

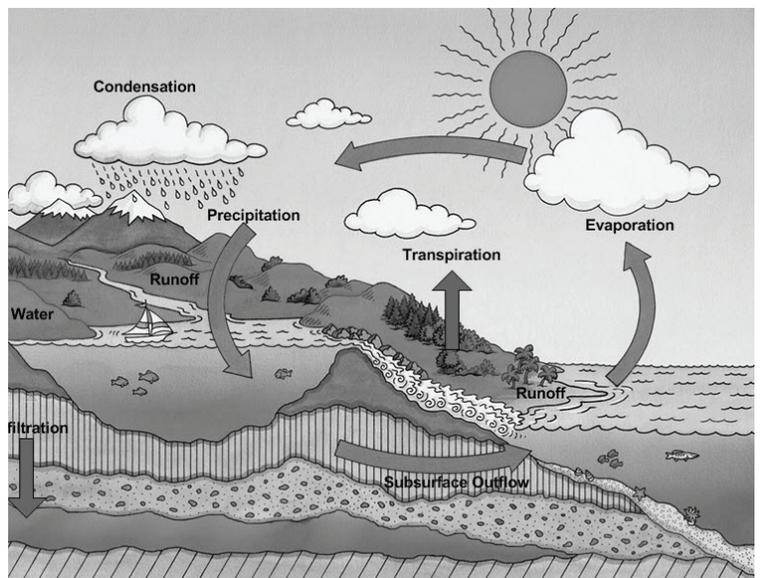
Save the Rain

SAVE A RAINDROP. SAVE A LIFE.

THE WATER CYCLE - WHERE IT ALL BEGINS...

The water cycle has no starting point. But we'll begin in the oceans, since that is where most of Earth's water exists. The sun, which drives the water cycle, heats water in the oceans. Some of it evaporates into the air. Water transpired from plants and evaporated from the soil is called evapotranspiration. Rising air currents take all the vapor up into the atmosphere. That vapor rises into the air where cooler temperatures cause it to condense into clouds.

Air currents move clouds around the globe, and cloud particles collide, grow, and fall out of the sky as precipitation. Some precipitation falls as snow and can accumulate as ice caps and glaciers, which can store frozen water for thousands of years. Snow packs in warmer climates thaw when spring arrives, and the melted water flows overland as snow melt. Most precipitation flows either back into the oceans or over the ground as surface runoff. A portion of runoff enters rivers, with stream flow moving water towards the oceans. Runoff, and groundwater seepage, accumulate and are stored as freshwater in lakes. Not all runoff flows into rivers, though. Much of it soaks into the ground as infiltration. Some of the water infiltrates into the ground and replenishes aquifers, which store freshwater for long periods of time. Some infiltration stays close to the land surface and can seep back into surface-water bodies as groundwater discharge, and some groundwater finds openings in the land surface and emerges as freshwater springs. Yet more groundwater is absorbed by plant roots to end up as evapotranspiration from the leaves. Over time, though, all of this water keeps moving, some to reenter the ocean, where the water cycle "ends" ... oops - I mean, where it "begins."



OUR PART IN WATER CONSERVATION

There are a number of ways to save water, and they all start with you.

1. When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run. Fill one basin with wash water and the other with rinse water.
2. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day, or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
3. Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.
4. Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
5. If you accidentally drop ice cubes, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.
6. When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.
7. Time your shower to keep it under 5 minutes. You'll save up to 1,000 gallons per month.
8. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save up to 4 gallons a minute. That's up to 200 gallons a week for a family of four.
9. Turn off the water while washing your hair. Save up to 150 gallons a month.
10. When washing your hands, turn the water off while you lather.
11. Take 5-minute showers instead of baths. A full bathtub requires up to 70 gallons of water.
13. One drip every second adds up to five gallons per day! Check your faucets and shower heads for leaks.
14. Teach children to turn off faucets tightly after each use.