and even feed the washing machine
- Before deciding whether or not to install a system, consider the costs of buying, installing and maintaining the system
- For more information visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Garden

- Install a water butt to collect rainwater for the garden. There are many suppliers, but www.garden4less.co.uk have a wide range to choose from (between 100-235 litre capacity) and many are made from at least 70% recycled materials. Tel: 0844 41 42 042
- Water plants in the early morning or evening to avoid the water evaporating
- Always use a watering can rather than a hose because you can measure more easily how much water each plant receives

Water Metering

Fitting a water meter raises awareness of how much water you use at home, and encourages you to avoid wasting water. If you are a household of one or maybe two people, you can also save money on water bills. **Southern Water** fits meters free of charge - Tel: 0845 272 0845.

Leaks outside your property

If there is a water leak outside the boundary of your property, for example on the road or footpath, **Southern Water** will repair and restore water supplies. You can contact them on the *Leakline* - Tel: 0800 820 999

What you can do right now.....

When boiling water for tea, coffee etc, fill up your cup to the top and put only this amount into the kettle. You'll save water, electricity and time.

Resources & Further Information

www.blueoctobercampaign.org

www.environmental-agency.gov.uk

www.waterwise.org.uk

www.ecokids.ca/pub/index.cfm

www.h2ouse.org