

Savvi Toolkit

Product Guide: Water Saving Devices



Remodeling your home is both a financial and emotional investment. At HomeSavvi we guide you through the process to help you achieve your dream. Our toolkit is a series of checklists, calculators, guides, etc... to help you get started and organized.

INDEX

Dehumidifiers.....	Page 3
Dual Flush Toilets.....	Page 4
Front Loading Washing Machines.....	Page 4
Irrigation Systems.....	Page 5
Rain Barrels.....	Page 6
Tankless Water Heaters.....	Page 7
Vapor Steam Cleaners.....	Page 8
Water Features.....	Page 9
Water Saving Dish Washers.....	Page 10
Need a Remodeling Professional? Contact us.....	Page 12

Dehumidifiers

Dehumidifiers are appliances designed to remove moisture from the air inside a home. Since excess moisture is a primary cause of mold and mildew and the related health and breathing problems they cause, getting rid of excess moisture can be important to ensure your family's health. The majority of dehumidifiers sold are portable units that can be moved from room to room; however, dehumidifiers that install permanently onto a wall or furnace are also available. Commonly, dehumidifiers operate mechanically to remove moisture from the air, but in colder or less moist climates, units that use desiccants will also do the job.



Pros / Benefits

- Dehumidifiers improve a home's interior air quality by making the air easier to breathe.
- Portable units have the flexibility to be moved to rooms where people are living.
- The water a dehumidifier removes from the air is chemical free and can be reused (for example in a steam iron).

Cons / Risks

- Mechanical dehumidifiers use fans to blow the air over built-in coils, so the fans can be noisy and distracting.
- Water removed from the air is stored in a small tank that needs to be emptied on a regular basis
- Humidistats are not always accurate

Price Range

\$200 to \$450

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Optimal humidity level in a home is between 30 and 50 percent. Most dehumidifiers include a humidistat to measure the moisture content of the air and turn the unit on and off. However, tests have found some humidistats on dehumidifiers aren't totally accurate. Dehumidifiers are relatively simple mechanically and some manufacturers offer warranties for up to two years.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [LG](#)
- [Danby](#)
- [Frigidaire](#)
- [DeLonghi](#)
- [Bionaire](#)

Dual Flush Toilets

Dual flush toilets are not only low water use toilets, they have the added advantage of using two separate amounts of water depending on what is being flushed. Solid wastes are flushed with 1.6 gallons of water while liquid wastes only use less than a gallon per flush. It's estimated a dual flush toilet can save over 25 percent of the water used in a regular low water efficiency toilet.



Pros / Benefits

- Dual controls to determine the size of flush and conserve water.
- Flushing liquid wastes using less than 1 gallon of water conserves water
- Flushing power equivalent to regular low flow toilets.
- Similar in appearance to a regular toilet and are available in a wide range of colors

Cons / Risks

- Low water level in the toilet bowl can make cleaning a problem
- Not all solid wastes land in the water so any remaining in the bowl may cause an odor.

Price Range

\$250 to \$1000+

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Manufactured from the same ceramic materials as a regular toilet, the durability and quality of a dual flush toilet is similar. A wide range of shapes, designs and colors are available to match any décor. Due to the low water level in the bowl, cleaning may be more difficult than a regular toilet.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [American Standard](#)
- [Kohler](#)
- [Crane](#)
- [Caroma](#)

Front Loading Washing Machines

Front loading washing machines are water efficient (use one-third less water than top loading machines) and as a result also use less heat, energy, and detergent. The front loading design has been proven in commercial applications around the world. A wide range of manufacturers produce front loading washing machines featuring electronic controls and numerous options in a wide range of colors for the North American market. Front loading Energy Star approved washing machine is estimated to pay for itself in just over 10 years.



Pros / Benefits

- Use 1/3 less water than regular top loading models
- Require less energy to heat the smaller amount of water
- Faster spin cycle means clothes are drier when they come out of the machine so less energy needed to dry them
- Use less laundry detergent than top loading models, so fewer chemicals will go into the environment

Price Range

\$500 to \$1200.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

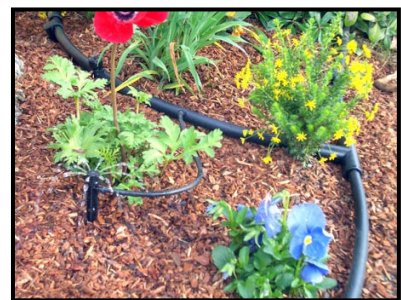
Front loading washers have a proven track record of reliability in Laundromat operations around the world. The front loading design is easier to use, provides more efficient space utilization in a home laundry room since the flat top provides an uncluttered surface for folding clothes. Some earlier consumer models reportedly had a problem with leaking seals causing mold build up but the components have been improved and leaving the front door open when the washer isn't in use as manufacturer's recommend, allows the tub to dry and prevents any mold.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Frigidaire](#)
- [Bosch](#)
- [LG](#)
- [GE](#)
- [Kenmore](#)

Irrigation Systems

Sprinklers or drip irrigation systems will provide water to your lawn or garden. In ground sprinkler systems can be programmed to provide not only the proper amount of water for a lawn to grow green and healthy, but to provide it at the optimum time. Drip irrigation systems can be automated to the extent they only require a person to turn them on. Combining a rain barrel with a drip irrigation system can provide eco friendly, natural water to a garden.



Pros / Benefits

- Systems provide proper water management and prevent over or under watering
- Minimal water loss due to evaporation or runoff when watering.
- Drip or sprinkler systems mean there is no need to drag hoses or carry watering cans around the yard
- Many systems can be programmed to work automatically

Cons / Risks

- Systems may require professional installation and can be costly
- In cold climates systems need to be protected from freezing
- Dirt can plug the emitters so system requires regular maintenance

Price Range

Price is very dependent on yard or garden size. Self installed systems start around \$50 and go up to the \$100's, while professionally installed systems start around \$500 and go up to the thousands.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

In cold climates the systems need to be drained in the fall to prevent freezing. Sprinkler heads may need to be adjusted to ensure they are watering lawns or gardens and not hard surfaces. In line filters need to be cleaned periodically. Irrigation systems that are properly looked after will last for years.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Rain Bird](#)
- [Hunter Industries](#)
- [Buckner Irrigation](#)
- [Champion](#)

Rain Barrels

Rain barrels or rain water tanks are usually 55 gallon (and larger) PVC tanks placed under or near a downspout to catch water for use primarily in gardens. Rain barrels provide an efficient and inexpensive way to minimize use of municipal water while taking advantage of a scarce resource that is often underutilized and allowed to run away.



Pros / Benefits

- Rain barrels capture and store water that will otherwise drain away
- Plants grow better when natural rainwater is used for watering
- Capturing water in a rain barrel minimizes a household's water use and helps lower their utility bill.

Cons / Risks

- Water must be carried or transported from the barrel to the garden or a drip irrigation system needs to be installed.
- Water barrels need to be kept free of debris and can become a home for insects.

Price Range

\$150 and up, plus installation

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Rain barrels are usually made from PVC plastic so are extremely long lasting. Spigots or outlet taps may leak or become clogged but clean out is simple and replacement is easy and inexpensive. Rain barrels need to have a lid or screen to prevent leaves from blowing in and the screen needs to be kept clean. In cold climates, draining some of the water (but not all) of the water should allow a plastic barrel to expand without cracking and return to its proper shape in the spring.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Spruce Creek](#)
- [Fiskars](#)
- [Palmetto rain barrels](#)

Tankless Water Heaters

Tankless, or instant, water heaters are small energy efficient water heaters that can provide a constant supply of hot water. Commonplace in Europe and Asia, tankless water heaters only turn on when someone opens a hot water tap. As a result, unlike a regular hot water system cold water is never heated until someone needs hot water. Water heating is usually provided by a small gas burner but electric models are available as well.



Pros / Benefits

- Tankless water heaters provide a never ending supply of hot water
- Use less energy than conventional water heaters since they heat water on demand.
- No energy loss as a result of hot water cooling while being stored

Cons / Risks

- More costly than a conventional hot water system. Tankless water heaters cost more than conventional systems and often require upgrades/modifications to gas venting system or electrical service.
- Since savings are primarily energy costs, tankless water heaters have a long payback period.
- Constant supply of hot water may mean you actually end up using more hot water.

Price Range

Tankless water heaters are more expensive than conventional water heaters and range in price from \$1000 up to \$2000.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Tankless water heaters require very little ongoing maintenance. They have a projected product life ranging from 15 to 20 years, substantially more than the projected life of regular tanks that have an expected life span of around 10 years.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Noritz](#)
- [Rinnai](#)
- [Bosch](#)

Vapor Steam Cleaners

Consumer vapor steam cleaners use super heated steam vapor to clean and disinfect virtually anything in a home. They operate by heating water to a very high temperature (275°F to 300°F) which turns the water into a very fine mist. The mist is then sprayed directly onto the surface being cleaned where it dissolves dirt and grease that is sucked up by an integrated vacuum. Since the vapor particles are so small, they dry quickly so even if the vapor cleaner is used on upholstery fabric or bedding, there is no residual moisture.



Pros / Benefits

- Vapor steam cleaners produce a fine vapor mist that softens grease and ground in dirt so can clean most surfaces as well as in very small or tight spaces.
- Vapor cleaners don't require any special water or additives. Regular tap water works fine in most vapor steam cleaners.
- Since they use water to clean, there is no chemical cleaner odor left in the home.
- Steam cleaners sanitize as well as clean a surface with no scrubbing.

Cons / Risks

- Vapor steam cleaners can be pricey (up to \$1500)
- Steam cleaners heat water using electricity and water and electricity can be a dangerous combination.
- A hand held steam cleaner filled with water can be heavy and awkward to use.

Price Range

There is a wide range of prices in vapor steam cleaners with low end consumer models costing starting the range of \$300 and while more powerful units can cost \$1500 or even more.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

The high temperatures used by vapor steam cleaners make them very effective in eliminating mold, mildew and germs. Most cleaners come with a number of attachments such as a pointed nozzle, so they're great at getting into tight spaces that would be difficult to with a cloth or sponge. Steam vapor cleaners have proven to be reliable over a number of years in both Europe and Asia and many manufacturers offer warranties of up to 3 years on the units themselves as well as up to 8 years on the boiler.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Bissell](#)
- [Hoover](#)
- [Haan](#)

Water Features

Water features run the gamut from fountains, pools and waterfalls to an in house desktop sized water feature. They can be made from a wide range of materials including, plastic, glass, stainless steel and natural rock. All provide the beauty of water usually combined with the pleasant sound of running water. Modern water features are usually self contained, and constantly recycle a small amount of water stored in a sump or hidden well. Commonly a small pump powered by electricity moves the water, however, newer designs are now starting to use solar energy.



Pros / Benefits

- Well designed water features use very little water and the water in them is continually reused.
- A water feature provide a soothing relaxed environment
- The sound and appearance of moving water is enjoyable

Cons / Risks

- Depending on size and design can be expensive or difficult to install
- Installation may require a building permit.
- Pumping system and the water itself requires regular maintenance (filtering cleaning)
- A water feature may attract unwanted animals to your yard

Price Range

Prices for a water feature can range anywhere from less than \$50 for a small self contained unit to thousands of dollars for larger, more elaborate pools and fountains.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Water features require regular maintenance including maintaining water levels to ensure the pump can operate properly. As well, any debris needs to be removed so it doesn't the water intake on the pump plus the filter and screens need to be cleaned regularly. Algae must be kept out of the water either with chemicals or using aeration. In cold climates the water should be removed or the level lowered to prevent damaging the water feature in winter.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Campania International](#)
- [Adagio Water Features](#)

Water Saving Dishwashers

Dishwashers are a common fixture in most modern kitchens. A standard dishwasher is 24 inches wide and stands up to 34 inches high (although different sizes - usually smaller) are available. Since dishwashers use water much too hot for people's hands, a dishwasher ensures dishes are not only cleaned, but also sanitized. A common misconception about dishwashers is they use a lot of water and energy, however, newer designs use substantially less water (up t 25% less) and energy than earlier models.



Pros / Benefits

- Dishwashers do a better job of cleaning dishes than washing by hand because they use much hotter water.
- Modern dishwashers have microprocessors to determine how dirty the dishes so can control how long they actually wash dishes and as a result, use less water and power.
- Dishwashers are available with fronts or faces that look like a cabinet rather than an appliance so they can blend in with any décor.
- Scientific tests have shown running a dishwasher when it's full, uses less energy and water than washing the same quantity of dishes by hand.

Cons / Risks

- Cost – a dishwasher with a cabinet look front and a full range of electronic controls can cost well over \$1000.
- Some dishwashers can be noisy when running.

Price Range

\$300 to \$400 for basic models to \$1500 for full featured units.

Quality, Maintenance and Durability

Lower priced models may be noisier, have less rack space and fewer feature options than higher priced units. However, most new designs (even lower priced ones) include a food disposer that eliminates the need to prerinse dishes providing water saving. Most dishwasher manufacturers provide a minimum a one-year parts and labor warranty plus some provide two years on components.

Popular Brands / Leading Manufacturers

- [Frigidaire](#)
- [Maytag](#)
- [Bosch](#)
- [LG](#)
- [General Electric](#)

Need a Remodeling Professional? Contact us!

Don't know where to start with your home remodeling project? Don't panic! HomeSavvi is here to help! With an online directory listing hundreds of contractors, interior designers, architects and retailers in your neighborhood, combined with an online shop offering millions of products for the home, we've got you covered. We look forward to the opportunity to be of service and help you achieve your dream home!



[Submit a question to a HomeSavvi expert](#)

[Connect me to a professional near me](#)