

Do you use water wisely? Here's a quiz to help you find out...

How do your water conservation habits rate? Check the things you currently do to curb your water consumption...and then check your score at the end of the checklist to find out if you're a water waster!

IN THE BATHROOM...

__ Regularly check toilets for leaks.

A leaky toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day. To check, put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait ten to 15 minutes. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, you have a leak. Adjust or replace the flush valve or call a plumber.

__ Don't use toilets as an ashtray or wastebasket.

Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or other small bit of trash down the toilet, you waste five to seven gallons of water.

__ Put a plastic bottle in your toilet tank.

Your toilet can probably flush just as efficiently with less water than it now uses. To cut down water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles in a plastic quart bottle to weigh it down. Fill the bottle with water and then put it in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. In an average home, the bottle may displace 10 gallons or more of water a day. (Note: Never put a brick in the toilet. Bricks tend to disintegrate in the water and can damage plumbing.)

__ Take shorter showers.

Long, hot showers waste five to ten gallons of water every minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off.

__ Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors.

Most shower heads put out five to ten gallons of water per minute. Your local hardware or plumbing supply store stocks inexpensive, water-saving shower heads that use less than 3 gallons per minute. Thanks to some new technology and design of the low flow shower heads, you won't even notice the difference - except on your water bill.

__ Turn off the water while you brush your teeth or shave.

After you have wet your toothbrush and filled a glass for rinsing your mouth, there is no need to keep water pouring down the drain. Before shaving, partially fill the sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse your blade just as efficiently as running water, and far less wastefully.



IN THE KITCHEN OR LAUNDRY ROOM...

__ Use your automatic dishwasher only for full loads.

Every time you run your dishwasher, you use about 25 gallons of water.

__ If you wash dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing.

If you have two sinks, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you only have one sink, gather all the washed dishes in the dish rack and rinse them with an inexpensive spray device.

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__ Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables.

Put a stopper in the sink and fill the sink with clean water.

__ Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.

This ends the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it off for drinking.

__ Use your automatic washing machine for full loads only.

Your automatic washer uses 30 to 35 gallons of water in a cycle. Most automatic washers have a water level regulator. To save water, use the appropriate setting.

IN THE YARD AND GARDEN...

__ Plant drought-resistant trees and plants.

There are many beautiful trees and plants that thrive in Texas with far less watering than other species. (Visit our website for a list of informative sites.)

__ Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants.

A layer of mulch will slow the evaporation of moisture. Consider starting a compost pile. You'll be amazed at how your plants will thrive with the rich mixture...and less water, too.

__ Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps.

Using a hose to push around a few leaves and scraps of paper can waste hundreds of gallons of water.

__ Don't run the hose while washing your car.

Soap down your car with a pail of soapy water. Then use a hose just to rinse it off.

__ Water your lawn only when it needs it.

You don't have to water on a set schedule. Watering frequently can actually damage your lawn. A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on some grass. If it springs back up, you don't need to water. If the footprint stays flat, it's time to water.

__ Deep-soak your lawn.

Don't sprinkle. A good soaking every five to seven days gets to the "root" of the problem and encourages deep, solid root growth. Don't allow water to run onto the sidewalk, driveway or street. If you have an irrigation system, set your timer conservatively. Be sure to install a rain sensor so you don't water when it's raining.

__ Water during the cool parts of the day.

Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

__ Properly position your sprinklers.

Direct the spray in such a way that water lands on your lawn or garden, not on concrete where nothing grows. Avoid watering on windy days when much of your water may be carried off before it ever hits the ground.

__ Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings.

Even a small drip can waste 50 or more gallons of water a day. Larger leaks can waste thousands of gallons.



How important is water conservation at YOUR home? Your Score: _____

If you checked ...

18-20 - *You're doing an excellent job saving water, energy and protecting our environment!*

12-17 - *You're doing a good job, but there's still room for improvement.*

Less than 12 - *It is time to take a good look your water usage habits and be alert to ways to conserve this precious resource!*