

# Dos And Don'ts Of Home Plumbing

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## Dos And Don'ts Of Home Plumbing

DO - Run very hot water into your kitchen sink drain either by boiling water on stove or from your faucet, then fill one side of your sink and plunge.

DO - When plunging your sink, plug up one side with a cloth and hold.

DO - When using your garbage disposal, run hot and cold water at full pressure.

DO - Fill up sink after using your disposal and drain.

DO - If you have a dishwasher, use after using your garbage disposal.

DO - Remove the aerator on your kitchen faucet when pressure is slow and clean, unscrew by hand or use channel pliers.

DO - Remove the screws from your kitchen wash bowl and bath tub faucet, and put a few drops of household oil in each screw hole or under handle if removable.

DO - At least twice a year clean out the inside of your toilet tank. When cleaning tank, turn off the water, flush toilet once, add small amount of cleaning detergent inside tank to water remaining, use a cloth or brush to clean.

DO - Clean out holes under toilet seat and rim of the bowl - can use small end of a pocket knife.

DO - Clean out 3/4" hole in the bottom of toilet bowl.

DO - Replace rubber tank ball at this time if needed.

DO - Adjust water level in toilet tank, 1" below top of 3/4" overflow pipe. To adjust type with 1/4" rod and metal or plastic float ball, put both hands on rod and bend end of rod towards float ball down, this lowers water level. To raise water level, bend rod up .

DO - When plunging your bathroom sink or bath tub use a cloth and plug up the overflow and hold tight. It's a good idea to plunge your drains before they stop up.

DO - Remove the stoppers and clean down pipe where stopper connects.

DO - When finished plunging, fill wash bowl until it runs int

overflow. If you have a small type spring brush, use to clean overflow.

DO - Spray disinfectant cleaner into overflow.

DO - If bath tub is slow draining and has the lever at overflow for stopper, remove bolts, and pull wire, lift lever out and clean hair from wire.

DO - Oil parts in toilet tank that are above the water level, handle and ballcock valve.

DO - If you have trouble with tree roots in your sanitary sewer, purchase some copper sulphate in blue chunk form, put a sizeable amount on your basement floor drain strainer, let cold water run over it until it dissolves.

DON'T - Put coffee grounds in your sink drains.

DON'T - Use drain cleaners containing lye.

DON'T - Poke any wire or rod from your sink into drain.

DON'T - Have a shelf above your china sinks with heavy objects that could fall into sink. Will crack china sink or chip cast iron type.

DON'T - Use your toilet tank lid for a shelf.

DON'T - Have a knick-knack shelf above your toilet.

DON'T - Pour a bucket of dirty water into your toilet; may contain scrub rag.

DON'T - Pour hot water into toilet; temperature change will crack the bowl.

DON'T - Put any type cleaning device into your toilet tank.

DO - Just clean by hand.

DON'T - Hang wire type odor tablet in toilet bowl.

DON'T - Put a brick in your toilet tank to save water

DO - Adjust water level.

DON'T - Use the toilet bowl for a scrub tub.

DON'T - Leave diapers soaking in bowl.

DON'T - Throw disposable diapers in toilet, burn them.

DON'T - Keep your waste basket in kitchen and bathroom under the sink. Keeps bumping pipes and causing leaks.

DON'T - Throw sanitary napkins into toilet; burn them.

DON'T - When painting around the house, paint any of your copper water lines.

DON'T - Forget at least twice a year to put a garden hose on the boiler drain at the bottom of your hot water tank and run until the water clears up. Spray this valve with a little oil also. I use WD-40.

DON'T - Forget to check your flu pipe from your hot water tank to the chimney for leakage of fumes.

DON'T - Leave your water valves rust shut. Put some oil on the stem and open and close them a few times. If it leaks at the stem use a crescent wrench and tighten bonnet nut at the handle. Spray a little oil on the whole valve. Keeps from rusting.

Here are some of the things I have removed years of home plumbing calls:

Small bottles	yo-yo ' s
tooth brushes	toys of all kinds
wire odor tablets	cigarette lighters
golf balls	lids and caps
car keys	hair curlers
false teeth	cream jars
wallets	combs
knick-knacks	pens and pencils

DO - Keep these items away from the toilet.

DON'T - Let the children play in the bathroom with toys small enough to go down your toilet trap.

DO - Get in the habit of putting the back of the toilet seat down before flushing.

But if you haven't put into affect my DO's and DON'Ts, and you flush the toilet and the water in the bowl starts coming up and not down, quickly remove the tank lid, reach into the middle bottom of tank and push the rubber ball or flapper back down over the outlet. Then shut off the water supply.

Now if you are sure you haven't let something like the above listed objects fall into the toilet, you can usually use a plunger to open the toilet. But if you are missing something

from the toilet area that could be in the bowl, you will have to use a toilet auger to try and retrieve the object. If you can't remove it with the auger, the toilet will have to be lifted.

DO - If you have a water leak from below your bathroom directly below Your bath tub shower, and it only leaks when YOU take a shower, here's what to look for:

DO - Check the entire tile wall on the inside area of the bath tub for cracks, etc. To repair, use a tube of tub & tile caulking seal.

DO - Check the wall, especially around the handles and the spout of the faucet, seal all openings with caulking.

DO - Check the inside edge of the shower door track.

DO - If the water leak is below the toilet, first check the water pipe where tank and bowl are connected together. If there is no sign of water on the floor around the pipe, chances are your toilet needs to be lifted and a new wax ring installed (refer to toilet installation).

DO - If you go on vacation or are away from home for a few days, always shut off your water supply to your home.

DO - Keep heat on where water pipes and drain pipes are located in your home, when temperature is 32 degrees or colder.

DO - If you can't put heat in an area where water pipes are, use an electric heat tape.

DO - If your kitchen sink is located on an outside wall, leave cupboard doors open in severe cold weather.

DO - Shut off all outside faucets in cold weather if they are not of the frost proof type.

DO - If you are closing up a home in the wintertime and there will be no heat in the home, shut off the water supply at the street or in the basement.

DO - Open all faucets in the home and leave them open.

DO - Open drain at bottom of hot water tank and drain.

DO - Remove all water from toilet tank and bowl.

DO - Put permanent Anti-freeze in toilet bowl and a small amount in the bottom of the toilet tank.

DO - Put anti-freeze in all sink drains and bath and shower drains, enough to fill the traps.

DO - If you wish, remove traps on sinks, but be sure and plug up open line, to keep out sewer gas fumes.

## HOW TO INSTALL A NEW TOILET

If your toilet is old and in need of repairs, it is really cheaper to install a new one. This is the easiest of all the plumbing jobs in the home to do and if you follow my simple instructions you can put yours in yourself.

1. Shut off the water to the toilet, use a bucket and a cloth or a sponge to remove the water left in tank and bowl after you flush the toilet.
2. Using a pair of channel pliers, or a small pipe wrench (8"), remove the nut where the water line fastens to the ballcock valve under the left side of the bottom of the tank. Next use a small crescent wrench, remove the two 1/4" nuts holding the bowl to the floor flange. Remove old toilet. Remove the water line from the valve or fitting at floor or wall.
3. Now you are ready to install your new toilet. Put the two 1/4" bolts in the side holes of the flange with the bolt head in the flange. Put some of the old wax at this spot to hold the bolts straight up and across from each other. Put new wax ring on flange, flat side up if tapered.
4. Set new bowl only straight down so it centers on wax ring and both bolts come through holds on each side of bowl. Sit on bowl facing wall until your weight puts bowl flush with the floor. Put metal washers and nuts on bolts and tighten until snug. Do not over-tighten as you can crack the bowl. Tighten these again after toilet is completely installed and filled with water.
5. Next put 2" rubber gasket on tank where it sets on the bowl, put rubber washers on bolts provided under the bolt head so they will be on the inside of the tank. Pick up tank and set on bowl over holes in bowl where bolts go through. Sit on bowl facing wall. Put bolts on from the inside of the tank into holes in bowl, put on metal washers and nuts and tighten. Hold tank level and tighten so it brings tank down level. Use a large screw driver inside tank and a crescent wrench or end wrench to back up nut under bowl. Tighten with screw driver. Hook water supply to tank, turn on water, check for leaks, snug up the bolts holding bowl to floor. If there is a space between the back of the tank and the wall, put a spacer of sort there to

brace tank. A piece of wood or hard rubber works fine.

#### PARTS NEEDED:

Toilet bowl

Toilet tank

Toilet seat

Two 1/4" bolts for bowl to flange

Wax ring

20" water supply with fitting at valve or floor connection

Now DO put my DOs and DON'Ts into use, and you new toilet will never need a plumber!

#### WATER CONSERVATION BEGINS AT HOME

I believe if we tried we could cut our water use in half. There are many more ways other than the ones I have in my report. Have an idea of your own ? write it down. Sometimes some things we don't think are worthwhile are great ideas.

Like the young man who went into one of the larger toothpaste companies and told the president of the company if he paid him a sizeable amount of money, he would give him his idea on how he could double his toothpaste business. The company president agreed, and the young man said, okay here's what you do, make the hole in all of your toothpaste tubes twice the size it is now, this will double the use of your toothpaste, and double your sales.

#### HERE ARE SOME OF MY IDEAS

The first thing to do is to check your entire plumbing system for leaks - leaking faucets, water pipes, etc. If you don't think a leaking faucet will waste water, put the stopper in a sink where one is leaking overnight.

The toilet is the worst water waster of all. Flush the toilet and wait until it supposedly shuts off, then listen at the tank for a hissing or trickling sound, if you hear a noise here's what to do, check the rubber tank ball or flapper in the middle of the toilet tank at the bottom. If the ball is old and has lost its shape, replace it. Also using a fine steel wool pad, clean off the seat under the ball till it is smooth. If the noise is from the ballcock valve on the left side of the tank and is the type with the quarter inch rod with a metal or plastic float ball, lift up on the rod, if the noise stops, then starts again after you let go, chances are your ballcock valve is bad and needs replaced. If when you are holding the quarter

inch rod up and the water leaks out of the tank, and you have already replaced the rubber ball or the flapper, check the lift wire or the chain from the ball to the handle, and make sure it is not dropping the ball wrong, or is on a bind.

**WHEN YOU FLUSH YOUR TOILET AT ANY TIME, ALWAYS WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE SURE IT SHUTS OFF, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE LEAVING THE HOUSE. IF YOU ARE LEAVING YOUR HOUSE FOR A VACATION OR ONLY A COUPLE DAYS ITS A GOOD IDEA TO SHUT YOUR MAIN WATER VALVE OFF. IT MIGHT SAVE A GREAT WATER LOSS, AS WELL AS A LOT OF DAMAGE TO YOUR HOME. HERE'S WHY:**

I had a plumbing call to a home where the people had gone on a vacation for two weeks. The last person to leave the home flushed the toilet and did not wait to be sure it shut off before leaving.

**HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED:**

The toilet stopped up when the last person flushed it. The rubber ball did not drop back straight and the water ran over the toilet bowl for two weeks.

**HERES WHAT THEY FOUND WHEN THEY RETURNED HOME AFTER TWO WEEKS:**

- The bathroom and the kitchen floors had warped.
- The tile and the carpet was ruined.
- The plaster ceiling in the kitchen had fallen.
- The woodwork and the doors were all warped.
- The formica counter tops in the kitchen had lifted.
- Below the kitchen in the basement, the father and son's very expensive car and train set were severely damaged.

NOW this was in the winter time, and the furnace was left on to keep the water pipes from freezing. The water went down from the first floor and leaked onto the furnace which made steam, the steam went into every room in the house and caused the wallpaper to fall off the walls in every room.

**LOOK AT THE WATER WASTED HERE AS WELL AS THE \$ COST**

- When using your bathroom or kitchen sink, don't leave the water run when you don't need to.
- Take shorter showers.

- Turn off the shower when you are lathering up.
- When using your washing machine, and only washing a small amount of clothes, set the water level for less water.

#### TRY THIS:

Take the quarter inch refill tube that goes from the toilet ballcock valve into the overflow pipe in the toilet tank, and fasten it so the water from it goes into the tank and helps to fill it faster. You can only do this if when your toilet is flushed and retraps itself.

While the toilet is refilling after being flushed, it doesn't take as much water as is put into the bowl from the refill tube. Every little bit helps.

#### HERE IS A GOOD WATER SAVER

If the water pressure in your home is more than you need. DO THIS.

Close your main water valve until your pressure slows down some, but is still enough for your needs. Or do this to the smaller valves under your kitchen and bathroom sin. A lot of homes have a lot more pressure than they need.

#### UNDERGROUND WATER LEAKS

Sometimes there are water leaks underground between your home, the street, or your outside water supply.

These go undetected for years. Here's one way you can check your line for a leak. Put your ear on the water meter in your home and put your finger in your other ear. If you hear a hissing sound like pressure releasing you probably have a leak in your line, be sure no one is running water in the house when doing this. Most of the time a leak underground will eventually come to the top of the ground, but I have had some leaks that I found had worked their way into the sewer line under it, and had been leaking for years.

To check this, remove the clean out plug on your sewer line to the street. Put your ear at that point and listen, if you have a leak you will be able to hear it in the sewer line. Again be sure no one is running water...

## HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS A CITY COULD SAVE WATER

In areas where the water pressure is greater than needed, the city water department could install a pressure regulator valve at the water meter in these homes to control the amount water used.

Another good water saver would be to require in new home construction that a small spring valved wall hung urinal be installed in all bathrooms .

A TOILET WHEN FLUSHED USES ABOUT SIX GALLONS OF WATER.

A SMALL WALL HUNG SPRING VALVED URINAL USES LESS THAN ONE GALLON.

LOOK AT THE WATER THAT COULD BE SAVED HERE.

HERE IS A TWENTY FIVE YEAR WATER LEAK...

I worked as a maintenance plumber in one of the larger hospitals in the area. Here's what I found one day.

The kitchen of the hospital had a tile floor, and at one area the tile floor was always hot, so much so the workers were always complaining of being too warm.

One day while working on the water piping, we had to turn off the water for a long time.

I later happened to kneel down on the floor where it was always hot. It had cooled down. When we turned the water back on we found a water line leaking under the floor where it was always hot. We repaired the hot water pipe, turned the water back on, and the floor stayed cool...

I then began to explain to the kitchen supervisor what we had found. She said she had worked here for twenty five years and the tile floor in that area had always been hot...

A twenty five year water leak. Can you believe the water loss here. I bet if we checked all over the good old U.S.A. we could find some water being wasted.