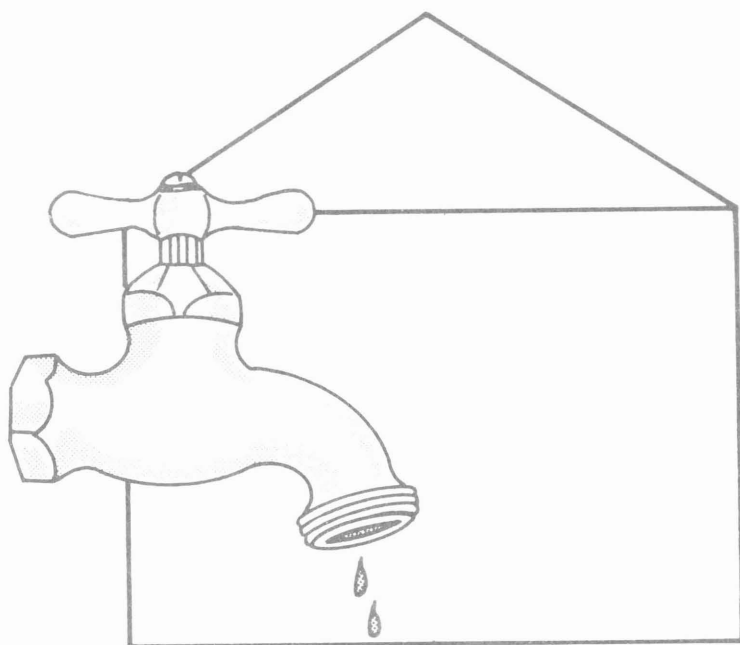


YOU CAN DO IT!

Repairing a Leaky Faucet



THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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REPAIRING A LEAKY FAUCET

Extension Housing and Home Furnishings Specialists
The Texas A&M University System

Leaky faucets which can develop even in new houses are wasteful and a nuisance. With a few simple tools, you can repair a leaky faucet in less than an hour.

Most water faucets in houses today are compression-type units in which a washer compresses itself over an opening when the faucet is closed, thus closing off the water. All compression-type faucets may not look alike, but all are similar in their operation and repair.

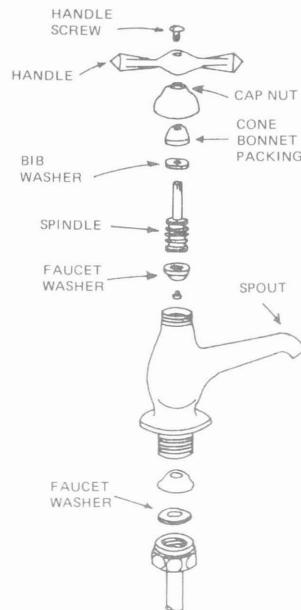
The exact point where a leak appears on a faucet is a good clue to finding its cause:

A *spout drip* is usually caused by a worn faucet washer or a corroded valve seat.

Leaks at the stem result from a loose cap nut or worn cone.

A *cap leak*, or water oozing below the cap nut, indicates a worn bib washer.

A *leak at the base of the faucet* results from water seeping through a worn washer.



WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE JOB



- Washers of the correct size and type
- A screwdriver
- A smooth-jawed adjustable wrench

STEPS IN MAKING REPAIRS

To repair a leaky faucet, follow these steps:

- To dismantle a faucet for repairs, *cut off the water supply* at the valve nearest the faucet. Then open the tap to drain the faucet.
- Remove the handle screw and handle.
- Unscrew the cap nut, using a protective cover of adhesive tape or a rag to avoid marring the finish.
- Unscrew the stem with finger pressure and lift it out.
- Remove the screw from the end of the spindle. Scrape away all worn washer parts. Be careful not to damage the rim.
- Install a new washer. Take either the old washer or the complete spindle unit with you to purchase the replacement. Know whether to buy a flat or conical washer. Check to make sure the replacement is like the worn washer.



- Check the seat (down inside the faucet) to make sure it is not pitted or rough. If the seat is scarred or rough, a seat dressing kit for grinding it smooth again may be purchased for under \$2. Follow kit directions.
- A leak at the stem usually means that the packing inside the cap nut needs replacing. To replace, pry out the old packing washer with a screwdriver. If a washer is used, replace with a new one. If there is no washer, wrap the spindle tightly with "packing wicking." Use string if commercial wicking is not available.

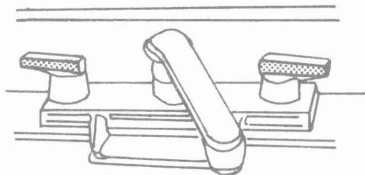


CAP NUT
PACKING MATERIAL OR
PACKING WASHER

- Reassemble the faucet. Tighten the cap nut just enough to prevent leaking. Screwing the nut down too tightly causes rapid wear on the stem.
- Turn the shutoff valve to the "on" position and check the faucet for leaks.

MIXING FAUCETS

A mixing faucet may look more complicated than a single faucet, but repairs are made in much the same way. Actually, a mixing faucet is two separate units with a single spout. Mixing faucets are used on sinks, bathtubs and laundry tubs. Repairs must be made separately on each faucet unit. Follow the steps listed above.



SINGLE-LEVER FAUCETS

Single-lever faucets operate differently than compression-type faucets. Single-lever faucets use spring pressure along with water pressure for shutoff. This type of faucet is affected by pipe sediment, so tiny metal screens are used to filter out debris. When the screens clog up, water flow is reduced. Other than cleaning the filtering screens, single-lever faucets demand little attention.

Every single-lever faucet model is a little different. When repairs are required, refer to the manufacturer's instructions on service procedures. If you do not have the service booklet, call a plumbing dealer who handles the brand and ask for literature. Or write the factory and secure the information along with the name of a dealer from whom parts can be purchased.

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