

Faucet Leaks



DETECT & FIX LEAKS

Detect and Fix Faucet Leaks

HOW TO DETECT A FAUCET LEAK:

A leaky faucet is a common household water waster. A steady drip at the rate of one drop per second wastes 192 gallons of water in a month! The first step in fixing a leaky faucet is to identify the faucet type. Faucets are divided into two basic types: compression faucets and washerless faucets.

Compression faucets, sometimes called stem faucets, always have two handles, one for hot water and one for cold water. When the handle is turned on, the stem rotates. The threads cause the stem to rise, moving a rubber washer away from the faucet seat and allowing water to flow. Then turning the faucet off, you can sometimes feel the rubber washer being squeezed against the faucet seat to stop the flow of water.

Washerless faucets typically have just one handle that controls both the hot and the cold water. They are known for providing years of trouble-free service because their design minimizes friction and wear. There are three main types of washerless faucets:

- A ball faucet has a single handle over a dome-shaped cap.
- A cartridge faucet has a narrow plastic or metal cartridge inside the faucet body. Most cartridge faucets are single-handle model, but some two-handled faucets use cartridge designs.
- A disk faucet has a single handle and a wide cylinder inside the faucet body.

Helpful Tips:

- Turn off the water before you start any faucet repair. The shutoff valves for indoor faucets are underneath the sink. Turn the left knob clockwise to shut off the hot water; turn the right knob clockwise to shut off the cold water.
- Before disassembling a faucet, cover the sink with a towel to protect it from dropped tools and to prevent small parts from going down the drain.
- When dismantling parts, line them up in the order and orientation in which they were removed to make it easier to properly reassemble the pieces.
- When using metal tools on a polished surface, protect the polished surface with a rag or several layers of masking tape.
- Take the old parts with you when you go to a plumbing or hardware store to buy replacement parts. This will help ensure that you get the right parts for the job.
- Most faucet repair kits come with good instructions. Follow them!

HOW TO FIX A FAUCET LEAK:

Fixing a Compression Faucet:

To fix a leaking compression faucet, first determine whether it is a hot water leak or a cold water leak. If you cannot tell from the temperature of the dripping water, turn off the hot water supply valve under the sink. If the drip stops, it is the hot water stem that is leaking. If the drip continues, the culprit is the cold water faucet.

- Remove the handle screw. (It may be hidden under a decorative cap or behind the handle). Remove the handle.
- Unscrew the retaining (packing) nut.
- Remove the stem by either jiggling it from the valve seat or unscrewing it counterclockwise with a wrench.
- To replace the washer on a standard stem, remove the seat screw at the bottom of the stem and pry out the old washer with a screwdriver. Install a new washer.
- For some compression faucets, you will also need to replace the packing washer or packing string, which prevents water from leaking at the faucet handle.
- Check the valve seat (the metal that the washer seals on) for damage by running your finger along the rim of the seat. If it is pitted and not completely smooth, remove the valve seat using a seat wrench and install a new valve seat.
- Reassemble the parts.

Fixing a Ball Faucet:

- With an Allen wrench, loosen the setscrew at the base of the handle. Remove the handle.
- Underneath the handle you'll find a protective cap with an adjusting ring. Sometimes a dripping ball faucet can be fixed by tightening this ring. Turn it clockwise gently.
- If tightening the ring doesn't stop the leak, close both shutoff valves beneath the sink.
- Unscrew and lift off the cap, plastic cam, cam gasket, and rotating ball.
- Rubber faucet seats are held against the bottom of the ball by small springs. Using the point of the screwdriver or a pair of needle-nose pliers, gently remove the two seats and springs. Remove any loose debris.
- Install new seats and springs from a repair kit. (Follow the instructions provided in the repair kit). Also, lift the spout and replace the two O-rings. (Apply a light coating of petroleum jelly or valve grease to the new O-rings before installing them).
- Reassemble the faucet and tighten the adjusting ring enough to prevent leaks without making the handle difficult to operate.

Fixing a Cartridge Faucet:

- Shut off both water supply valves underneath the sink.
- Remove the decorative cap (if any) and remove the handle screw. Remove the handle.
- Unscrew the retainer nut.
- Some models have a U-shaped clip that holds in the cartridge. Use needle-nose pliers or the tip of a screwdriver to remove the clip.
- The cartridge fits tightly in the faucet body. Remove the cartridge by pulling up on it firmly with a pair of pliers.
- Replaced damaged O-rings and lubricate the new ones with petroleum jelly or valve grease. If the cartridge is worn or damaged, replace it with an identical part. (Cartridge repair kits typically contain a new cartridge, new O-rings and grease).
- Install the new cartridge, making sure that the notch in the stem faces the sink.
- Reattach the U-clip, retainer nut, handle, and handle screw and decorative cap.

Fixing a disk Faucet:

- Shut off both water supply valves underneath the sink.
- Remove the setscrew from the handle. Lift off the handle and remove the body cover (escutcheon cap).
- Remove the disk assembly as a unit by unscrewing the mounting screws. Pull the disk out.
- Turn the disk over and remove any dirt lodged between the ceramic disks.
- Remove the rubber seals from the cylinder openings. Clean the cylinder openings and flush out an.
- Remove the disk assembly as a unit by unscrewing the mounting screws. Pull the disk out.
- Turn the disk over and remove any dirt lodged between the ceramic disks.
- Remove the rubber seals from the cylinder openings. Clean the cylinder openings and flush out any debris.
- Install new rubber seals and reassemble the faucet.
- If the faucet still leaks, replace the entire disk assembly with a new one.

If your faucet still leaks call a professional plumber.