

fact sheet



How to fix a dripping tap

A dripping tap can waste 24,000 litres of water a year, and usually all that is wrong is a washer which needs replacing.

Armed with these instructions, you should be able to change the washer yourself in less than twenty minutes (and in five minutes once you know what you're doing). It will cost you virtually nothing.

You'll need a shifting spanner (or a set of spanners), a new washer and a rag. You can get washers and spanners from your local hardware store and they usually look like the picture on the right. Most taps use 12mm washers, but if you're unsure of what size you'll need, follow the steps below to remove your worn washer, and take it with you to the hardware store.

Find your water meter. It's usually near your front fence, and usually looks like the picture to the right. **Turn off the tap at the meter**, and then go inside and check that the water is definitely off (a trickle will come out of the taps, but then it should stop). If it's not off water will go everywhere when you start unscrewing things!

Take the top off your tap. Usually you just need to unscrew the little disc at the top with hot or cold written on it (or pull it off and unscrew the nut under it). Most nuts and bolts and all the bits of tap you will come across in changing a washer unscrew in the same direction you would turn on a tap (anti-clockwise) and screw in the direction you would turn off a tap (clockwise).

Then pull off the handle (the bit which turns). If there's a cover over the bottom of the tap, you'll need to take this off too. Wrap a cloth around it first so you don't scratch it, and undo it with a shifting spanner.

The top of the tap body should now be visible. Unscrew it with a shifting spanner and pull it out.

The washer is the small rubber and plastic bit (or sometimes rubber and metal bit) at the bottom of the tap body. Replace the washer and reassemble the tap, making sure you don't over tighten anything.

Turn the tap off. Turn the water back on at the meter. If your tap is still leaking, the problem is not just the washer. You may need to call a plumber.

For a video tutorial on changing a washer, see <http://www.savewater.com.au/how-to-save-water/in-the-home/video-tutorials>

