

A close-up photograph of two hands cupped together, holding a small amount of water. The hands are positioned in the center of the page, with the water visible in the palm of the right hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

WATER AUDIT GUIDE

WHAT IS A WATER AUDIT? & WHY YOU SHOULD DO ONE

A water audit is a survey of your home that assesses your water usage and identifies ways you can conserve water.

Conserving water is great for the environment, only 2.5% of water on the planet is fresh water, and only 1% of freshwater is easily accessible to us. By conserving water at home it helps to prevent us depleting aquifers, our underground sources of freshwater. It also reduces the amount of water that needs to be treated and transported to your home - lowering the need for fuel, energy and chemicals.

Conserving water is also great for our local infrastructure, the more water we use, the more quickly the equipment in the water and waste water treatment plants needs to be replaced. By conserving water we prolong the life of the water treatment plants and delay costly upgrades to the city infrastructure.

The national average for daily water consumption is 250 litres per person, per day. In Cornwall the average consumption is nearly double! 450L per person per day. Other communities in Ontario, like the city of Guelph have made a conscious effort to lower their water use they now consume only 160L per person per day!

MEASURE YOUR USE

Water use in your home can be measured in a few ways, the first method is to use your water meter. Only 3,000 homes in Cornwall currently have water meters. In order to calculate your daily use simply read your meter at the same time on two consecutive days, the difference will be your daily use! It's always good to repeat this over the course of several days and then calculate a daily average.

If you have a water meter you can also calculate your average using your water bill and dividing your monthly useage by the number of days on your bill to get your daily average.

If you don't have a water meter you can use our water audit table to estimate your daily use! You should record your water use each day for a week and then calculate a daily average at the end. Just mark down each day the number of times an activity is performed in your house, or for how long (i.e. Showers, running the tap).

HOME WATER AUDIT

Not all fixtures are created equal, many newer fixtures and appliances are more energy efficient than older ones. Determine the age of your fixtures and appliances and use the values below to fill in column 9 of the audit table.

Toilet

- If you have a toilet purchased before 1988 use 20 liters per flush
- If you have a toilet purchased between 1988 and 1996 use 13.5 liters per flush
- If you have a toilet purchased after 1996 use 6 liters per flush.

Shower

- If your showerhead was purchased before 1996 use 20 liters per minute
- If your showerhead was purchased after 1996 use 9.5 liters per minute

Faucets

- If your faucet was purchased before 1996 use 11 liters per minute
- If your faucet was purchased after 1996 use 8.5 liters per minute.

Washing Machine

- If you use a front loading or water efficient washing machine use 100 liters per load.
- If you use a top loading machine use 165 liters per load.

HOW TO CONSERVE WATER

After completing the home audit are you surprised about where in your home you use the most water? Here are some ways you can reduce water used in your home without drastically changing your lifestyle!

1. Don't flush any unnecessary waste down the toilet, gum, tissues and more should instead go in the garbage. It wastes less water and prevents clogs in the pipes and at the wastewater treatment plant.
2. Replace appliances and fixtures with more energy efficient ones. Older washing machines, dishwashers, toilets, faucets and showerheads waste more water than newer energy efficient ones.
3. Water your lawn more efficiently, if you water your lawn in the middle of the day most of the water will just evaporate in the heat! It's best to water your lawn for 20 minutes in the early morning or evening to ensure the most water soaking into the ground. During the hottest part of the summer you should water every two to three days.
4. Check for leaks! One of the number one places water is wasted in homes is from leaks - check out the guide on the next page to learn how to check for leaky toilets and pipes in your home.

HOW TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

The easiest way to determine if there is a leak in your home is to manually check pipes, fixtures, and appliances inside and outside your home to find leaks.

Leaks inside your home are the easiest to find, you can visually check for water damage, pools of water and condensation around appliances and exposed pipes. Check for dripping faucets, and make sure that taps, showers and hose connections are off, and that connections on appliances are tightened properly.

Leaks from toilets are often 'silent leaks', the easiest way to detect a leak in your toilet is by putting food dye in the tank and leaving it sit for 30 minutes. If there is coloured water in the bowl then your toilet has a leak.

Leaks outside your home may be more difficult to spot, as they occur in buried pipes. Check your lawn for spots that are muddier, or where the grass is greener or grows more quickly.