

## Maximize your faucet's efficiency

- Avoid running water unnecessarily — turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Install high-efficiency aerators on all faucets. Visit [portlandonline.com/water](http://portlandonline.com/water) to order your FREE aerators.

## Other ways to save water

- Take shorter showers.
- Find and repair toilet leaks.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines when full, or adjust water levels to match load size.
- Install high-efficiency fixtures and appliances throughout your home.

For more information or to request materials:

### Portland Water Bureau Water Conservation Program

503-823-4527

[conserve@water.ci.portland.or.us](mailto:conserve@water.ci.portland.or.us)

[www.portlandonline.com/water](http://www.portlandonline.com/water)



**Saving water  
makes cents!**



**Portland Water Bureau**  
WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM  
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Nick Fish, Commissioner  
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# Yes!

you can

# Fix a Leaky Faucet!



# The source of Portland's high quality drinking water is the Bull Run watershed.

Water flows nearly 30 miles from the Bull Run to more than 700,000 Portland-area customers. Sixteen percent of all water used in the average home comes from the faucet. Dripping faucets are one of the places where we waste water in our homes.

In Portland, leaks not only put stress on the drinking water system, but also send clean water to the wastewater treatment plant. You can reduce your impact on the environment and save money and water by repairing some leaks yourself. Follow these easy steps for repairing leaking faucets.

## Step 1 - Find the leak

Watch the leak to see where it is coming from - the handle 3, the top stem 4, or the faucet itself 12. Feel the temperature of the leaking water to see whether the faucet is leaking hot or cold water. You may have to fix one handle unit, not both.

## Step 2 - Turn off the water

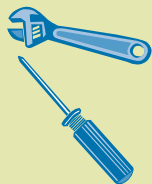
Shut off the water supply valves under the sink. If you cannot locate them or if they will not shut off, shut off the master supply to the house. Turn on both faucet handles to let the water drain.

## Step 3 - Gather materials & prepare the work space

Make sure you protect any shiny parts of your faucet by wrapping them with a couple of layers of masking tape. This will keep them from getting scratched by your wrench. Place a towel in the sink to cover the drain. This will prevent any small parts from falling down the drain.

## Tools you may need to fix your faucet:

- A roll of 1/2" Teflon® tape
- A roll of 3/4" masking tape
- Flat head screwdriver
- Phillips head screwdriver
- Adjustable crescent wrench
- Petroleum jelly
- Replacement O-rings and/or washers
- Hand towel



## Step 4 - Remove the faucet handle

If there is a decorative plastic button 1 on top of the handle, slip the blade of your flathead screwdriver under the edge and twist the screwdriver gently. The button should pop off. Unscrew the top screw 2 and pull or pry off the faucet handle 3. It may stick due to rust. Take it off as gently as possible. *Note: Never bang the handle - the inner workings might break.*

## Step 5 - Remove the stem

Beneath the faucet handle 3 is the top stem 4. Fit your wrench to the large six-sided packing nut 5 and loosen it. It may unscrew in either direction, so try turning it the opposite way if it does not loosen on your first try. Once the packing nut is loose, unscrew it with your fingers until you can lift the whole stem out of the faucet handle.

## Step 6 - Repair the leak

### Handle Leak

Cover the threads beneath the packing nut 5 with Teflon® tape and tighten it gently. Never overtighten this nut. If the leak persists, remove the nut entirely and replace the nylon washer underneath. Reassemble the faucet (see step 7).

### Stem Leak

Unscrew the stem from the six-sided packing nut to expose the plastic O-ring 8. Pinch the O-ring on the stem to get a finger hold, and then pull it off. Replace with an O-ring the exact same size that has been lubricated with a little petroleum jelly. Reassemble the faucet (see step 7).

### Faucet Leak

On the bottom of the stem, the bottom screw 10 holds a rubber washer 9 in place. Unscrew it, put a new washer of the same size in place, and then replace the screw. Reassemble the faucet (see step 7).

### Other Problems

While some faucet repairs are easy, others are more complicated. Know your limitations — call a plumber if you have any concerns about how to make a repair. The Portland Water Bureau will not be responsible for any damage to your home or faucet because of faulty repairs.

## Step 7 - Reassemble the faucet

Rub a little petroleum jelly on the threads of the bottom stem 7. Screw the stem back into place, tightening it with your wrench. Put the handle back on.

## Step 8 - Test your work

After reassembling the faucet, turn the water back on. Watch your faucet for leaks.

