

Household Water Saving Tips: A Guide for Water-Scarce Pakistan

1. Understanding Pakistan's Water Crisis

Pakistan is rapidly transitioning from a water-stressed country to a water-scarce one. In 1951, the per capita water availability was over 5,200 cubic meters; today, it has plummeted to dangerously close to the 1,000 cubic meter threshold that defines absolute water scarcity. With a growing population, inefficient agricultural practices, and the looming threat of climate change accelerating glacial melt, conserving water at the household level is no longer optional—it is a critical civic duty.

2. Bathroom Conservation Strategies

The bathroom accounts for the largest share of indoor water use.

- **Fix Leaks Immediately:** A single dripping tap can waste upwards of 10,000 liters of water annually. A silently leaking toilet flush can waste hundreds of liters a day. Check for leaks regularly and repair worn washers and valves.
- **Change Bathing Habits:** A standard 10-minute shower can use up to 150 liters of water. Reducing shower time to 5 minutes drastically cuts usage. Better yet, revert to the traditional bucket-and-mug bath, which effectively uses less than 30 liters per wash.
- **Mind the Tap:** Never leave the tap running while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing your hands. Only turn the water on when you actively need to rinse.

3. Kitchen Conservation Techniques

Kitchen activities offer numerous opportunities to save water.

- **Washing Dishes:** Washing dishes under a continuously running tap is highly wasteful. Instead, fill one basin or large bowl with soapy water for scrubbing, and another with clean water for rinsing.
- **Washing Produce:** Clean fruits and vegetables in a pan of water rather than under a running

faucet. The leftover water, enriched with minor soil nutrients, is excellent for watering indoor or outdoor plants.

- Thawing Food: Avoid using hot running water to defrost frozen meat or poultry. Plan ahead and thaw food in the refrigerator overnight, which is both water-efficient and safer for food hygiene.

4. Outdoor Water Efficiency

Outdoor chores often result in massive, unnoticed water waste.

- Vehicle Washing: Washing a car or motorcycle with a running hose pipe can waste over 300 liters of water. Always use a bucket and sponge, which accomplishes the same task using only 20 to 30 liters.

- Cleaning Surfaces: Do not use a hose to wash down driveways, patios, or the street front of your house. Use a stiff broom to sweep away dirt and leaves.

5. Greywater Recycling at Home

Greywater is gently used water from bathroom sinks, showers, and washing machines. While setting up full greywater plumbing requires effort, simple collection is easy. For instance, place a bucket under the condensation pipe of your Air Conditioner. During humid Pakistani summers, a single AC unit can produce several liters of pure, distilled water daily, which is perfect for watering delicate plants or using in steam irons. Similarly, the reject water from Reverse Osmosis (RO) water filters can be collected to wash floors or flush toilets.