



FIXING A TOILET LEAK

Hi, my name is Sarah, I'm with the Regional Water Providers Consortium.

Many toilet leaks can be easily fixed by the do-it-yourself plumber. I'm going to go over 4 things to look for when repairing a toilet.

I'm comfortable putting my hands in the back of the toilet tank because I know that the way the toilet is designed it's impossible for dirty water to get into the tank. Before you start any toilet repairs, you want to make sure you turn the water to the toilet off first. To do this turn off the shutoff valve at the base of the toilet against the wall and flush the toilet to drain the tank.

Next, let's check the chain. If you have to jiggle the handle to keep the toilet from running, it's likely that the chain that controls the flapper might not be adjusted properly or that the handle might be loose. First check the length of your chain. It should be long enough to allow the flapper to easily rest properly on the valve seat. If it's too short you may need to replace it with a longer length of chain. If it's too long you need to adjust it to make it a little bit shorter. Next, check the handle. If needed, tighten the nut that holds the handle to the tank. If that doesn't work, the handle itself might need to be replaced.

Now, let's check the flapper. A leaking flapper can be caused by two problems. The rubber may be deteriorating and not forming a proper seal or the flapper might not be sitting properly on the valve seat. Let's check the condition of the flapper by gently rubbing the bottom of the valve. If you get streaks of rubber on your fingers, it should be replaced. If the rubber is in good condition, remove any corrosion from the valve seat and check that the flapper is sitting properly.

To replace a flapper, first you need to disconnect the chain from the handle. Then you need to disconnect the flapper itself from the overflow tube or the bracket that keeps it attached to the toilet. There are several different types of flapper, so be sure you take the flapper with you when you bring it to the hardware store to purchase a replacement.

Finally, let's check your fill valve. If water continues to flow after your toilet bowl and tank are filled, it may be that your fill valve is working improperly. This can cause water to continuously spill into the overflow tube. This might be because the water level in the tank is adjusted too high. The correct water level is indicated by the manufacturer on the inside of the tank. There's typically a line marking where the proper water level should be. The fill valve is a mechanism inside the toilet tank that controls the refilling of the tank after each flush. All fill valves work similarly. The two most common types differ only in the type of float used. One has a cylindrical float that moves up and down a shaft while the other has a float ball located on the end of a long metal rod.

I'll start with the float ball type. You can manually adjust the level that your tank fills to by gently bending the float arm downward. Then test that the water comes to the proper level by flushing the toilet. If it is at the proper level, your work is done. If it's not, additional adjusting may be needed. Be sure to check that the float arm is screwed in securely so that the arm itself doesn't rotate.

If you have the cylindrical float, here's how we're going to check it. First you look for the thin metal rod that connects the float to the valve arm. The metal rod has an adjusting clip that you can pinch to allow you to move the float farther down in the water. Once you've adjust the level of the float, test it by flushing the toilet. If the water comes to the proper level, your job is done. If not you may need to adjust the float a little bit more. Adjusting the water level can take a little bit of trial and error, so go ahead and try it a few times.

If water continues to flow after you've adjusted the float, you will likely have to replace the entire fill valve mechanism. Since these can differ from model to model we recommend bringing your fill valve with you to the plumbing store. Before you attempt to remove the fill valve, make sure you turn off the water to the toilet and empty the tank. You may need a bucket or a sponge to catch excess water.

Once you've drained your toilet tank you're going to unscrew the hose that brings water into the toilet. Next, you're going to unscrew the bolt that keeps the fill valve assembly attached to the base of the toilet. Next you want to pull the flexible overflow tube out from the rigid overflow tube. You should then be able to easily lift the fill valve assembly out of the back of the toilet. Again, remember you want to take the fill valve assembly with you to the hardware store when you go to purchase a replacement because they can differ.

Good luck with your toilet repairs. I hope this video has been helpful. If at any point you feel like you're in over your head, go ahead and call a plumber.

For more information about water conservation please visit our website at: www.conserveh2o.org.

The instructional videos listed on our website are general guidelines. The Regional Water Providers Consortium will not be responsible for any damage to your home, landscape, or appliances from following the procedures in these videos. If you have concerns doing any of this work yourself, you may wish to seek the services of a professional plumber or contractor.