



Western Cape  
Government

Human Settlements

---

# Do It Yourself

## Home Maintenance Guide

Housing Consumer Education

# How to replace a tap washer



- What you need:**
1. Adjustable wrench/spanner
  2. Screwdriver (medium size)

Step 1: Turn off the isolation valve to your taps so that water don't spill all over your bathroom.

Step 2: Place the plug in the sink. This is what wise plumbers do, because the tiny screws and bits that make up your tap are fiddly and prone to falling down the plug hole into the sewer, where only talented rats will find them useful.



Step 3: Unclip the lid of the tap (often the bit that says 'H' for hot or 'C' for cold).

Step 4: There's a screw inside. Unscrew it (righty tighty, lefty loosey) and remove the hand grip portion and unscrew the cover.



Step 5: Remove the cartridge. This can be quite tricky. Use an adjustable spanner and some force. Pull the cartridge out.



Step 6: Unscrew it and remove.

Step 7: Get in the car or on the bus to your nearest plumbers' merchant. Show them the cartridge and ask for a new washer to fit. There are MANY different kinds of washer and all your taps will have different ones. This will save you time, effort and money in the long run.



Step 8: Unscrew or pop off the washer, pop the new one in and put your tap back together.

Step 9: Tighten it all up hand-tight, plus a quarter turn.

**Top tip:** *As you disassemble your tap, it's clever to keep all the separate parts in the order in which they came out so that you can easily put them back again.*

# How to change a plug

- What you need:**
1. Plug
  2. Screw driver (star)
  3. Flat head screw driver
  4. Pair of wire strippers



Step 1: To start connecting your plug, first loosen the screw in the centre of the plug that holds it together by using your screw driver.



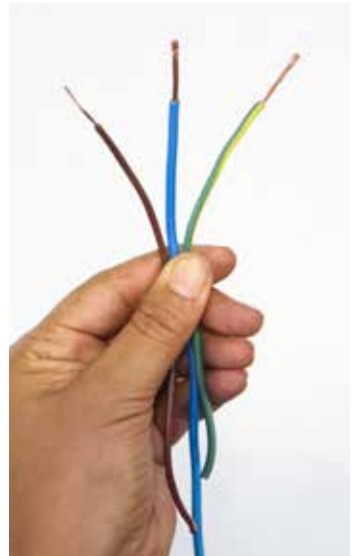
Step 2: Remove the screw and put it in a safe place so that you will not lose it. Open up the plug and put the cover to one side.

Step 3: You will now see that your plug has got 3 pins. A long pin at the top and 2 short ones at the bottom of the plug. Each pin has got a screw in the side of it which covers up a hole in each pin. These holes are where you would now connect your wiring too.



Step 4: Now take your flat head screw driver and unscrew the screws that are in each pin. Be careful not to unscrew the screws completely, just unscrew them enough so that you are now able to see clearly through the hole in each pin.

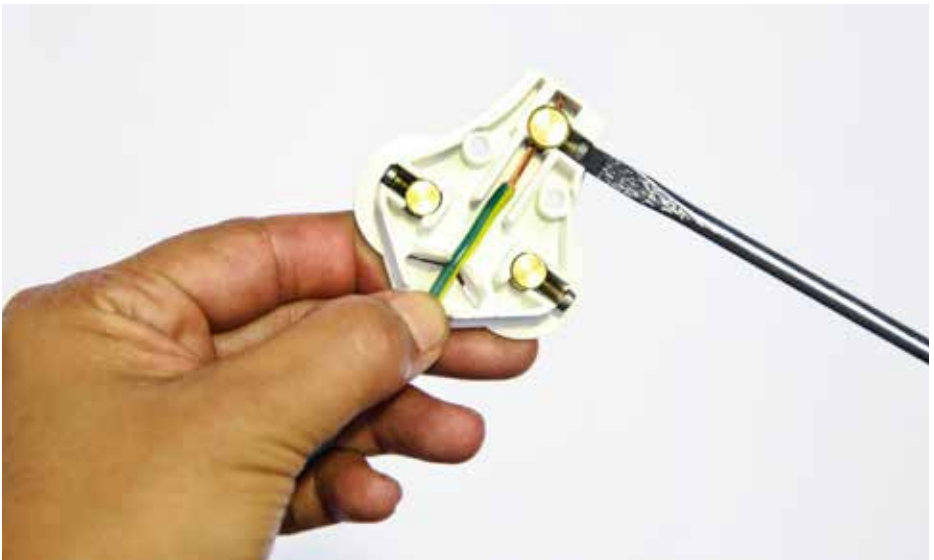
Step 5: Look for the 2 plastic sleeves at the bottom center of the plug. Remove the sleeves. This will make it easier for you when you need to start connecting your wiring to the pins.



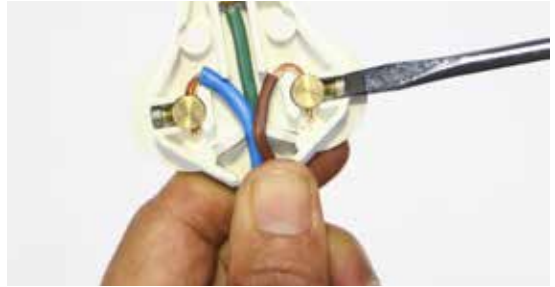
Step 6: Use the wire strippers to strip away 1cm of the plastic of the 3 wires to expose the copper cabling within. Or if you don't have wire stripper just cut the plastic.

Step 7: Now before you even consider connecting the wiring pins, there are a couple of things to always remember. When looking at your plug you will see that for the 2 short pins there are markings on the plug which tell you which wires must be connected to which pin. If you connect your wiring to the wrong pins and you put your plug into the wall socket then things can go horribly wrong.

If you're lucky it could just trip your mains but more seriously it could give you an electrical shock or even cause a fire which is not a good thing at all. If you have a look at the 3 wires you are going to connect, the general rule is that they are 3 different colors: blue, brown and green with a yellow stripe in it or sometimes just plain green. These 3 colored wires are very important to your connecting of the plug. On the plug the 3 markings you will see is as follows: where the central long pin is situated, there is an E imprinted, at the bottom side of the small pin there is a N imprinted and the right small pin there is a L imprinted. These 3 letter stand for: **EARTH, NEUTRAL** and **LIVE**.

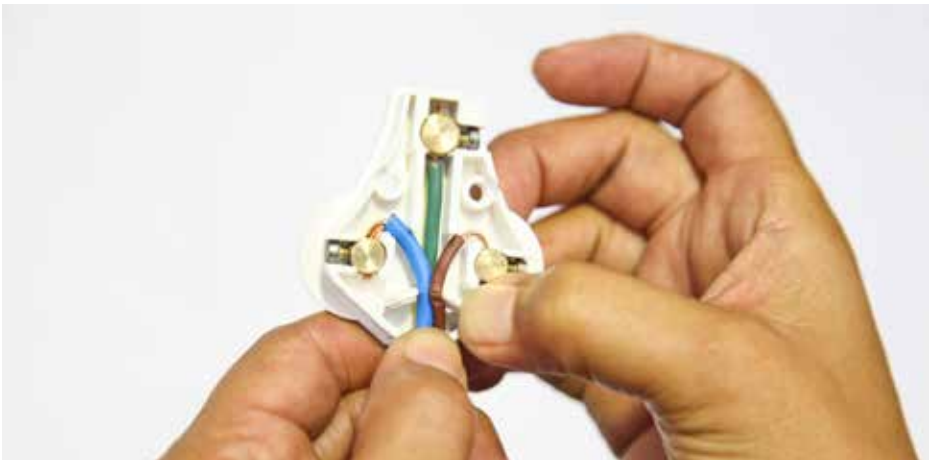


Step 8: The green and yellow striped wire is connected to the long pin in the Central top of the plug. This will earth the plug and prevent any electrical shocks. Take your yellow wire and insert it into the hole of the pin marked with an E then fasten the screw which will tighten against the wire and keep it in the pin.



Step 9: The blue wire is connected to the left pin which is your neutral, which helps the electric current run through the appliance back to the source of power where it came from otherwise your electrical current will only end at the plug and not reach through to the appliance that is connected to the plug. Take your Blue wire and insert it into the hole of the pin marked with an N then fasten as per above.

Step 10: The brown wire is connected to the right pin which is your live; this is the wire which actually carries the electricity through to your appliance that your plug is connected to. Take your Brown wire and insert it into the hole of the pin marked with an L then fasten as per above.



Step 11: After doing this, you can now put the 2 plastic sleeves back into position. This will now keep the wires securely in place and prevent them from being pulled out of the pins by accident.





Step 12: You can now put the plug cover back on to the plug and screw the star screw back on in order to close up the plug.



Step 13: Once you have done this, you can now go ahead and plug it into the wall socket and your appliance will work.

**Notes:**

The best plugs to get are usually the ones that are fastened by a screw. You can also get the clip on plugs but the clips don't usually last and tend to break if you are not careful with opening or closing the plug up. The picture here is an example of the best plug to use.

**So in future always remember the following; green is earth, blue is neutral and brown is live.**

# How to replace a light bulb

Step 1: Look at the lamp that is currently not working. If there is not a bulb install a bulb of the correct wattage for that lamp or fixture.



Step 2: Make sure you turn the switch off. This will prevent you from being electrocuted.

Step 3: If the bulb you are replacing is still working, let it cool down for about 30 seconds or more. If there is no bulb it is ok to skip this step.



Step 4: Remove the burnt out lamp and dispose of it properly. If you don't have a burnt out bulb to dispose of it is ok to proceed to next step.



Step 5: Fit the new bulb. Do not over-tighten or press on the bulb too hard.

Step 6: Turn on the light switch to make sure the bulb works. If light does not work double check to make sure you installed a new bulb. {see prior step}

Housing Consumer Education Programme  
27 Wale Street  
Cape Town

Estelle Juries

**Email:** [Estelle.Juries@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Estelle.Juries@westerncape.gov.za)

**tel:** +27 21 483 2449      **fax:** +27 21 483 2343

[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

---

Afrikaans and isiXhosa versions of this publication are available on request.

**Email:** [Estelle.Juries@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Estelle.Juries@westerncape.gov.za)



**Western Cape  
Government**

Human Settlements