

## Faucet Fix-Its

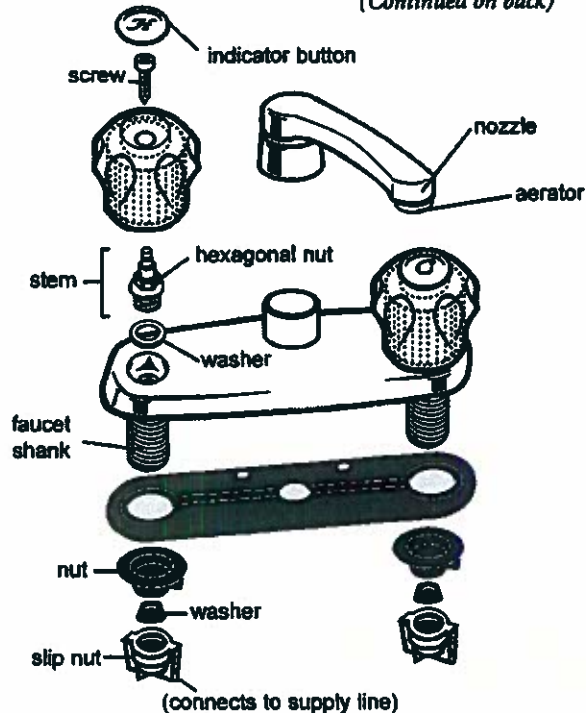
Water faucets are either washerless or compression-type. A compression-type faucet uses a washer to place pressure over a pipe opening when the faucet is closed, thus shutting off the water. A washerless faucet does not mean it will never leak, but that parts will last longer since their design cuts down on wear and tear. *The most common mistake in faucet repair is not bringing the original parts with you when purchasing replacement parts.*

## Compression Faucets

Compression faucets may not look alike, but they all are similar in their operation and repair. The exact point where a leak appears on a faucet is a good clue to finding its cause:

- ✓ Worn upper faucet washer or corroded seat usually causes a spout drip.
- ✓ Leaks at the spindle or stem result from a loose cap nut, worn cone, or worn bonnet packing.
- ✓ Cap leak or water oozing below the cap nut indicates a worn bib or packing washer.
- ✓ Leak at the base of the faucet results from water seeping past a worn lower faucet washer.

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To repair a leaky compression type faucet, do the following:

1. Turn off the water supply at the valve nearest the faucet. If you are working on a hose bib, this is usually the main shut-off valve to your home. Next, open the tap to drain the faucet. Before removing any parts, remember to pay attention to the order in which you remove any parts. Consider making a sketch. Remove the handle screw and lift the handle off the spindle. Unscrew the cap nut. Use a protective cover on the sink counter and the faucet to avoid damage. Using finger-pressure, unscrew the stem and lift it out. Remove the screw from the bottom end of the spindle. Scrape away any worn washer parts. Be careful not to damage the rim.
2. To install a new upper faucet washer, remove the screw from the bottom end of the spindle. Take either the old washer or the complete spindle unit with you to purchase the correct size and shape (flat or conical) replacement washer. Double check to make sure the replacement is like the worn washer.
3. Check the seat (located down inside the faucet) to make sure it is not rough. If the seat is scarred or rough, a set-dressing kit should be used to grind the seat to a smooth finish.
4. To replace the packing, pry out the old packing washer with a screwdriver. If a washer is used, replace it with a new one. If there is no washer, wrap the spindle tightly with "packing wicking."
5. Reassemble the faucet. Tighten the cap nut just enough to prevent leaking. If you over-tighten the nut, it will cause rapid wear on the stem. Turn the shut-off valves to the on position and check the faucet for leaks.
6. Repeat steps 1 to 5 for both handles of a mixing faucet.

## Washerless and Single-Lever Faucets

Every washerless and single-lever faucet model is different. When repairs are required, you should purchase the repair kit specified for your model, which includes instructions and the parts that generally will be worn. By replacing all the parts at once, the faucet should function for several years without needing further repair.

For more information about indoor water conservation call 1-800-776-5272, Ext. 2230 or e-mail [waterconservation@lcra.org](mailto:waterconservation@lcra.org).



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# Household Leak Detection and Repair

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## YOUR LEAK REPAIR CHECKLIST

Plumbing leaks waste water and cost you money. Finding and fixing leaks is easy and inexpensive. Start by fixing all visible leaks, both inside and outside your home or business. If you have a drip at a faucet or toilet, you usually can repair it yourself with a few simple tools in less than one hour.

- ❑ **Toilet Leaks** - Leaks inside your toilet can waste up to 3200 gallons per day. Follow the steps in this pamphlet to fix common problems.
- ❑ **Faucet/Showerhead Leaks** - Faucet leaks are easy to spot. If a faucet is leaking hot water, it is also costing you money to heat the water. Remember to check all sinks and bathtubs.
- ❑ **Outdoor Leaks**
  - ✓ Check all hose bibs (outside faucets) for visible drips or wet spots on the ground. If the faucet is leaking follow the instructions for repairing compression faucets.
  - ✓ Check hoses and nozzles annually for leaks and repair or replace if necessary.
  - ✓ If you have an outside irrigation system, visually check it each month for broken heads and wet spots along lines and repair the leaks.
- ❑ **Invisible Leaks** - After you have repaired all visible leaks, check for invisible leaks.
  1. Make sure no water is in use inside or outside the house (don't forget automatic icemakers).
  2. Find your water meter.
  3. Record the current meter reading. Wait 15 minutes. (Remember: no water should be used during this period.)
  4. Read the meter again. If the reading has changed, you have a leak. If you cannot find the leak using the tips in this brochure, you should consult a plumber.

## Toilet Tune-ups

Most toilet leaks are easy to fix. Here are simple repair steps to follow:

- \* **Water Level Adjustment** - If the water level is too high in the toilet tank, it will spill into the overflow tube, causing the water to run. The float can be adjusted by turning the adjustment screw clockwise. If you have a newer model with the float on the ballcock assembly, lower the wire link using the "v" shaped clip. The water should shut off one inch below the top of the overflow tube, or some toilets may have a fill line on the inside of the tank to use as a guide. It may take a couple of tries to get the water level where you want it.
- \* **Handle Adjustment** - If you have to jiggle the handle to keep the toilet from "running," the guide-wire or the handle itself may be sticking. Adjust the nut that secures it in the toilet tank. If that does not work, you may need to replace the handle. Remember to take it with you when looking for a replacement.

- \* **Dye Test** - Most people think that their toilet does not leak. To find out if yours does, use the dye tablets attached to this pamphlet to test for silent toilet leaks. You will need one dye tablet per toilet. Place the tablet in the toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes and **DO NOT FLUSH!** If colored water appears in the bowl, you have a silent leak and will most likely need to replace the flapper.
- \* **Flapper Replacement** - If the flapper ball is worn, it should be removed and replaced. When removing or replacing the flapper, note how the chain is adjusted before the old flapper is removed. You also should check the valve seat for scale or corrosion. If the surface of the valve seat is rough, get some 400-grit wet or dry sandpaper and lightly go over the entire surface. Repeat the process until the surface is smooth. If cleaning does not work, you can purchase a combination flapper/valve seat that is made to fit over the existing valve seat. Make sure to take the existing parts with you when purchasing replacements.
- \* **Still Leaking?** - If none of these steps solve the problem, contact a plumber to repair the toilet.

