

Cold Showers? No More!

NEW COMPACT, TANKLESS HEATERS CAN KEEP YOU (COMFORTABLY) IN HOT WATER.

Kyle and Paige Medlin of Milton, Georgia rarely used the large tub in their master bath—until they installed a tankless water heater.

“We’d run out of hot water before the tub was full,” says Paige. “Now we can take a hot shower and fill the tub at the same time.” Tankless heaters provide hot water on demand at a preset temperature. If properly sized and used within their capacity, larger whole-house units can supply virtually unlimited hot water, industry experts say.

PEEK INSIDE

How do they work? When a hot water valve opens, a sensor detects the flow of water and triggers a powerful heating element that heats water instantly (though homeowners with long supply-pipe runs may still have a bit of a wait for it). Common in Europe and Japan, tankless heaters are more expensive than storage-tank models. Prices range from \$200 for a small point-of-use unit installed under a sink or by a washing machine to more

than \$1,000 for a whole-house model.

But here’s the kicker: They use anywhere from 10 to 20 percent less energy because there’s no need to keep an entire tank of water hot, virtually eliminating so-called standby energy loss.

PAINLESS PAYBACK

Lower operating costs can eventually offset the higher price. An evaluation in Texas by the Partnership for Advanced Technology in Housing compared a \$585 tankless heater to a \$188 conventional model. The tankless version used almost 24 percent less energy for a savings of \$58 a year or a payback period of just under seven years.

Experts note, however, that savings vary depending on a household’s hot-water usage and local energy costs. They also diminish with electric units because electricity typically costs more than natural gas—and electric units require more electricity to operate. That also makes installation more expensive, which prolongs the payback period.

Tankless water heaters:

- Can’t rupture and flood homes (burst tank heaters are among the top five reasons for water-damage home insurance claims).
- Reduce water bills in some cases because hot water arrives faster.
- Can replace existing tank heaters, but installation typically is easier in new construction.
- Last 20 years, compared to 10 to 15 years for conventional heaters.
- Cost anywhere from two to four times more to install.

➤ For more information from the National Association of Home Builders, go to www.toolbase.org > “plumbing” > “tankless”.



ALL PUMPED UP

REGULARLY INSPECT YOUR SUMP PUMP SO YOUR PROPERTY STAYS SAFE AND PROTECTED.

Sump pump maintenance is one of the most important tasks you can add to your seasonal to-do list. You want to make sure this valuable piece of equipment is ready when needed before winter snows melt and spring flooding begins. For proof, just ask Michelle and Gary Neubauer, who came home one day last spring to discover two inches of water in their Waterford, Wisconsin basement. Luckily, they turned on their never-used sump pump and prevented further damage, but after their close call,

the couple isn’t likely to pass on yearly maintenance for the pump. “We had almost forgotten it was there,” Michelle says. To avoid costly and unpleasant surprises at your house, take time to step through this checklist:

■ **Corrosion and connections:** At least once each season, carefully inspect your pump for corrosion, says Brian Kuglich, program manager with the National Safety Council. Piping connections should be intact and cords in good shape. “It’s simple, but people don’t take

the time until it’s too late,” Kuglich says.

□ **Debris and buildup:** Clean any debris from the sump pump screen or inlet opening, says Pamela Franzen, director of the Sump and Sewage Pump Manufacturers Association.

■ **Motor:** If your motor shuts off unexpectedly or runs constantly, the pump could be overheating—a sign of a serious drainage problem. Call a certified contractor right away, says Kuglich.

SAFETY TIP:

Before any inspection or cleaning, always unplug your sump pump to avoid the risk of electrocution.

For more safety tips, call your Liberty Rep: Steve Kosydar, 630-250-7100, ext. 56599
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