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I out of 5EasyJust keep the pieces in order for proper reassemblyFor too long now, a stubborn drip-drip-drip has been descending from the one-handed kitchen faucet in the home of Richard Tretthewey. This Old Houses plumbing and heating consultant. Most people will ignore a dripping faucet out of fear or ignorance, says Richard. If they deal with it at all, its usually by cranking the handle so hard they risk tearing a rubber washer or cracking something and making the leak worse. At his own Second Empire house, its more the case of the cobblers child whose feet go unshod.When Richard does finally find a free morning to break out the wrenches, he stems the tide within 15 minutes. A homeowner with a little wherewithal should be able to finish similarly simple repairs in half an hour: Fixing a faucet drip wont solve the worlds water woes, says Richard. But it will save the finish on your enamel sink and end your Chinese water torture.Illustration by Paul PerreaultSingle-handed cartridge faucet is easy to disassemble. Just pry off the decorative cap on the handle, remove the handle screw, tilt the handle back and pull it off. If theres a threaded retaining clip holding the cartridge in place, use needle-nose pliers to remove it, and then pull the cartridge straight up. In Richards case, only the cartridge needed replacing. If the O-rings are cracked, remove the spout and cut off the old O-rings using a utility knife. After coating the new O-rings with nontoxic, heat-proof plumpers grease, reassemble the unit.The first task in any faucet repair is to shut off the water feed by closing the valves under the sink; if there are none, Richard shuts the kitchen faucet. He turns on the faucet to bleed the pipes of water, then plugs the sinks drain with a rag. The smaller the part, says Richard, the more it wants to take a dive down the drain.Photo by Craig RaineTo figure out the next step, look at the faucet and try to understand how it was put together, then go in reverse, advises Richard. This single-handed kitchen faucet has a cartridge under the handle. The cartridge has holes that mix the hot and cold water to deliver different temperatures depending on how the handle is turned. If its worn or cracked, water will seep through to the spout. To remove and replace it, Richard first uncovers it by using a pocket knife to pry off the decorative plastic capsimilar to those on two-handed hot and cold units expose the screw that holds the handle in place. Richard removes the screw; then he gently wiggles the handle back and forth to loosen it and slides it off.Photo by Craig RaineThe faucet handle isnt the only thing between Richard and the cartridge; he must unscure the bonnetbeing careful not to scratch this chrome cover for the cartridge assemblywith a pair of slip-joint pliers. Then he uses needle nosed pliers to grab the U-shaped retainer clip, which slides through the faucet base and around the cartridge to secure it in place. As he takes out the pieces, he carefully lines them up to the side so hes sure not to lose anything or mix up the order of the parts when its time to reassemble the faucet.Photo by Craig RaineRichard grips the stem of the exposed cartridge with his pliers. To overcome the suction resistance of the rubber O-rings at the top of the cartridge, he pulls up firmly, sliding the unit straight out without any side-to-side twists. Had the leak been coming from the base of the handle, Richard would have known that the O-rings needed replacing. But since this is a case of a dripping spout, hes already surmised that the cartridge is the problem. He installs a new one, making sure that he places it in the same position as the one he just pulled out, so the holes in its side that deliver the hot and cold water to the spout will not be mixed up. He then fits the retainer clip snugly into its slot and reassembles the bonnet and handle. With this process, Richard is able to fix his water woes without having to replace the old faucet entirely. Download Article Save money and avoid water waste with this quick tutorial Download Article A leaky faucet handle can be annoying, but luckily, it's one of the easiest plumbing problems to fix yourself. All you need to do is dismantle the handle and replace any parts that are worn or damaged. We spoke with Master Plumber Dave Jones, who told us exactly how you can find out whats causing the leak and fix it in just a few minutes. Keep reading to learn everything you need to get your sink's working right again, no matter what kind of faucet you have. Turn off the water supply under the sink and plug the drain.Pull the decorative cap off the top or side of the handle and remove the screw.Pry off the handle and unscrew the nut underneath.Pull out the cartridge and inspect it and the O-ring around it for damage.Apply grease to a new O-ring or cartridge and put it in the handle hole.Reassemble the faucet and turn on the water supply.1Turn off the water supply, turn on both handles, and plug the drain. Look under your sink for one or two small valves. Turn the valves clockwise to shut off the water supply to your sink and prevent water from spurting out while you work.[1] Turn on the faucet so any remaining water runs out. Insert a plug into the drain or pull up on the stopper behind the faucet.Plugging up the sink prevents any screws, parts, or tools from falling down the drain.If you cant turn off the water under the sink, turn off the water main in your home.Jones says Youll likely find the main water shutoff valve on a basement wall facing the front of your house or hidden from view inside a closet or wall access panel near the front of the house.[2] 2Pull the decorative cap off the handle and remove the screw. Most sink faucets have a large or small decorative cover that hides the handles screw. Use a small flathead screwdriver or utility knife to pry off the cover on the top or side of the handle. Remove the screw underneath with an Allen wrench or a screwdriver.[3] On some two-handed faucets, you may need to unscrew the handle before you can pry off the cap. If the leak is coming from under the tap, unscrew the tap from the base.[4] Advertisement 3Unscrew the nut underneath using an adjustable wrench. Use an adjustable spanner wrench to loosen and remove the nut around the base of the handle.[5] Jones says if the nut has a chrome or metallic finish put electrical tape or a rag around it to protect the finish, then use pliers to remove it.[6]This nut holds down the cartridge, a metal and plastic piece inside the handle that turns the water on and off and controls the water flow. Some models may not have a nut.If the nut wont come off, apply penetrating oil around the screw and let it soak for 10 minutes before trying again.4Pull out the cartridge and inspect it and the O-ring for damage. The O-ring is a piece of rubber that wraps around the bottom of the cartridge. If the O-ring is worn, Jones says to take it to the hardware store to match it with a new one. If the cartridge is broken, you may have to get a new replacement cartridge from the faucets manufacturer.[7]Jones recommends shining a flashlight down into the hole that the cartridge came out of. Inspect for debris and if you see any, remove it with your finger or a needle nose pliers.[8]If possible, insert your finger into the handle hole. Pull out the rubber seat and spring inside to inspect them. If either are broken or worn, replace them.5Apply grease to the O-ring and cartridge and put them in the handle. Place the O-ring on the open edge of the cartridge and use your fingers to roll it down to the groove near the middle. Apply waterproof plumpers grease along the outside of the O ring and on the bottom of the cartridge. Insert the cartridge into the handle hole in the faucet.[9] 6Reassemble the faucet and turn on the water valves. Use your adjustable wrench to tighten the nut around the top of the cartridge. Attach the handle, screw it on, then replace the decorative cap. Turn on the water supply under the sink, then unplug the drain and run the water for a few seconds to make sure the faucet has stopped leaking.[10] 7Check the action of the faucet handle to make sure it moves freely.[11] If your faucet keeps leaking, you may need to replace the cartridge. Follow the same steps as above to access the cartridge, then install the new one. If you already replaced the cartridge and the handle still leaks, you may have to replace the faucet. Advertisement 1Turn off the hot water first. Find the water shut-off valves under the sink and turn the left valve clockwise to turn off the hot water. If the faucet stops leaking, that means the hot water handle is the source of the leak, so thats the side youll need repair. If the faucet keeps leaking, the cold water handle is to blame.[12] Even if youre sure the leak is coming from the hot water side, its a good idea to turn off the cold water, too, just to avoid getting sprayed if you accidentally turn on the cold water tap.Close the sink drain or cover it with a small towel. That way, if you drop a screw or another small piece, it cant go down the drain.2Locate and remove the handle screw. On some compression faucets, the handle has a decorative cap covering the screw that holds the handle in place. Use a flat screwdriver to pry this cap off so you can access the screw.[13] If your faucet has a grip that extends out from the base of the handle, you may need to unscure that grip to access the screw.Once you locate the screw, use a screwdriver or Allen wrench to remove it, depending on the type of screw you find. Then, pull off the handle.3Loosen the retaining nut with an adjustable wrench. At the base of the handle, you should find a large nut holding the handle in place. Turn the nut to the right to loosen it. This will loosen the handle assembly enough for you to remove it.[14] On some faucets, you may be able to loosen the nut by hand.4Pull the valve stem out of its seat. The valve stem is the part of the handle that sits down in the hole after you remove the handle itself. You may be able to pull the stem out by hand just straight up. But if its too difficult, you may need to grip the stem with a wrench and turn counterclockwise to loosen it.[15] 5Inspect the washer, packing washer, and valve seat for damage. Look at the washer on the bottom of the valve stemthis is one of the most likely causes of a leak in a compression faucet.[16] To replace this washer, unscrew the screw at the bottom of the stem and use a screwdriver to pry off the old washer. Coat the new washer in waterproof grease, push it into place, and replace the screw.[17] 6Pop off the old O-rings as well. Get a new O-ring thats exactly the same size, coat it in waterproof grease, and slide it into place.[18] Run your finger inside the hole where the valve stem sits. The part the stem sits on is called the retainer or seat. If it feels rough or pitted, use a seat wrench to pull it out, then replace it with a new one. 7Reassemble the handle. Working backwards, replace the valve stem, then tighten the retaining nut. Replace the handle and tighten the handle screw, then pop the decorative cap back into place or screw in the handle grip.[19] Advertisement 1Unscrew the faucet handle and remove it. Look at the base of the handle to find the screw holding the handle in place. Use an Allen wrench or hex-key wrench to loosen this screw, then pull the handle to remove it.[20] There may be a small cover over the screw; there is, pry off the cover to access the screw.[21] Place the handle somewhere safe so it doesnt get damaged.2Tighten the ball cap under the handle to see if it fixes the leak. Sometimes the ball that the handle rotates on can be loose. Use your fingers to turn this ball clockwise, then turn on the faucet to see if that fixed the leak. If it did, youre finished. If not, keep going.[22] Just use your hands to tighten the balldont force it with a tool or you could damage it.3Turn off the hot and cold water. Look under the sink to find the hot and cold water shut-off valves. Turn both of them clockwise to turn off all of the water to the sink.[23] Ball faucets only have one handle that controls the hot and cold water, so you dont need to determine whether the hot or cold side is leaking.4Unscrew the ball cap and lift off the cap and assembly. Use pliers to remove the cap from beneath the handle.[24] Under the cap on a ball faucet, youll find a cam, a cam gasket, and the ball that allows the handle to move back and forth and side to side. Pull all of these out and set aside everything except the ball.[25] You may need a special tool to remove the camthis should be included in your faucet repair kit.[26] 5Replace the seats and springs on the ball. When you look at the bottom of the ball, you should see two small springs that are held in place by two springs. Carefully remove those springs and seats with needle-nose pliers or pry them off with the tip of your screwdriver, then replace them with new ones from your ball faucet repair kit.[27] Use a cloth or your fingers to remove any dirt or grime from the bottom of the ball.Follow the instructions in the repair kit for replacing the springs.GPut new O-rings under the spout. Pull up on the spout to remove it, then look in the hole for two rubber O-rings. Rub a little waterproof grease onto your new O-rings, then press them into place.[28] Old O-rings are a common cause for leaky faucets.7Put everything back together and check for leaks. Working backwards, replace the spout, then the ball, cam gasket, cam, and cap that covers it all. Once the assembly is in place, replace the handle and screw it back on. [29] Some kits will come with a new cam gasket and capit so, use these and discard the old ones.[30] Turn on the water and check whether the leak is fixed. If the handle is still leaking, youll probably need to replace the faucet. Advertisement 1Turn off the hot and cold water. Find the hot and cold water shut-off valves under the sink and turn them both clockwise to close them. Turn on the faucet to make sure the water is completely shut off before you start working on the faucet.[31] 2Unscrew the handle and remove the handle and body cover. Push the handle upward and look at the base of the handle for the setscrew that holds the handle in place. Unscrew that, then pull up on the handle to remove it.[32] Also, remove the cap that covers the disk assembly, called the escutcheon cap.[33] 3Unscrew the mounting screws and remove the disk assembly. Under the cap, youll see a ceramic disk assembly held in place by two mounting screws. Remove these screws, then pull up on the disk to remove it.[34] Use a cloth or your fingers to wipe away any dirt on the bottom of the disk after you pull it out.4Replace the rubber seals around the cylinder openings. Pull off the old seals on the cylinders, then rinse the assembly to clean out the cylinders. Then, rinse the seals with white vinegar. If the cylinders are really dirty, rinse them with 3% hydrogen peroxide, then gently scrub them with a soft scouring pad to clean them.[36] 5Work backwards to reassemble the faucet. Push the disk assembly back into place and replace the mounting screws. Replace the cap, then pull the handle back on and screw in the setscrew.[37] Turn on the water slowly and check to see if the leak has stopped. Turning the water on too quickly can crack the ceramic disk.[38] If youre sure you assembled everything correctly but the handle is still leaking, youll probably need to replace the faucet. Advertisement The 4 types of faucets are compression, cartridge, ball, and disk. Each has a unique interior assembly. They can be a little hard to distinguish without disassembling the faucet, but these tips can help you tell them apart.Cartridge faucets can have one or two handles. Theyre very easy to turn.Compression faucets arent as common anymore but can still be found on older sinks. They always have 2 handles and require some pressure to turn them.Ball faucets have a single handle that sits on a dome-shaped base, or cap.Disk faucets have a single handle that sits on a wide cylinder. A leaky faucet handle is caused by a worn cartridge or O-ring. Jones says a leaky modern faucet handle, like those on a bathroom sink, is caused by a worn faucet cartridge. On older faucets, the leak is usually caused by a worn washer or O-ring.[39] If your handle is leaking from the tap, it might be caused by.[40] A corroded valve seat (the rubber ring underneath the cartridge)A loose or damaged washerWorn out inlet and outlet seals (inside of ceramic disk faucet handles) Advertisement 1Inspect your sink for leaks regularly. A leaky faucet can waste water and increase your water bills. To check for leaks, examine the outside of the faucet, its gaskets, and the fittings of the pipes under your sinks to make sure there arent any surface leaks.[41] When you notice a component is broken or damaged, replace it immediately.2Descale your faucet once a month to avoid mineral buildup. Vinegar can help prevent limescale and other mineral deposits from damaging your faucets components. Fill a plastic bag with equal parts water and vinegar, secure it around the faucet head, and let it soak for 30 minutes to an hour. Scrub the rest of the faucet with the vinegar solution and dish soap.[42] Remove the bag and brush the head with a toothbrush or cleaning brush and dish soap. Run the faucet to dislodge anything inside, then rinse and dry the area. Advertisement Call a plumber if you cant fix the problem or the leak gets worse. If youve tried to fix your faucet handle but its still leaking, or if youre not comfortable taking on a project like this, call a plumber to help you handle the problem. Also, if the water has damaged the area around your sink, its a good idea to contact a professional like a plumber, contractor, or mold remediation specialist to make sure there arent underlying problems that will worsen over time. Add New Question Question Why doesnt my faucet leak from the handle? Dave Jones Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water CleanupDave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooters Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. It's almost always the O-ring, which is the plastic gasket inside of the cartridge. That thing can wear down over time, and it's usually the main problem when there's a leak. Question Where do I get the replacement O-ring? Dave Jones Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water CleanupDave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooters Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. You may have to inspect your faucet carefully to find its brand name and model number. Once you know, visit the manufacturers website or look up their customer service phone number. Some brands guarantee their faucets for life and will supply replacement cartridges free of charge if you contact them directly. Otherwise, you can just buy one from them. Ask a Question Advertisement Co-authored by: Master Plumber, Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup This article was co-authored by Dave Jones and by wikiHow staff writer, Amy Bohinger. BA Dave Jones is a Professional Plumber and the Midwest Regional Vice President at Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup. In 1992, Jones joined Roto-Rooter as a drain service technician at the age of 18. Since then, he has risen through the ranks into positions of increasing authority. Dave served as general manager of Roto-Rooters Charlotte, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia branches before being promoted to Contractor Area Manager and later to Regional Vice President. Dave holds Master Plumber Licenses in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. This article has been viewed 223,436 times. Co-authors: 10 Updated: February 24, 2025 Views:223,436 Categories: Faucet Repairs Article SummaryXIf your faucet handle is leaking, you should be able to fix the issue yourself by replacing its O ring. First, turn off your water supply at the valve under the sink and open the faucet to drain any water from the pipe. When the water stopped, remove the faucet handle. Depending on the type you have, you may have to pull it straight up, unscrew it counterclockwise, or pry it off with a flat-head screwdriver. Once youve removed the handle, unscrew the nut underneath with a wrench. Under the nut, you should see the rubber O ring, which will probably be worn down. Replace the O ring with a new one, then screw the nut and faucet handle back on. Finally, open the faucet gradually to release any air bubbles until the water flows normally. For more tips, including how to unscrew a stiff handle, read on! Friend end fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 223,436 times. "Repairing a dripping faucet in our bathroom wasnt as easy as I thought it would be. The instructions were clear, and the step-by-step pictures were helpful. I was able to fix the leak in about 30 minutes. Thank you for the extra helpful side notes! Keep up the awesome work & advice!" - more Share your story Do you want to fix a leaking bathroom or kitchen faucet? A leaking faucet can be frustrating, as it increases your water bill, produces annoying dripping noises, and may lead to mold growth around the sink. As a home inspector, I have reported on many leaking faucets and am my clients often ask me how to fix it. In this guide, well go over: How to replace the faucet cartridge Tips to change the O-rings for a tight seal How to clean a faucet cartridge of mineral deposits Replacing rubber seats/springs of ball faucets And more Lets get started! New Cartridge Or Repair Kit: Homeowners can either replace the entire faucet cartridge or use a repair kit containing O-rings, washers, and rubber seats/springs. There are also universal repair kits that come with different sized O-rings and washers which is useful for older faucets where replacements may be unavailable. Hex Or Allen Wrench: You will need a hex or Allen wrench if your faucet has a set screw. Typical sizes include 1/8 or 3/32. Flathead And/Or Phillips Screwdriver: A flathead screwdriver may be needed to pry off any decorative caps and to loosen/remove the cartridge. A Phillips or flathead may be needed to unfasten the screw underneath the decorative cap. Strap Or Adjustable Wrench: For faucets that have twist off handles, a rubber strap wrench is useful for hard-to-remove handles. An adjustable wrench (covered in tape) can also be used. An adjustable wrench will also be needed to remove the retaining nut that is secured over the cartridge. Plumbers Grease: Silicone grease that is put over O-rings and bottom of cartridge. In modern faucets, leaks are most often caused by a failing cartridge. Most have a cartridge inside each handle or at the base of the faucet. Older models may use a stem or ball assembly, especially in single-handle designs. These valves control the flow of water for the hot and cold side (dual handle faucets) and controls both water/temperature for single-handle faucets. A faulty cartridge can cause leaks at the base of the faucet or around the handles. Replacing may then be fairly simple and safe for most homeowners to do themselves. Read the steps below to change out a cartridge or ball. If you have a dual-handle faucet, and you arent sure which side (hot or cold) the leak is coming from, you can turn off one shutoff valve at a time under the sink for a quick diagnosis. Turn the shutoff valve or angle stop clockwise until it is perpendicular to the water line. If the leak stops, then you know which hot/cold handle to repair. I recommend completely shutting off the water to the sink. You dont want any accidental water flow when trying to fix the leak and make a mess. Turn both hot and cold water valves clockwise or perpendicular to the water line. CAUTION: If you have a corroded shutoff valve with evidence of rust or mineral deposits, you may want to turn off the main water shutoff for the entire house just in case the valve breaks or starts leaking. Read Also >> How To Fix A Running Toilet Open the faucet handle(s) and allow all remaining water to drain out. If water is still coming out of the faucet, you may have a faulty shutoff valve under the sink. I recommend turning off the main water shutoff valve to the entire home especially if there is still water coming out. I recommend pulling up the sink stopper so you dont lose any parts when you disassemble the faucet. Placing a rag or paper towel in the sink can help prevent scratches if you drop a tool. After determining which side is leaking, homeowners will need to remove that side of the faucet handle or the center base if its a single-handle faucet. Faucets are typically removed in one of three ways. Set Screw: There is a set screw on the side or bottom of handle that needs to be loosened with a hex or Allen wrench. There can be variation in the size but a 1/8 or 3/32 sized Allen wrench will usually do the trick. If you have a set of Allen wrenches, one of them should fit. Decorative Cap: Some faucet handles will have a small decorative cap on the top or side that will need to be removed with a flathead screwdriver or a pick. These decorative caps are typically made out of plastic and colored blue/red. Once the plastic cap is pried off, there should be a Phillips screw underneath. Twist Off Handle: It isnt as common but some faucet handles wont have a set screw or a decorative cap. You will simply need to twist off the faucet handle counterclockwise. Homeowners may be able to do it by hand, but a strap or adjustable wrench may be necessary. If using an adjustable wrench, I recommend covering it with tape to prevent scratches. After removing the handle, the cartridge should be visible. But before you can remove the cartridge, you will have to remove the retaining nut (or metal clip) that is holding the cartridge in place. You can use an adjustable wrench or pliers to turn the large nut counterclockwise to loosen it and pull off the cartridge. If there is a metal retaining clip, you can use needle nose pliers to pull it off. Sometimes all homeowners have to do is tighten the retaining nut that is holding the cartridge in place. Over time, the retaining nut can become loose which allows the faucet to leak. Simply tighten the retaining nut with an adjustable wrench. And then turn back on the water to that side of the faucet to see if its still leaking. Homeowners will need to remove the faucet cartridge or ball after removing the retaining nut. I highly recommend first taking a picture of the cartridge to remember its orientation. Most faucet cartridges are unthreaded and should be lifted straight up by hand but you may need to use pliers or channel locks to grab the top metal piece of cartridge to pull it out. Be aware that some cartridges and stems ARE threaded, requiring you to turn them counterclockwise for removal. You can also use pliers for grip and gently twist it back and forth to loosen it. There are also specialized cartridge puller tools if you have a stubborn or stuck cartridge. After removing the cartridge, look into the valve body (hole) to see if there is a rubber washer that is still in there. You may need to use an Allen wrench or pick to remove it from the hole. If the cartridge is damaged, simply replacing it may be the best option. Faucet cartridges are pretty cheap and you may want to avoid the hassle of cleaning them or changing the O-rings. I recommend removing the faucet cartridge, and taking it to the hardware store for an exact replacement. Another option is to find the exact model number on the cartridge itself and order it online. However, if you have an old faucet you may have trouble finding a replacement cartridge. The only option would be to buy a universal faucet repair kit that has replacement washers, O-rings, rubber seats of various sizes. XBVU Universal Faucet Repair Kit Before installing the new cartridge, I recommend putting on a bit of silicone plumpers grease over the O-rings of adjustable wrench may be necessary. If using an adjustable wrench, I recommend covering it with tape to prevent scratches. After removing the handle, the cartridge should be visible. But before you can remove the cartridge, you will have to remove the retaining nut (or metal clip) that is holding the cartridge in place. You can use an adjustable wrench or pliers to turn the large nut counterclockwise to loosen it and pull off the cartridge. If there is a metal retaining clip, you can use needle nose pliers to pull it off. Sometimes all homeowners have to do is tighten the retaining nut that is holding the cartridge in place. Over time, the retaining nut can become loose which allows the faucet to leak. Simply tighten the retaining nut with an adjustable wrench. And then turn back on the water to flow for a minute to flush out any remaining debris and to purge it of air. If the faucet is still leaking, you may have a deteriorated or broken valve seat the female part of faucet that cartridge goes into. Read Also >> How To Fix A Garbage Disposer For cartridge and ball faucets, the O-rings are essential parts that seal the faucet and if damaged can cause leaking from the handle or base. Faucets with cartridges, the O-rings will be on the outside of the cartridge. When you pull out the cartridge, carefully inspect the O-rings for damage. For single-handle ball faucets without a cartridge, the O-rings are on the faucet base around the spout. If the O-rings look deteriorated, you may want first try to replace them. There are universal faucet repair kits with an assortment of different sized O-rings. You can also pry an O-ring off the cartridge or base and take it to the hardware store to try and get an exact replacement, there is typically an entire section for O-rings in the faucet repair aisle of hardware stores. When you put the new O-rings on, I recommend putting on plumbers grease (typically silicone) onto the O-ring. The plumbers grease will help the O-rings last longer, prevent cracking, and it will also make the faucet handle smoother. Sometimes homeowners dont need to replace any parts to fix a faucet leak but just tighten parts. If any of the handles are loose, it can cause water to leak around the handle or base of the faucet. Simply locate the set screw securing the handle and tighten it with an Allen wrench. If there is a leak at the base of the sink or even underneath the sink, tightening the mounting nut located underneath the sink can do the trick. A loose aerator (mesh screen) on the tip of the spout can also cause unexpected leaks due to backpressure in the faucet. Additionally, a loose retaining nut that secures the cartridge/system to the faucet can cause leaking. You may want to methodically tighten all these parts to see if it fixes the leak. Be careful not to over-tighten the threads because it can damage the seals and threads however. Occasionally, a loose, clogged, or damaged aerator the mesh screen at the spouts tip can cause leaks at the base or handle, but only when the water is turned on. A loose aerator can disrupt water flow, creating backpressure that forces water to leak from the base. The aerator is easy to inspect and tighten. You will need to remove the aerator by twisting it counterclockwise (facing up) and inspect it for mineral deposits. Twist it back onto the spout moderately tight (not overly tight) and check for leaks by turning on the water. With some single-handle faucets, there is a ball assembly instead of a cartridge such as with Delta or Peerless brands. The ball valve typically has 2 or 3 rubber seats and springs located underneath that controls water flow into the ball assembly. You will need to take a flathead or small tool and pry out the rubber seat and spring from the valve seat after removing the ball. You may need to take a paper towel and remove any existing water in the valve body to actually see the rubber seat and spring after removing the cartridge. It is essential that you install the new seat and spring in the correct orientation. The rubber seat goes over the SMALL or tapered side of the spring. And the spring side goes first into the valve body (female part of faucet that cartridge goes into). Changing out these rubber seals and springs is an easy and cheap way to fix a leak without replacing the entire faucet. Read Also >> How To Unclog A Toilet With & Without A Plunger Sometimes all you have to do is clean the cartridge of debris caused by minerals in the water. After pulling out the cartridge, let it soak in white vinegar for about 30-min. to an hour. Once the cartridge has been soaked, I recommend using an old toothbrush to brush away any debris. Pay careful attention to the small openings where water flows through. If any of these holes are clogged, use a toothpick or wire to clear the hole of any minerals or debris. After the cleaning, run the cartridge through some water to flush out any remaining particles. Re-install the cartridge and faucet handle. Turn on the water and run the faucet to see if the leak is fixed. If you have leaking faucet that isnt from the center spout but from the faucet base (below the handle or spout), read the steps below. A leaking faucet at the base (or underneath the sink) is typically from a failed gasket or O-ring that is in-between the faucet base and the countertop. If you have a leak from below the sink, it is likely a loose mounting nut underneath the sink that is securing the faucet to the countertop. Always turn off the water first before working on a sink. Turn the shutoff valves under the sink clockwise or perpendicular to the water line. Open up the faucet to allow all remaining water in the faucet and water line to drain out. If you miss this step, you may get a wet mess all over your floor. Depending on the length of your flex water lines below the sink, you may need to disconnect them in order to lift up the sink base. Obviously, you only want to do this if you have to. If there is no slack in your water lines, disconnect them using an adjustable wrench. Your faucet is secured to the countertop with a mounting nut underneath. Homeowners may need to use a basin wrench to loosen the nut if there isnt any room for an adjustable wrench. Turn the nut counterclockwise (looking up) and remove it. After removing the mounting nut, the faucet can be lifted up to inspect the base. Inspect the gasket or seal underneath the faucet to see if its cracked or worn. Replace the gasket or seal if needed and re-tighten the mounting nut. Turn on the water and check if the leak is fixed. A leaking faucet is the most common sign that a faucet cartridge needs to be replaced, but there are other indicators such as: If it is difficult to turn the faucet handle, if it is making grinding noises, it can indicate that the cartridge needs replacement or cleaning. And if the handle is too loose, it can also mean a bad cartridge or the set screw needs adjustment. When the water pressure is weak or inconsistent, it can indicate a bad faucet cartridge such as mineral deposits or faulty internal seals. If water temperature fluctuates, it can also be a sign that there is something wrong with the cartridge since it controls water flow. If there is a small delay between when you turn the faucet handle to off and when water actually shuts off, it can indicate a problem with the faucet cartridge. When the seals in the cartridge are corroded or not operating correctly, it takes longer for water to stop flowing when shut off. If you fixed your leaking faucet but still dealing with low water pressure, you may need to change out the mesh screen or aerator. The aerator is a circular screen that is on the tip of the faucet and its designed to mix air with the water stream. The extra air makes it feel like more water is being used but actually reduces water use. Mineral deposits and other debris after changing or cleaning the cartridge may have clogged the aerator leading to reduced water pressure. Typically, homeowners can just unscrew the aerator by hand by turning it counterclockwise when looking upwards at the faucet tip. You also may need to use pliers or a channel-lock wrench to loosen it. I recommend using an old toothbrush and vinegar or you can just let it soak in vinegar for a few hours to dissolve the sediment. If you have a leaking faucet, the easiest solution is to replace the cartridge, change out the O-rings, or to clean the cartridge by soaking it in vinegar. A leaking faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of water over time, wear out faucet parts, and just make it difficult to use. I hope you enjoyed this guide by TimberSill. Leave a comment below or ask me a question on fixing a leaking faucet. Repairing a leaky bathroom or kitchen faucet is generally not a hard job, but it is sometimes complicated by the fact that there are so many different faucet designs, each with different types of parts and requiring different repair methods. Many single-handle faucets use some form of interior ball or cartridge. Most of the time, fixing a leaky single-handle faucet is a fairly simple matter of replacing the faucet cartridge or replacing the ball or its parts. A single-handle disk faucet, however, uses a different design that requires a different repair procedure. From the outside, the disk, cartridge, and ball faucets look similar. Like most cartridge or ball faucets, a disk faucet usually has one handle (though there are some double-handle models). However, if you are facing fixing a leaky old-fashioned faucet, for example, it is not a disc faucet but rather it has compression valves, which is a much different and easier fix. But while ball faucets have a handle that rotates freely in all directions, a ceramic disk faucet has a distinctive operating motion that includes a smooth forward-back action, along with a left-right rotation. This is similar to the way standard cartridge faucets move, but youll notice that a ceramic disk faucet has a shorter, wider body, not the upright cylindrical shape common to cartridge faucets. Inside the faucet body, a disk faucet uses a special type of sealed cartridge with two closely fitting ceramic disks, one fixed, the other moveable. Moving the handle slides the disks around within their cartridge, aligning the holes in various ways to change the ratio of hot and cold water getting through the disks to the faucet's mixing chamber. It is a very dependable design that requires less attention than standard ball-type or cartridge faucets. In this project, we describe how to disassemble and clean the parts of a typical single-handle ceramic disk faucet. It is the same repair process if you have a single-handle kitchen faucet with a spray hose. In many cases, a simple cleaning of the seals and water ports will fix a faucet that is leaking. Sometimes, though, a simple cleaning will fail to fix the leaky faucet. In this case, the problem causing a single-handle faucet to leak may be damaged seals that have lost their resiliency. Unlike other faucets, where seals, springs, and other parts are often offered in repair kits specified for particular faucet models, the seals for most ceramic disk faucets are not sold this way. Nor will you find suitable seals in the universal kits that offer a wide selection of washers, seals, and O-rings. If you find that the seals on your ceramic disk cartridge are cracked or badly worn, the fix is generally to just buy a new cartridge and install it. Credit: The Spruce / Kevin Norris The first step in faucet repair is to locate the hot and cold fixture shutoff valves and turn them off. The shutoffs are usually found directly under the sink, at the point where the water supply pipes are connected to the flexible water supply tubes leading up to the faucet tailpieces. Some valves have knurled knobs that are rotated clockwise to shut off the water, while others are lever-type valves with handles that rotate one-quarter turn to shut them off. You do not need to turn off the home's main water supply to fix this problem. However, if your faucet does not work correctly, it takes longer for water to stop flowing when shut off. If you fixed your leaking faucet but still dealing with low water pressure, you may need to change out the mesh screen or aerator. The aerator is a circular screen that is on the tip of the faucet and its designed to mix air with the water stream. The extra air makes it feel like more water is being used but actually reduces water use. Mineral deposits and other debris after changing or cleaning the cartridge may have clogged the aerator leading to reduced water pressure. Typically, homeowners can just unscrew the aerator by hand by turning it counterclockwise when looking upwards at the faucet tip. You also may need to use pliers or a channel-lock wrench to loosen it. I recommend using an old toothbrush and vinegar or you can just let it soak in vinegar for a few hours to dissolve the sediment. If you have a leaking faucet, the easiest solution is to replace the cartridge, change out the O-rings, or to clean the cartridge by soaking it in vinegar. A leaking faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of water over time, wear out faucet parts, and just make it difficult to use. I hope you enjoyed this guide by TimberSill. Leave a comment below or ask me a question on fixing a leaking faucet. Repairing a leaky bathroom or kitchen faucet is generally not a hard job, but it is sometimes complicated by the fact that there are so many different faucet designs, each with different types of parts and requiring different repair methods. Many single-handle faucets use some form of interior ball or cartridge. 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Sometimes, though, a simple cleaning will fail to fix the leaky faucet. In this case, the problem causing a single-handle faucet to leak may be damaged seals that have lost their resiliency. Unlike other faucets, where seals, springs, and other parts are often offered in repair kits specified for particular faucet models, the seals for most ceramic disk faucets are not sold this way. Nor will you find suitable seals in the universal kits that offer a wide selection of washers, seals, and O-rings. If you find that the seals on your ceramic disk cartridge are cracked or badly worn, the fix is generally to just buy a new cartridge and install it. Credit: The Spruce / Kevin Norris Remove the O-ring from the faucet body neck. Coat a new O-ring with a light layer of silicone plumber's grease and install it by setting it into the groove on the faucet body. Credit: The Spruce / Kevin Norris Insert the cleaned rubber seals back into their seal seats. Place the disk cartridge back into the faucet body, aligning the tabs on the cartridge with the notches in the faucet body. If there is a mounting screw or cap, reinstall it. Attach the handle, then replace the decorative cap (if present). Tighten up the mounting screw if the single-handle faucet just enough until you feel resistance, but don't strip the screw. Credit: The Spruce / Kevin Norris Set the faucet handle to the center open position, then turn the water supply back on gradually. When air stops spurting out of the faucet, move the handle to the closed position. Check to make sure the faucet is not leaking. If it's still leaking you may need to slightly tighten or adjust the inner parts. Credit: The Spruce / Kevin NorrisFAQThere are distinct signs indicating you have a bad faucet cartridge. You will spot water leaking from the handle. The lever may not work well and it will feel different when you use it. In addition, you may have trouble regulating the water temperature.A leaking faucet should be repaired immediately because the problem will only get worse. You will have pools of leaking water in places you can't see and the trapped moisture will cause mold, mildew, and rot to develop.It can cost the price of the cartridge if you do it yourself. If you hire a plumber to fix a leaky faucet, you could be charged anywhere from \$200 to \$300, depending on where you live.

**How to fix a leaky delta kitchen faucet single side handle. How to fix a leaky moen kitchen faucet single handle. How to fix a leaky kitchen sink faucet single handle. How to fix leaky faucet single handle. Leaky faucet kitchen sink single handle. Fix a leaky kitchen faucet with one handle. How to fix a leaky single handle ball delta kitchen faucet. How to fix a leaky american standard single handle kitchen faucet.**