

no more cold showers

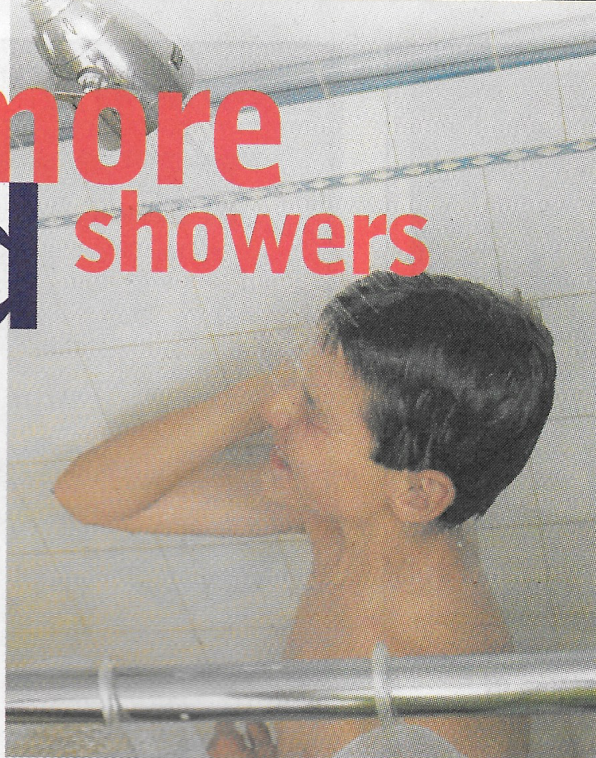
by Pamela Knight

Was the last cold shower you took a matter of choice?

If not, perhaps its time to take a look at whether your hot water requirements have changed. Children becoming teenagers, for example, will present a challenge for the water heater as well as parents! "Mom, the water's freezing" yelled from the bathroom can have a chilling effect for the rest of the day. And the glow from adding a second bathroom or dishwasher or a whirlpool bath can quickly turn luke-warm if there's not enough hot water on tap. A family of four, living in a three-bedroom home with a washing machine and a dishwasher, needs a tank with a capacity of 151 litres. If the family includes teenagers or young adults, then the next size up would be a wise choice. So what size water heater does *your* family need? A heating contractor or retailer can help you determine that very quickly and precisely.

The next step is to come up with a conservation plan. Water is a scarce resource and although recovery time with a natural gas water heater is two times faster than an electric heater, there are additional steps you can take that will mean even bigger savings.

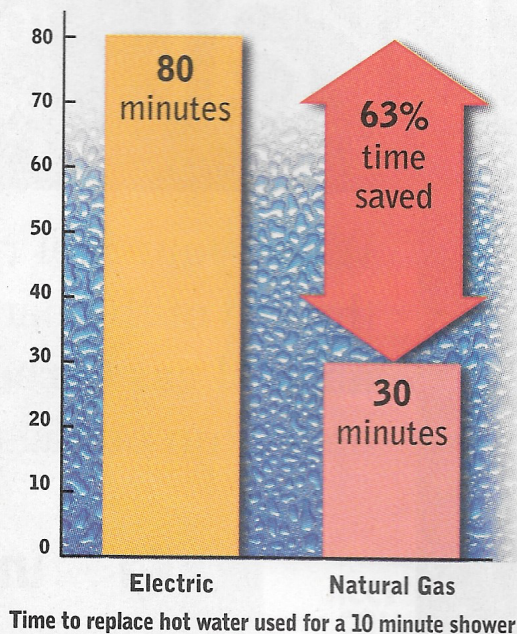
- Lower the temperature setting of your water heater to 54°C/130°F.
- Wrap the first two metres of hot water pipe and the first metre of cold water pipe running from the tank. By doing so, you can save about 2% on your natural gas bill



▲ Natural gas heaters heat water more than two times faster than electric

and reduce sweating problems in summer.

- Install low-flow shower heads in all bathrooms, and aerators on faucets.
- Wash clothes in warm or cold water and always use the water level control feature on your washing machine. With these small steps, you'll save money and preserve precious resources as well. Congratulations. You deserve a hot shower! ■



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ask the expert

Mike Sallows thinks of energy conservation seven days a week. That's because his position at Abbey Air Systems in Oakville puts him in daily contact with consumers who want to save money and resources. We like to encourage our customers to take a total approach to conservation, says Mike. "Although our business is mainly heating and air conditioning, all the natural resources used in the home have an effect on one another.

The obvious place for us to start is heating and cooling. If equipment is more than twelve years old, we recommend our customers consider upgrading to a newer model. This step alone can save hundreds of dollars a year and noticeably cut down on energy consumption. In summer, we suggest taking a realistic approach to cooling. Be reasonable in your expectations. No system should be expected to keep a house more than 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. Aim for a comfort zone, not a deep freeze. Mike adds: While you're in the yard watering the flowers, give your air conditioning unit a shower at the same time. This helps to prevent clogged or dirty components. In addition to taking out a subscription to a regular maintenance program, homeowners can do several things for themselves.

- Change furnace filters four times a year. Even in warmer weather, the filter plays an important role in helping the furnace to circulate cool air throughout the house.
- Make sure caulking and weather stripping are in good condition around doors and windows.
- Check that basements and attics are properly insulated and, if needed, upgrade the insulation.
- Most importantly, install a setback programmable thermostat to help conserve energy every month of the year.