Installing a low-flow showerhead

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City of Dallas
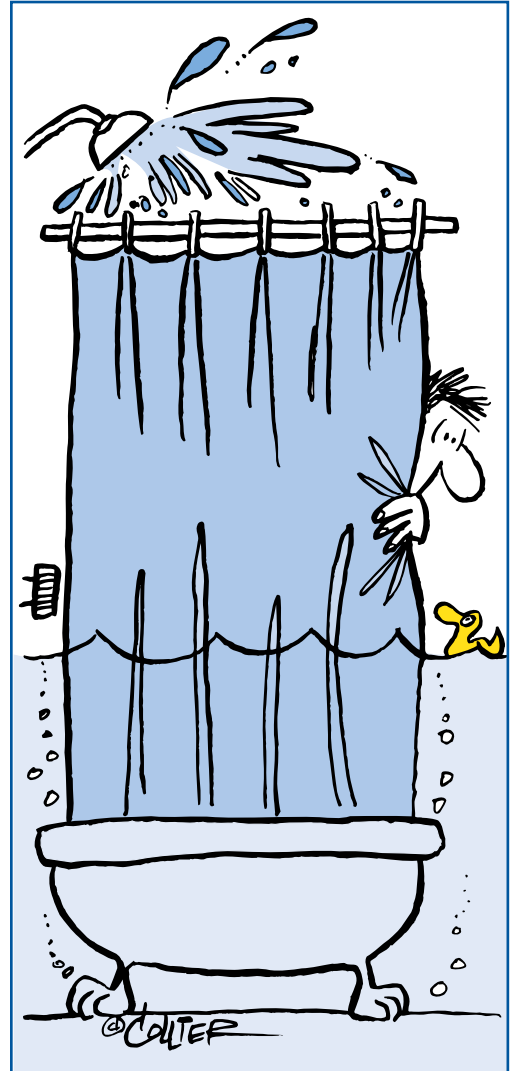
Looking for a way to save?

A low-flow showerhead can save a family of four as much as 3,000 gallons of water each month. Depending on whether electricity or gas heats the water, the annual savings in energy and water costs could exceed $300.

Low-flow showerheads use 2.5 gallons of water a minute or less and are available at most hardware or home improvement stores. If your present showerhead was purchased or installed after 1982, you probably already have a moderate to low-flow showerhead. If not, you may want to install one. Here's how:
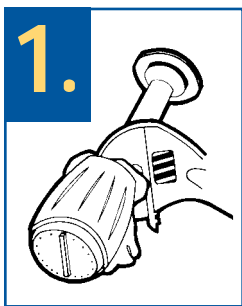
1. Remove your old showerhead with a wrench, pliers or vise-grips, using counter-clockwise turns. Apply a penetrating oil to dissolve any scale build-up on the shower arm. Wrap a cloth around the shower arm to protect its finish. Hold it secure with vise-grips and loosen the showerhead.
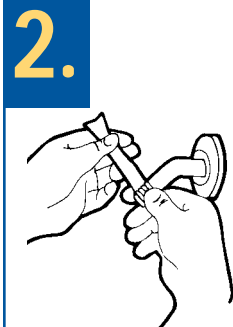
2. Clean the shower arm threads with steel wool. Wrap the threads with Teflon tape one and one-half times in a clockwise direction. Turn on the water to flush out any scale that may have been dislodged inside the pipes.
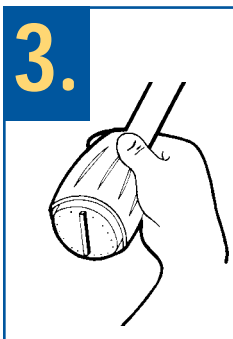
3. Thread the new showerhead onto the shower arm by hand. When it is hand-tight, turn on the water. Any leaks probably will indicate cross-threading or insufficient sealing tape. To stop the leak, repeat the threading procedure. If the leak persists, you may have a defective unit. If there are no leaks, use a cloth between the shower arm and the wrench or pliers to prevent marring, then gently tighten until the head is snug. However, be careful to avoid tightening it too much: this can cause damage to both the showerhead and the shower arm.

Your new showerhead fits standard one and one-half inch threads. If your shower arm has a ball-end, an adapter or replacement arm must be used. These can be purchased at most hardware or home improvement stores.