

Personal Water Conservation Strategies

This guide outlines strategies to reduce household water consumption by 50–70%, helping your well recharge and building long-term resilience.

Stage One: Awareness—Free Habits, Zero Effort

The well is low but flowing. These habits should be permanent to prevent future shortages.

- **Bathroom:**
 - Turn off the tap: Do not run water while brushing teeth, shaving, or lathering hands; turning the tap off while brushing saves 8 liters per person.
 - Short Showers: Aim for 2–3 minutes; use a song to time your family.
 - Cold Showers: These reduce energy use and provide health benefits.
 - "If it's yellow, let it mellow": Reduce the frequency of flushing.
 - **Kitchen:**
 - Fridge Jug: Keep a jug of water in the fridge instead of running the tap until it gets cold.
 - Thawing: Thaw food in the fridge or on the counter; never use running water.
 - Soaking: Soak sticky pots overnight instead of scrubbing under a running tap.
 - Dishwasher: Only run on a full load.
 - Produce: Wash fruits and vegetables in a bowl and reuse that water for plants.
 - **Outdoors:**
 - Time Your Watering: Water only in the early morning or late evening; midday watering loses 50% of water to evaporation.
 - Sweep, Don't Hose: Use a broom for driveways, decks, and steps.
 - Car Washing: Use a commercial or self-serve car wash.
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Stage Two: Active Conservation—Small Investments

One-time projects to permanently drop water use.

- **Hardware Fixes:**
 - Aerators: Install on all faucets to cut water flow by half without losing pressure.
 - Shower Upgrades: Install low-flow showerheads or shower timers; these offer the highest return on investment for water-stressed homes.
 - Toilet Displacement: Place a brick or sand-filled bottle in the tank to save ~1 liter per flush.
- **Laundry:**
 - Re-wear Clothes: Only wash items when necessary.
 - Full Loads: Never run the washer or dishwasher unless they are completely full.

- Pre-treat: Tackle stains early to ensure they come out in a single short cycle.
 - **Leak Audit:**
 - Meter or Pump Check: Check your meter overnight or listen for the pump
 - Food Coloring Hack: Use food coloring in the toilet tank to find silent leaks that can waste 200+ liters a day.
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Stage Three: Serious Shortage—Rationing and Reuse

The well is dry or nearly dry; water is being delivered or strictly limited.

- **Grey Water Reuse:**
 - Bucket Brigade: Collect shower warm-up or used bath water to manually "gravity flush" toilets, which requires ~6 liters.
 - Kitchen/Garden: Save pasta and produce water for plants; route washing machine discharge to the garden using plant-safe detergent.
 - Floors: Reuse laundry rinse water for cleaning floors.
 - **Hygiene:**
 - Navy Showers: 30 seconds to wet, turn off to soap, 30 seconds to rinse.
 - Sponge Baths: Use damp cloths or baby wipes on non-shower days.
 - Shared Water: Have children bathe first, followed by adults using the same water.
 - Hand Washing: Use a basin of water or a coffee carafe with warm water instead of the tap.
 - **Storage & Strategy:**
 - Water Delivery: Fill bathtubs (150 liters), pots, and jugs; keep drinking and utility water separate.
 - Disposable Kitchenware: Use paper plates and cook one-pot meals to minimize dishwashing.
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Stage Four: Emergency—Bare Minimum Survival

Extended outage with no delivery.

- **Know Your Minimums:** Survival requires 3–4 liters for drinking/cooking and 10–15 liters for sanitation/hygiene, totaling ~15 liters per person, per day.
- **Alternative Sources:** Collect rainwater in barrels for flushing and cleaning; it must be filtered or boiled if used for drinking.
- **Community Support:** Locate municipal emergency fill stations and activate neighbor networks.
- **Long-term Planning:** Consider deepening the well, adding a larger holding tank to slow drawdown, or xeriscaping with native, drought-resistant plants.