THE MANY FACETS OF FAUCETS

How To Choose and Care For The Right Faucet Without Getting All Wet

North Olmsted, Ohio… From the early days of cavemen cupping their hands in a running stream, to the sophisticated Roman aqueducts, to today’s multi-functional and space-age finished faucets, our water delivery systems have come a long way. In fact, plumbing technology has reached the point where most of today’s well-constructed faucets should give you years of worry-free performance. So, what should you look for when you’re overwhelmed, staring up at that big faucet display at your local showroom or retailer? And how do you keep your new faucet in working order once you get it home?

“There are three main reasons people purchase new faucets,” according to David Lingafelter, Moen Incorporated Vice President, Faucet Marketing and Product Development. “Obviously, a key one is new home construction. The second is when they take on a kitchen or bath remodeling project, and the third is when a repair becomes necessary – usually because a faucet breaks down or just wears out.”

The following are the most commonly asked questions about faucet selection, installation and maintenance. Follow the advice given here and you will not only know how to select a quality faucet, but you will also know how to get the most out of it:

Why do some faucets cost more than others?
Not all faucets are created equal – some are simply made better than others. Look for faucets constructed of copper, brass and other high quality materials. These faucets will usually give you superior looks as well as performance and durability. And while
you may pay a bit more for a quality faucet, here’s where that old adage comes true, because when it comes to plumbing products, you really get what you pay for.

**How do I stop a faucet from leaking?**

Usually, the cause of a leaky faucet is a faulty washer. Washers may be replaced time and time again and still not fit properly to stop the leak. That’s why the best solution is a preventative one: buy and install a washerless or cartridge-based faucet in the first place. With these faucets, you don’t need to worry about replacing worn-out or ill-fitting washers. Their advanced, one-piece construction means greater reliability and better performance.

**What’s the advantage of a cartridge faucet?**

The washerless cartridge faucet, created by Al Moen decades ago, still eliminates the leaks associated with washers. It also features a one-piece, self-contained assembly. Fewer parts mean that there are fewer things to go wrong. Replacement with the cartridge is easy – just take out the old and drop in the new without the hassles of many complicated components.

**What are the key features I should look for in a faucet?**

Today’s faucets do more than just regulate the flow of cold and hot water into your sink. Look for the latest modern conveniences. In the kitchen there are many available features, such as pull-out or pull-down sprays, water filtering systems and a variety of designer styles and finishes. In the bath, style is usually the driver of choice (traditional, country, contemporary; single or two-handles), and many times the bath faucet is available with matching accessories (towel bars, paper holders, robe hooks), to create a “suite” look in the overall bath.

A new feature for bath faucet installation – for those people tired of going under the sink – is Moen’s M•PACT® system. It offers a revolutionary new common valve architecture allowing you to upgrade the style or finish of your faucet by simply unscrewing and replacing the handle and spout trim.

**Will any new faucet fit my existing sink?**

Standard size sink and faucet dimensions are used throughout the plumbing industry, which should make your job of finding a new faucet easier. Most faucet manufacturers offer a wide selection of faucets for any kitchen or bath setting. To determine what type
of faucet you need in the kitchen, you should count the number of mounting holes you have under your sink. Your sink can have up to four holes and may be difficult to see from the top of the sink if they are covered by an existing faucet and deck.

In the bath, the faucet is typically set in either 4” or 8” width configurations. In the 4” set you can have a centerset or mini widespread setup; if it’s 8” or more, it is known as a widespread set. When you choose your new faucet, you can change styles, but will have to stay with the same size, or replace the sink if you want to switch.

Will my existing water supply lines fit a new faucet?
The first thing you need to determine is the size and type of water supply lines you currently have. Water supply lines can vary, but the most common sizes are 3/8” and 1/2”. Supply hook-ups also vary but typically are made of flexible plastic, standard copper, flexible braided and corrugated copper. The best thing to do once you find out which size and type of line you have is to shut off the water and bring in the pieces to your local hardware or DIY store to find the faucet that will work best with your particular configuration.

What type of finish should I look for and how do I clean my faucet?
If you’re choosing a faucet with a polished brass or specialty finish, look for one like Moen’s LifeShine® non-tarnish finish which won’t pit, corrode or discolor.

With so many products on the market today claiming to offer superior cleaning power, it can get confusing to know which one is best. For cleaning faucets, avoid products that contain abrasives or harsh chemicals. They can scratch your faucet and take away some of its original beauty. In fact, the old-fashioned way may still be best – simply use warm water and a damp cloth.

Can I really replace a faucet myself?
Unless you have a difficult or unique installation, replacing a faucet can usually be done on a do-it-yourself basis. All you really need are the right tools, good judgment and a little time to devote to the project. To make your installation job easier, manufacturers usually provide easy step-by-step illustrated instructions with all faucets. If you need further assistance, check the faucet package to see if there is a toll-free helpline to assist in plumbing installations. Or, many manufacturers will have installation information posted
on the company Web site. www.moen.com offers helpful assistance on both faucet selection and installation.

Can I replace a two-handle model with a single-handle faucet?
In most cases, yes. In both the kitchen and bath, mounting hardware and other flexible hookups will let you replace two-handle models with a single-handle faucet. If you’re concerned about existing holes in the sink, single handle faucets are available with deck plates (also know as escutcheons) to provide an attractive covering.

I’m concerned about the quality of my drinking water – should I choose one of these filtering faucets?
More than $7 billion was spent on bottled water last year, yet one of the most convenient ways to get great tasting water is available at the touch of a button. There are a number of filtering faucet systems now available, in either pull-out or fixed spout models (several even install the same way as a regular kitchen faucet), or as separate water dispensers that affix to the sink. Either way, these will save you time running to the store as well as significant money over bottled water in the long run.

These tips should help you choose the right faucet for your next remodel or repair and provide you with years of attractive, convenient “water delivery”.

For more information on faucets check out www.moen.com where you can review more than a hundred different styles and finishes, or even check out the design center where you can design your very own kitchen and bath faucet system. For technical questions, call its customer service line at 1-800-BUY-MOEN (1-800-289-6636).

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EDITORS NOTE: Moen Incorporated is one of the world's largest producers of residential and commercial plumbing products. Moen is the #1 brand of faucets in North America. The company manufactures a complete line of single and two-handle faucets in a wide assortment of styles and finishes. It is also a leading producer of residential and commercial sinks, a variety of shower accessories, and bathroom accessories (sold under the brands Moen, Cleveland Faucet Group, and Creative Specialties International).

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