

CHANGING TAP WASHERS

1. Turn off the water at the mains

If you disassemble your tap before you've turned your water off you'll have a huge mess on your hands. The tap for your water mains is normally located at the front of your house where your water meter is, or sometimes in the bathroom or laundry if you live in a flat or apartment.

You'll also need to turn the water off at the hot water service. Some bathrooms may have an isolation valve under the sink inside the vanity which might allow you to just isolate those taps instead.

For further help and information on locating and turning of water at the mains, see below.

2. Empty the tap

Once the water's off at the mains, turn the tap on to allow any remaining water to run out. The water should stop flowing pretty quickly. If it doesn't, you probably haven't turned the water off properly at the mains.

Once it's stopped, put the plug in to make sure you don't lose any important parts down the drain.



3. Remove the button on the top of the tap

If it has one, remove the button on top of the tap which holds the handle on (often the bit that says 'hot' or 'cold'). You may need a screwdriver for this, depending on how your tap's built.



4. Take the handle off the tap

How this is done will depend on the tap, but it usually just involves unscrewing something to expose the guts of the tap below.



5. Remove the shroud / skirt

If the tap has a metal shroud or skirt like this one does, you'll need to screw that off too. If it's screwed on ridiculously tightly or sealed on hard with some silicone or some other sealant (like this one was), you might need to use a wide pair of pliers or a wrench to unscrew it.

Putting some gaffer tape around it will help give you extra grip on the smooth chromed surface - and wrapping the cloth around the tap will help to protect it from scratches or damage from your tools. The gaffer tape might leave some sticky residue but you can always clean that off later.



6. Use shifting wrench or spanner to remove the tap bonnet

Completely unscrew the body of the tap (i.e. the 'headgear'), as shown. Remove it and place it to one side. You should now be able to see the jumper valve inside the tap, if it hasn't come off with the headgear - this will usually be made either of brass or plastic.



7. Remove the washer and jumper valve

If you can't reach it, try using some needle-nosed pliers or a set of tweezers. At this point you may be able to see where the damage is. The washer in the next picture (the blue bit) is split, which is a pretty common failing.



8. Take the washer to your local hardware store and find a suitable replacement

The bits you can see here are jumper valves (the white bits) with the washers attached (the rubber parts on the front). Jumper valves come in brass and plastic. You can either replace both parts at once, or just the broken washer if that's all that's wrong. Because they come in different sizes, it's best to remove the washer and jumper valve and take them with you when you're getting a replacement.

(Tap washers for domestic taps usually have a 12mm diameter, but some may also be 15mm or bigger. When you're comparing, remember that if the washer's split it's likely to look larger than it's meant to be. The ones in the picture below are both 12mm washers.)

If your tap had a skirt on it like the one shown in step 5, you might also want to pick up some silicone to reseal it to prevent mould and gunk from accumulating inside the tap in future.)



9. Replace the washer, and put your tap back together

Insert the washer and jumper valve, then screw the tap bonnet back on and tighten it sufficiently with a wrench or spanner. Put the tap back together - but don't put any silicone on the skirt before you've tested it to make sure the problem's been fixed.



10. Close the tap completely, then turn the water on at the mains

Make sure the tap's off (don't close it too tightly), then turn the water on at the mains.



11. Test the tap

Turn the tap on and off to see if it leaks. If you're confident that it's OK, you can remove the handle and the skirt, and carefully apply a bead of silicone to the bottom of the skirt to seal it up again (if your tap has one). Keep some paper towel handy - silicone can be very messy if it gets on the wrong things.



TURNING OF WATER AT THE MAINS

Do You Live In A House?

Your water main is usually located near your water meter, outside at the front of your house, near the boundary of your home, sometimes in the close vicinity to a garden tap. Depending on how old your house is, it may have a knob or a nut for turning – turn it clockwise, or to your right, to turn the water off.

Do You Live In A Duplex?

If you live in a duplex then usually you will have individual water meters for each duplex unit in the same manner as for an individual house, so just follow the instructions above.

But if you live in some of the older duplex units then often there is only one water meter box and one water supply pipe for all of the duplex units. Turning off the water as per the instructions above will turn off every units water supply. To turn off an individual duplex units water supply we recommend:

- Locate the stop valve that is for your duplex which is usually outside on the wall in a copper pipe that will feed into your bathroom or laundry or kitchen
- When you find a valve, turn off the stop valve to test it works, then go inside and turn on taps to ensure they run dry after a short time

Do You Live In An Apartment?

Apartments are always interesting and even for experienced plumbers they can be a challenge at times to isolate the water supply.

In theory there should be a control valve that controls and isolates your apartments water only. But, and it's a big but there can be multiple valves for apartments, so we recommend:

- Look for a tap handle that appears to be all alone and appears to be for nothing under the kitchen sink or laundry tub or vanity unit or under the toilet cistern
- When you find a stop valve turn it off to test what specific taps it isolates, because it is common to have separate valves for the kitchen and each bathroom
- Once you have found the valves and tested them make sure you write down the specific location plus which rooms are isolated and save it in a secure accessible location such as on the pantry door
- If you cannot find any valves or are not able to isolate the entire apartment a Plumber may need to be scheduled

Do You Live In A Town-House Complex?

This can be challenging depending on when the complex was constructed. If you live in newer complexes then in all likelihood you will have individual water meters for each town-house in the same manner as for an individual house, so just follow the instructions above for a house.

But if you live in older complexes that were developed before compulsory sub-metering then you will need to locate where the control valve is for your individual town-house by:

- Looking for a valve box at the front of your property or it could be on the wall in a copper pipe that will feed into your bathroom or laundry or kitchen or it could be an internal valve under the kitchen sink or laundry tub or vanity unit or under the toilet cistern
- When you find a valve turn it off to test that it works, then go inside and turn on taps to ensure they are isolated and run dry after a short time

STANDARD TAP DIAGRAM

SUGGESTED RETAILERS FOR WASHERS & VALVES

Bunnings Warehouse

Masters

Magnet Mart (Home Hardware)



FOR MIXER TAPS

If you have a leaking mixer tap, please report to our office on:

6293 1033 or **rentals@hodgkinsonrealestate.com.au**

so that we may arrange repair or replacement.