

A guide to using
water wisely

Save water and money too





No one wants to **pour money down the drain**. Follow the advice in this leaflet and you'll be surprised how easy it is to save water and money too.

Savings on tap

Saving water is not only good for the planet, it can be good for your bank balance too – no bad thing in these tough economic times.

A lot of water we use in the home is heated – such as baths, showers, washing machines and dishwashers. So making small changes to how you use water can help keep your energy bills down.

And, if you're one of our customers with a water meter, you'll already know that using less water also saves you money on your water bill too.

You can still use all the water you need, but with a few tweaks to your daily routine you could soon be feeling flush!

This leaflet offers some simple tips to help get you started. Enjoy!



**Wait a mo...
did you know?**

On average, each of us uses 142 litres of water every day. Imagine that lot on the doorstep!

The water that comes out of your tap has been collected, treated and transported to your home. The process requires lots of power, so by reducing your water usage, you'll help to reduce the North West's carbon footprint.

More than two thirds of household water is used in the bathroom with the kitchen and outdoor making up the rest.

Try our online water calculator

We have a great tool on our website which shows how to reduce your water wastage based on how you currently use water in the home. Visit unitedutilities.com/you-can-save-with-a-water-meter to try it out - you may be surprised how much you could save. If you don't currently have a water meter, the calculator will also show whether you would make a saving by comparing the cost of the water you use to your existing rateable value bill. And if it looks like you'll benefit from a meter, you can apply for one online too.

How much water do you use?

Before we explain how easy it is to save water, you might find it useful to complete the table opposite to better understand how much water you currently use.

Each time you use water at home or in the garden, make a note of it in the table. At the end of the day, work out how much water you have used.

If you're using more than the average amount for the categories in the table, you will be able to make a reduction in your water consumption by following the advice in this booklet. And remember, if your water charges are based on a meter reading, then any reduction in your water use will have the added benefit of reducing your water bill too.

The average amount of water used in the

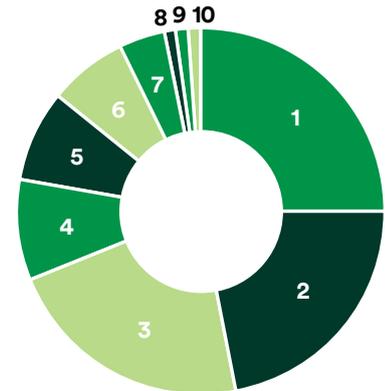
Your self-audit checklist

| Activity | Average amount of water used (litres) | Multiply by | Number of times each day | Equals | Daily total |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Bathroom | | | | | |
| Bath | 80 | x | | = | |
| Mixer shower* | 32 | x | | = | |
| Power shower* | 52 | x | | = | |
| Toilet flush | 9 | x | | = | |
| Dual flush toilet | 6 | x | | = | |
| Basin tap | 6 per minute | x | | = | |
| Kitchen | | | | | |
| Washing up bowl | 8 | x | | = | |
| Washing machine | 50 | x | | = | |
| Dishwasher | 14 | x | | = | |
| Kitchen taps | 6 per minute | x | | = | |
| Garden | | | | | |
| Watering can | 10 | x | | = | |
| Hosepipe / sprinkler | Up to 1,000 per hour | x | | = | |
| TOTAL FOR THE HOUSEHOLD PER DAY | | | | = | |

*Usage amounts based upon a 4 minute shower. All figures shown are a guide only, actual usage will depend on factors such as age of appliance and energy rating.

Average household water use

- 1: Shower **25%**
- 2: Toilet **22%**
- 3: Other (cold taps) **22%**
- 4: Washing machine **9%**
- 5: Bath **8%**
- 6: Bathroom hot tap **7%**
- 7: Hand wash dishes **4%**
- 8: Dishwasher **1%**
- 9: Car **1%**
- 10: Garden **1%**



Figures from the Energy Saving Trust

home is approximately **142 litres per person per day**

Cool savings in the kitchen

What better place to start thinking like a water hero than in the kitchen? These top tips could save you hundreds of litres of water each week, and a few quid into the bargain. Put the kettle on, and keep reading!

Put a plug in it!

When you're washing the dishes, try and get into the habit of placing a plug in the sink or using a bowl instead of letting the tap run. Also, modern dishwashers often use less water than washing by hand but please remember to only switch it on when it's full.

Show your mettle with your kettle

Get into the habit of filling the kettle only as full as you need. That way, you'll save water, and electricity. Anyone for a brew?

Load up, switch on

An average washing machine uses 50 litres of water. By waiting until you have a full load before pressing 'start', you'll save both energy and water.

If you're choosing a new machine, be sure to look for one that is energy and water efficient. This information is readily available for all new models. A bit of research could save you a packet in the long run.

Keep it chilled

Feeling thirsty? Why not keep a container of drinking water in the fridge? That way, you won't have to run the tap every time you want a cool drink.

Drip, drip, drip...

There's nothing more irritating than a dripping tap, especially as it can waste thousands of litres of water a year. Now where did you put that spare washer?

Put that running water to good use

If your hot water is supplied via a combi boiler you probably let your tap run for a few minutes before it gets hot. Don't let all that lovely water go to waste, collect it in a bowl or watering can and use it to water your houseplants or outside in the garden.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright green hoodie and dark jeans, is kneeling on a dark tiled floor. She is smiling and looking towards the camera while loading laundry into a black front-loading washing machine. The machine is built into a kitchen cabinet with light-colored wood grain. To the right of the machine is a dark countertop with a sink. On the countertop, there are two mugs, one with 'I NY' on it, and some silverware. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor setting.

Wait until you have a full load before pressing 'start',
you'll save energy and water

Bill-busting in the bathroom

There are loads of ways to save water in the bathroom. Include a few of these in your daily routine and you could clean up!

Brushing up on your smile

Leaving the tap running when brushing your teeth can waste around 6 litres of water every minute. Remember: when you brush and floss, turn it off.

Showers vs baths

A standard mixer shower typically uses less than half as much water as a bath. So getting clean standing up is clearly the way to go if you want to save water.

If you've got a power shower, you may wish to consider having shorter showers as they use a lot more water than other types of shower.

If your shower is not electric, you can order a free gadget from us that saves water every time you have a shower. Visit unitedutilities.com/savewater for details.

Feeling flushed with success

A third of the water we use each day goes straight down the toilet.

Modern loos with a low or dual flush can save you several litres every time you spend a penny. But if you have an older toilet, fitting a cistern bag device can also make a big difference. We provide these handy little gizmos completely free - visit unitedutilities.com/savewater for details.

And if you have to replace a faulty toilet cistern, consider fitting a dual flush version instead. They don't cost much more than a standard version and they're a great way to reduce the amount of water we flush away.



Using less hot water means you'll
save money on your energy
bills too



Wait a mo...
did you know?

A power shower uses around 52 litres of water, compared to the 32 litres used by a mixer shower (based upon a four minute shower).

Older toilets (pre 2000) use nine litres of water per flush. Modern loos use around six litres.

Try taking a four minute shower instead of a bath. If you can keep the time down, you're sure to keep your costs down. Remember, using less hot water means you'll save money on your energy bills too.

Grow your garden, not your bill

Your garden can be a thirsty place. These tips will keep it looking blooming marvellous, without your bill growing skywards.

A can-do attitude

A watering can uses far less water than a hosepipe or sprinkler, and the smaller droplets are better for your plants.

Be sure to water your garden in the early morning or late evening, when you'll lose less through evaporation. Aim for the plant roots, not the leaves.

Mulching around

Mulching involves placing a protective cover over the soil to retain moisture and keep weeds at bay.

A layer of bark chips, cocoa shells, manure or peat free compost usually does the trick. You can even grow your vegetables through a layer of plastic sheeting.

Hanging basket brilliance

Here's a great homemade idea for your hanging baskets – in the grand tradition of Blue Peter.

Cut the bottom off a plastic bottle, and put a few small holes in the side. Place it in the hanging basket, upside down (with the cap still on). Simply fill this container every time you water your basket. It will spread the water more evenly and avoid spillages.

Choose the right plants

When you're at the garden centre, consider stocking up on drought resistant plants, such as geraniums. They look fabulous, and require a lot less water.

And don't forget to line any clay or terracotta pots with a plastic liner with holes in. It will help to retain moisture.

There's no butt about it

A water butt collects all that lovely rain that falls on your roof, so that you can give your plants a free drink.

Plants love rainwater, so there's no need to waste your tap water. They'll thank you for it, and in the long run, so will your bank balance.

You can order a water butt via our website unitedutilities.com/savewater



Put all that lovely
rainwater to good
use by installing
a water butt

?

Wait a mo...
did you know?

The average UK roof collects 85,000 litres of water each year – more than enough to keep your water butt topped up.

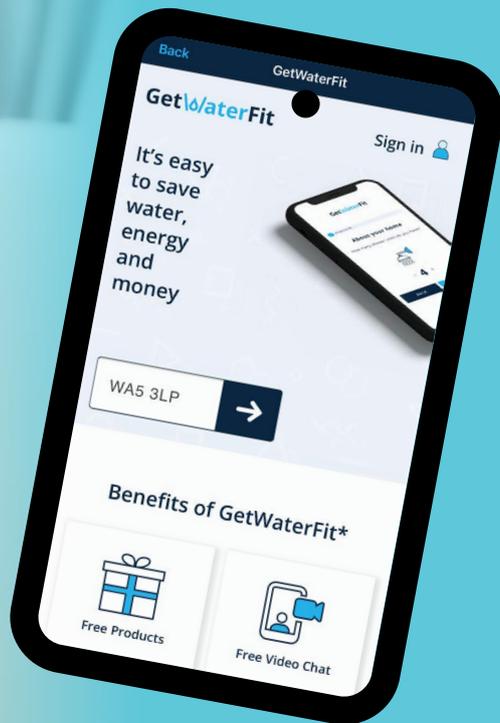
A hosepipe or sprinkler uses more water in one hour than a family of four will use in a day. Ouch!

Sprinklers and hosepipes are not actually good for lawns as they encourage shallow root growth.

GetWaterFit



Have you ever wondered how much water a shower or a dishwasher uses? Or simply want to save water and reduce your carbon footprint? Then **GetWaterFit** is for you!



GetWaterFit helps you calculate how much water you use in your home every day, giving you hints and tips on how to reduce the amount you use. What's more, it can save you money on your water and energy bills, help the environment, raise money for charity and get you some great goodies at the same time – and all for free!

It's easy to do your bit

Getting set up is quick and easy, just enter your postcode, answer a few questions about your water use and **GetWaterFit** will do the rest, suggesting ways to save and helping you to track your progress.

GetWaterFit can even help you make your home more efficient: as soon as you complete the water calculator, you'll be able to instantly order FREE water saving devices, recommended just for you and book a FREE online home water check to help you save even more.

Not only that - when you complete challenges, you'll earn virtual coins which can then be donated to charity.

Just go to **getwaterfit.co.uk** and start saving water, saving money and saving nature today.

Use it, don't lose it

Some leaks can be tricky to spot. They're often hidden from view – on a pipe behind a plastered wall, on a water tank tucked away in the attic, or even on an outside pipe under your garden.

Not only is this wasteful, but it could be damaging your home. And, if your bill is based on a water meter reading, you're literally pouring money down the drain.

That's because your water meter can't tell the difference between a leaky pipe and your everyday water usage – both will make the meter dial turn, and increase your bill. (And please don't ignore those leaking taps or cisterns overflowing into your toilet bowl either – both could be costing you lots of hard earned cash in wasted water.)

Thankfully, there is a simple way to check for leaks which doesn't require you to be a DIY expert!

If you do spot a leak and need a plumber to help get it sorted you can find one in your area by visiting [watersafe.org.uk](https://www.watersafe.org.uk)

You can find much more information on how to spot leaks, and the support we provide, at [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](https://www.unitedutilities.com/bursthme)

How to check for leaks

STEP 1: Turn off all taps and appliances which use water.

STEP 2: Wait 30 minutes, then take a meter reading (including the red digits).

STEP 3: Don't use any water for a further hour (longer if possible, ideally overnight), then take another meter reading.

STEP 4: Compare the two readings. Have they changed? If so, you could have a leak.

Check your loo for leaks

Modern toilet cisterns tend to overflow into the bowl rather than through a pipe in the wall so can waste thousands of litres of water if they go undetected. You may hear a low hissing noise if the cistern is leaking water into the toilet – a simple way to spot this is to place a piece of dry toilet paper on the back of the bowl and see if it becomes wet. If it does, your cistern is probably leaking. Visit [unitedutilities.com/leakyloo](https://www.unitedutilities.com/leakyloo) for further details.

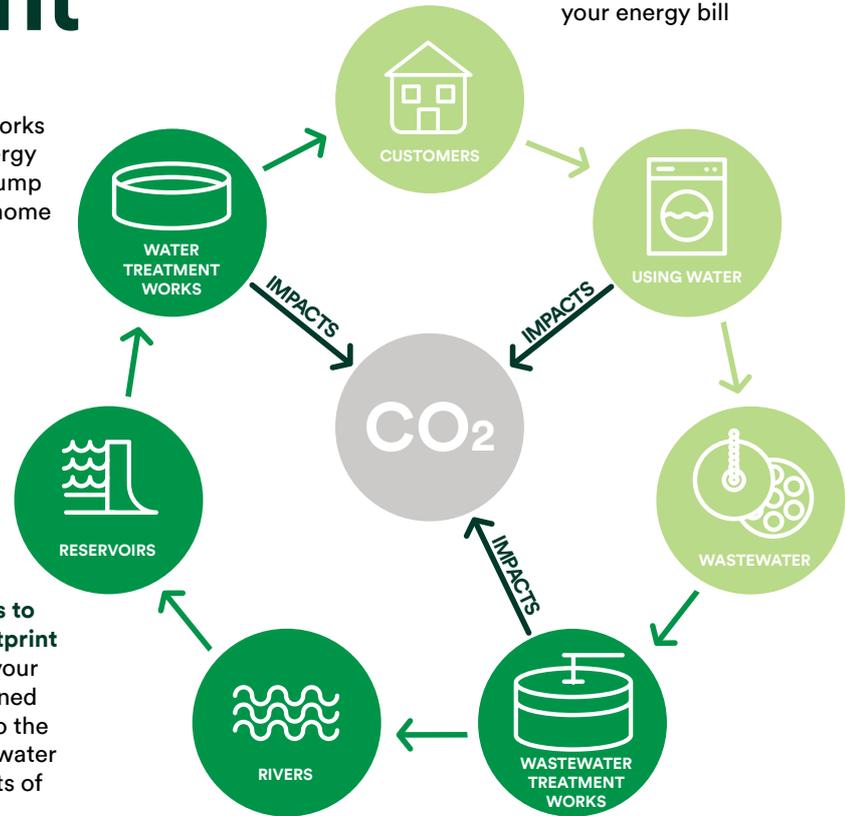
How water impacts the environment

This diagram illustrates how the demand for water directly affects the amount of carbon emissions from power stations. Collecting, cleaning and then pumping water to your home – and the energy required to take away and clean all the wastewater too – requires a lot of energy, so reducing your water use will have a positive impact on your carbon footprint.

Our water treatment works have to use lots of energy to collect, clean and pump drinking water to your home every day

Water efficiency helps to reduce OUR carbon footprint
The water that leaves your home needs to be cleaned before being returned to the environment. Our wastewater treatment works use lots of energy to do this

Water efficiency helps to reduce YOUR carbon footprint
Using water wisely in the home will reduce wastage and reduce your energy bill



Shrink your bill with a water meter

A water meter can be a great way of cutting your bill down to size.

Your charges would be based on the water you use, so the more water you save the more cash you save.

If you live on your own, have a small family or pay a high

fixed bill, you could be quids in.

We have plenty of information about water meters on our website unitedutilities.com/meters, where you can also try out our water calculator to see just how much you could save compared to your existing bill.

We install water meters free of charge, and applying for one couldn't be easier.

You can:

CLICK: apply online at unitedutilities.com/meters

CALL: ring us on **0345 672 2888** and we'll do the rest.

Try it for two years... change back if you don't like it.

If you're unhappy with the savings from your water meter, you can switch back to your old fixed bill, based upon the rateable value of your home, within 24 months.

Helping life flow smoothly

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.



Other leaflets that may be of interest:

This leaflet is one in a series of publications containing useful information for our customers. Others that may be of interest to you are:

- **A simple guide to pipes, drains and sewers**
- **Water meter application pack**
- **Testing your household water meter**
- **A guide to paying your water bill**
- **A guide to our Priority Services**
- **WaterSure application pack**
- **Our complaints procedure**
- **Replacing lead and common supply pipes**
- **Our standards of service**

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: unitedutilities.com/leaflets, or write to: **United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB.**

My Account

Register for My Account and you can go online to pay your bill, tell us you've moved, give a meter reading and go paperless.

Visit unitedutilities.com/myaccount



United Utilities Water Limited,
Haweswater House, Lingley Mere Business Park, Lingley Green Avenue, Warrington WA5 3LP.
Registered in England and Wales. Registered Number 2366678.

In case you need to contact us:



To talk to us about your bill:

0345 672 2888 if you don't have a water meter

0345 672 2999 if you have a water meter

For opening hours please visit unitedutilities.com/contactus where you can also get in touch with us online.

To talk to us about your water and wastewater services:

0345 672 3723

Opening hours: for emergencies we are open 24 hours.

You can also call this number to check the identity of one of our representatives.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, and use a textphone, please dial **18001** followed by the number you require.



You can go online:

Visit our website and click on 'Live chat' to webchat with a member of our team or go to unitedutilities.com/contactus



You can write to us at:

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