

Leaky Faucet and Pipe Repair Guide

FREE DIY GUIDE

Introduction

A dripping faucet is not just annoying - it can waste thousands of gallons of water per year and increase your water bill. This guide will help you identify the type of faucet you have and walk you through the repair process.

Tools and Materials

- Adjustable wrench\n- Screwdrivers (flathead and Phillips)\n- Allen wrenches\n- Replacement washers, O-rings, or cartridges\n- Plumber's grease\n- Towels or rags\n- Bucket

Step 1: Shut Off the Water

Before starting any faucet repair, turn off the water supply. Look for shut-off valves under the sink. Turn them clockwise to close. If there are no valves under the sink, you will need to shut off the main water supply to your home. After shutting off the water, turn on the faucet to release any remaining water in the lines.

IMPORTANT:

Place a towel or rag in the sink to catch small parts and prevent them from falling down the drain.

Compression Faucet Repair

Compression faucets have separate hot and cold handles that you turn to control water flow. These are the most common type in older homes.

Step 1:

Remove the decorative cap on the handle and unscrew the handle screw.

Step 2:

Lift off the handle to expose the packing nut.

Step 3:

Use an adjustable wrench to remove the packing nut.

Step 4:

Pull out the stem assembly.

Step 5:

Remove the old washer at the bottom of the stem and replace it with a new one of the same size.

Step 6:

Apply plumber's grease to the new washer.

Step 7:

Reassemble the faucet in reverse order.

Cartridge Faucet Repair

Cartridge faucets have a single handle that moves up and down and side to side. They contain a cartridge that controls water flow and temperature.

Step 1:

Remove the handle by unscrewing the set screw (usually hidden under a cap).

Step 2:

Remove any retaining clip or nut holding the cartridge in place.

Step 3:

Pull the cartridge straight up and out.

Step 4:

Take the old cartridge to a hardware store to ensure you get the exact replacement.

Step 5:

Insert the new cartridge, ensuring it is oriented correctly.

Step 6:

Reassemble the faucet.

Pipe Joint Leak Repair

Leaks at pipe joints are often caused by loose connections or worn washers.

Step 1:

Shut off the water supply.

Step 2:

Place a bucket under the leaking joint.

Step 3:

Try tightening the connection with a wrench. Do not overtighten.

Step 4:

If tightening does not work, disassemble the joint.

Step 5:

Replace any worn washers or gaskets.

Step 6:

Apply plumber's tape to threaded connections.

Step 7:

Reassemble and check for leaks.

Temporary Leak Fixes

If you cannot make a permanent repair immediately, these temporary solutions can help:\n\n- Pipe clamp: A metal clamp with a rubber gasket can seal small leaks\n- Epoxy putty: Can be molded around a leak and hardens to create a temporary seal\n- Pipe wrap tape: Self-fusing silicone tape that bonds to itself\n\nRemember, these are temporary fixes. Schedule a permanent repair as soon as possible.

When to Call a Professional

Contact a licensed plumber if:

- The leak is in a wall or under a floor
- You cannot identify the source of the leak
- The faucet continues to leak after you have replaced parts
- You are uncomfortable working with plumbing
- The leak is causing water damage
- You need to replace the entire faucet

A professional plumber can quickly diagnose the problem and make lasting repairs. They also have access to specialized parts and tools that may not be available to homeowners.