**Ways to Collect Water When the Taps Run Dry** by [**Tricia Drevets**](https://collapsesurvivalsite.com/author/tricia-drevets/)

In the home

Many of us are accustomed to simply turning on a faucet when we need a drink. But what happens when nothing comes out of the tap or that supply is tainted? Here are some home sources you might not have considered.

1. Ice

You can melt the ice cubes you have in your freezer for some clean drinking water.

2. Hot Water Heater

Depending on your tank’s size, you may have 20 to 80 gallons of water stored there. In order to [access it safely](https://www.wikihow.com/Get-Emergency-Drinking-Water-from-a-Water-Heater), you’ll need to know whether it is gas- or electric-powered and follow the instructions for your particular model.

The critical first step is to turn off the power supply and shut off the water. Here is a [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIpOc3bmZ1E) that goes over the basics for draining the water.

3. Toilet Flush Tank

You may have three to five gallons of water in your toilet tank. You can drink this water, but be sure to [purify it first](https://collapsesurvivalsite.com/ways-to-purify-water/) as it could have contaminants from the sewer. It’s not recommended to drink the water in the toilet bowl—even if it was recently flushed—since it may be contaminated by residual bacteria.

4. Household Pipes

You can use the force of gravity to drain water that is in your home’s plumbing system even after the main supply flow has stopped.

Turn on the highest water faucet in your house to introduce air into the pipe. Place a container beneath the lowest faucet in the home. Turn on that faucet to drain out the water.

If you live in a one-story home, you may find that the highest faucet is your shower head, and a hose spigot is your lowest. The water valve may be in a common area if you live in an apartment or condominium. The amount of available water will depend on your home’s location and how many other people are draining their pipes.

Outside the home

You also can find emergency water sources outside your home. These sources are more susceptible to contamination and should be treated by boiling, adding disinfectants, or using a filter.

5. Rainwater

[Collecting rainwater](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/create-water-catchment-system-from-rainwater/) can run the gamut from using a simple rain barrel to installing a catchment system.

The main thing to remember is that you need to use clean, covered collection containers. Any water that hits the ground (or a dirty barrel) can become contaminated.

Also, if you collect rainwater from the roof, it could contain anything from bird poop and insects to asbestos, lead, and copper. Recent studies have shown that “[forever chemicals](https://phys.org/news/2022-08-rainwater-unsafe-due-chemicals.html)” are omnipresent in the world’s rainwater. So, you probably will want to [purify your rainwater](https://www.primalsurvivor.net/water-purification-methods/) before drinking to eliminate what you can.

6. Hose and Sprinkler Systems

You might be surprised to find out how much water remains in your watering hoses and irrigation systems. But beware. Most hoses are manufactured with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) that uses lead as a stabilizer. Also, the brass fitting on the ends of the hoses may contain lead.

7. Transpiration

It’s a slow process that doesn’t yield an ample water supply. But in an emergency, every drop counts. You can extract water from plants by placing a clear plastic bag over the branch of a bush or tree growing in a sunny location.

Water will begin to condense on the sides of the bag in as little as an hour. After about five hours, you may collect as much as a half-cup of water.

Note: Take care of what bags you use. Many plastic bags will release toxins into the water. [This article](https://www.survivalresources.com/transpiration-bags-for-water-collection.html#:~:text=Clear%20bags%20work%20better%20than,several%20in%20a%20small%20space.) explains the process.

8. Solar Stills

A solar still relies on evaporation and condensation to produce distilled water. [This article](https://www.motherearthnews.com/diy/how-to-make-a-solar-still-ze0z1209zsch/) explains the process. However, you’ll need multiple systems are required to produce a large quantity of distilled water. [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zuj_NnymqMg) shows how much time and work it takes to have a small amount of distilled water.

9. Wells

Digging a well on your property is perhaps the most sustainable way to have an emergency supply of water. How deep you need to dig depends on your location.

Experts tend to agree that a drilled well is a better choice than a dug well. Dug wells usually only reach the top of the water table, meaning they can dry up as the water table fluctuates.

On the other hand, drilled wells reach deeper into the earth and make use of a submersible pump at the bottom to get the water out.

In the Wilderness

Other sources of water can be found in natural settings.

10. Bodies of Water

It’s evident that freshwater ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams can be lifesavers when you need water. Look for fast-flowing water at higher elevations for the cleanest water. And check to make sure the water is away from possible wastewater contamination from humans or livestock.

If you can’t locate water, here are a few signs to look for:

Animal trails

Low-flying birds

Insect activity

11. Snow

In the winter, you can melt snow and ice as another water source. [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfeiL3ApaVc) shows three methods you can use.

12. Morning Dew

Depending on the time of year and your location, you may be able to harvest the morning dew to quench your thirst. Try tying a bandana or a t-shirt around your ankle and walking through the dewy landscape. You can wring the moisture into a jar or into your mouth. [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPYzllsumTo) shows how easy the process is.

13. Plants

Some plants have a high water content. [This article](https://www.survivopedia.com/how-to-get-water-from-plants/) details some of the do’s and don’ts when it comes to getting water from plants in a [survival](https://collapsesurvivalsite.com/auto/aliveaftercrisis) situation.