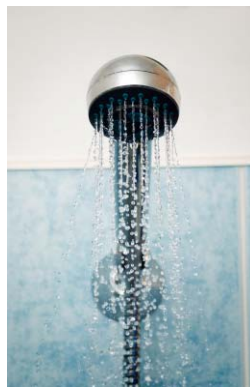


Showers account for roughly 17 percent of the water used indoors and are typically the third-largest use of water in the average home. According to a national study of residential water use, the average American shower uses roughly 17 gallons of water and lasts for around 8 minutes. The average bath uses 24 gallons of water and accounts for roughly 2 percent of the water used indoors. Taking the time to think about how you can conserve water in the shower or bath will help you save water, energy, and money!

Determine how much water your shower uses

The amount of water consumed while taking a shower depends on two main factors: the flow rate of the showerhead, and how long the shower lasts.

- **Flow rate:** Prior to the 1980s, most showerheads used 5 gallons-per-minute (gpm) or more. By the mid-1990s federal requirements mandated that new showerheads use no more than 2.5 gpm. Most showerheads are marked with the flow rate on a small silver button in the center of the head.



- **Shower length:** Changing how long you spend in the shower is the least expensive way to conserve water. A 10-minute shower will use twice as much water as a 5-minute shower taken at the same flow rate. Some people believe that a lower flow rate leads to longer shower times; however, studies show that flow rates have little influence on the duration of the shower.

To determine exactly how much water your showerhead uses, use a flow measuring bag provided in the Portland Water Bureau's home water audit kit.

Order an audit kit and other water conservation devices like a water-efficient showerhead and five-minute shower timer free of charge, by calling (503) 823-4527 or going to the Portland Water Bureau's website: www.portlandoregon.gov/water/conservation.

Replace your showerhead

Another great way to conserve water in the shower is to make sure you are using a water-efficient showerhead. Showerheads generally last about 10 years. As showerheads age, they may wear and leak, or the nozzle holes can enlarge or plug, causing them to use more water or change the pattern of the spray so that the shower spray no longer feels even and comfortable. If you have showerheads that are more than 10 years old, it may be time to replace them.

Today there are many well-performing showerheads on the market that flow at 1.5 gpm or less! The performance and quality of showerheads can vary greatly. Talk to representatives at your local plumbing supply store and visit the WaterSense web site to make sure you purchase a showerhead that is right for you.

WaterSense labeling

WaterSense is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) product labeling program for quality, water-efficient products. The EPA will soon be labeling



showerheads that have been tested for performance and are water-efficient. Look for the WaterSense label on showerheads in 2010. More information can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

Energy savings

Hot water for showers is one of the biggest energy users in the home after the furnace. Switching to a water-efficient showerhead not only cuts down on water use, but also the energy needed to make and keep that water hot.

Water consumption in the bath

The amount of water used while taking a bath varies depending on the size of the bathtub and the level to which the user fills the tub. The American bathtub size has generally decreased over time and today the typical modern bathtub (non-jetted) holds between 25 to 45 gallons. A person who only fills the tub half-way will consume approximately 20 gallons while bathers that fill the tub up to (or exceeding) the overflow valve will use 40 to 50 gallons.

To reduce water used while taking a bath follow these helpful hints:

- **Fill the tub to your belly button.** Only fill the bathtub as much as you need.
- **Use a small tub insert when possible.** Bathing babies, small children, and pets requires much less water, so use a small tub insert or baby bathtub.
- **Don't over fill the tub.** Over filling the tub forces unneeded water into the overflow drain.

Estimated Water Use by Duration and Bathing Method						
Device	Duration of Event in Minutes					
	5	10	15	20	25	30
Tub half-full	20 gallons	20 gallons	20 gallons	20 gallons	20 gallons	20 gallons
Tub full	45 gallons	45 gallons	45 gallons	45 gallons	45 gallons	45 gallons
Whirlpool tub	80 gallons	80 gallons	80 gallons	80 gallons	80 gallons	80 gallons
1.5 gpm showerhead	8 gallons	15 gallons	23 gallons	30 gallons	38 gallons	45 gallons
2.5 gpm showerhead	13 gallons	25 gallons	38 gallons	50 gallons	63 gallons	75 gallons
5.0 gpm showerhead	25 gallons	50 gallons	75 gallons	100 gallons	125 gallons	150 gallons
	Extra-Efficient	Efficient	Non-Efficient		Wasteful	

Table is adapted from the Alliance for Water Efficiency:

http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/Residential_Shower_Introduction.aspx