

Good water habits require little effort for big payoff

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Habits are, by definition, behavior patterns acquired by frequent repetition. The great thing about the human race is that, even though we are born with a natural tendency to have bad habits, we can learn to replace them with good ones.

Wasting precious natural resources can have grave consequences. Here are some common bad habits that waste water, and easy ways to change them.

Bad Habit: Hearing the drip, drip from the faucet or toilet and deciding it sounds musical.

Simple Solution: The moment you hear the leak, fix it! A leaky toilet can use more than 600 gallons of water per month. If you don't have time or the know-how to fix it, call a handyman.

BH: Watching the water gush from a broken sprinkler head and thinking, "How nice! It looks like a fountain. I think I'll keep it."

SS: Fix it! If you don't know how, call someone who does. Better yet, learn how to fix it because this gush probably won't be the last one you see.

BH: Washing one piece of clothing on the "large load" cycle of the washing machine.

SS: A full-cycle load uses up to 50 gallons of water. Wait until you can fill the washing machine before using it. If you absolutely have to wash it now, hand-wash it in the sink or turn your washing machine to "small load."

BH: Running the dishwasher when it's only half full.

SS: Wash dishes you need on a daily basis by hand.

BH: Leaving the faucet running while you wipe down the kitchen counters.

SS: Turn it off! An open tap can easily blast up to 10 gallons of water in minutes.

BH: Washing your car in the driveway and running the hose the entire time.

SS: If you must wash your car at home, use soap and water from a bucket. Use a hose with a spray nozzle to rinse it down, so you can shut it off when you're not using it. Better yet, go to a local car wash. They use less water than a hose, help prevent urban runoff pollution and sometimes recycle their water.

For more water tips and to educate yourself even more, go to www.thedripwebsite.com.

We live in a semiarid climate where droughts will always be a part of our environment. Water for our future means conserving now. The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation.