

OTTAWA PRO PLUMBING

Faucets & Fixtures

Choosing, installing, and repairing taps,
showerheads, and fixtures

8 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawaplumbingpro.ca/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. How do I fix a leaky faucet?
.....
2. Why is my faucet dripping?
.....
3. How do I remove hard water buildup from my faucet?
.....
4. Can I replace a faucet myself?
.....
5. What is the difference between single and double handle faucets?
.....
6. What causes a faucet to spray erratically?
.....
7. Why does my faucet have low water pressure?
.....
8. How much does it cost to replace a kitchen faucet?
.....

How do I fix a leaky faucet?

A leaky faucet is one of the most common plumbing issues homeowners face, and in many cases it's a manageable DIY repair — but the approach depends entirely on what type of faucet you have.

Identifying Your Faucet Type

The fix varies significantly depending on whether you have a **ball faucet**, **cartridge faucet**, **ceramic disc faucet**, or an older **compression faucet**. Compression faucets (common in older Ottawa homes) leak because rubber washers wear out — these are the most DIY-friendly repairs. Cartridge and ceramic disc faucets are also repairable but require matching the exact replacement cartridge to your brand (Moen, Delta, Kohler, etc.).

The Basic Repair Process

Start by **shutting off the water supply** under the sink — turn both hot and cold valves clockwise until they stop. Open the faucet to release any remaining pressure. Remove the handle (usually held by a screw hidden under a decorative cap), then access the cartridge or stem. For a compression faucet, you're looking for a worn rubber washer at the bottom of the stem — replace it with an identical one from a hardware store. For cartridge faucets, pull the cartridge straight out and bring it to the store to match the replacement exactly.

Ottawa-Specific Context

Ottawa's water has moderate mineral content, which accelerates wear on rubber washers and cartridge seals — so leaky faucets are especially common here. Replacement parts for major brands run **\$10–\$40** at stores like Home Depot or Rona. If the job escalates (corroded valves, damaged valve seat, or you can't shut off the water), a professional faucet repair in Ottawa typically runs **\$150–\$300** including parts.

When to Call a Pro

Stop and call a plumber if you find **corroded or seized shut-off valves** under the sink — forcing them can cause a burst pipe. Also call if the valve seat inside the faucet body is damaged, as resurfacing or replacing it requires specialized tools. A faucet dripping once per second wastes roughly **3,000 litres of water per year**, so don't put off the repair.

Next Steps

If you're comfortable with basic tools, grab the replacement parts and give it a try — most cartridge swaps take under an hour. If you run into trouble or the shut-off valves won't cooperate, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can handle the repair quickly and ensure everything is properly sealed. Feel free to request a free estimate if you'd like a professional to take a look.

Q2

Why is my faucet dripping?

A dripping faucet is almost always caused by a worn or damaged internal component that's no longer creating a proper seal to stop water flow. The good news is that once you identify your faucet type, the fix is usually straightforward.

The most common culprit is a worn washer or O-ring. In traditional compression faucets (the kind with two separate handles you turn), a rubber washer presses against a seat to stop water flow. Over time, that washer wears down, hardens, or gets damaged — and water starts sneaking past it. You'll typically notice the drip coming from the spout itself.

Cartridge and ball-style faucets (common in single-handle designs) have their own internal components that wear out. Cartridge faucets use a replaceable cartridge that can crack or wear, while ball faucets have small springs, seats, and O-rings that degrade with use. **Ceramic disc faucets** — often found in higher-end fixtures — are the most durable, but their ceramic discs can still crack or accumulate mineral buildup, especially with Ottawa's moderately hard water.

Ottawa's water supply can accelerate wear on faucet internals. Mineral deposits from hard water build up on washers, seats, and cartridges over time, causing parts to fail sooner than expected. If you've noticed white or greenish buildup around your faucet, mineral scale is likely contributing to the drip.

A dripping faucet wastes more water than most people realize — a faucet dripping once per second wastes roughly 3,000 gallons per year, which adds up on your Ottawa water bill. If you're comfortable with basic DIY, replacing a washer or cartridge is a manageable fix with the right parts from a hardware store. However, if you open the faucet and find a corroded valve seat, stripped threads, or aren't sure what type of faucet you have, that's a good time to call a pro before a small drip becomes a bigger problem.

For a **faucet repair or replacement in Ottawa**, you're typically looking at **\$150 - \$300** for professional service, including parts. If you'd like an accurate assessment of your specific situation, Ottawa Pro Plumbing offers free consultations — sometimes what looks like a simple drip points to a larger issue worth catching early.

Q3

How do I remove hard water buildup from my faucet?

White vinegar is the most effective and safe method for removing hard water buildup from faucets. Soak a plastic bag filled with white vinegar around the faucet aerator and spout, secure it with a rubber band, and let it sit for 2-4 hours or overnight for heavy buildup.

For the faucet body and handles, create a paste using **baking soda and water**, then scrub gently with an old toothbrush. The mild abrasive action helps break down mineral deposits without scratching the finish. After scrubbing, wipe clean with a damp cloth and dry thoroughly to prevent new water spots from forming.

Ottawa's water is moderately hard (around 130-150 mg/L), so mineral buildup is common throughout the city. For stubborn deposits, you can also use **CLR (Calcium, Lime & Rust remover)** following the manufacturer's instructions, but test it on an inconspicuous area first as it can damage certain finishes like brushed nickel or oil-rubbed bronze.

Prevention is key - wipe down faucets after each use and consider installing a water softener if hard water is affecting multiple fixtures throughout your home. If the aerator is completely clogged and won't come clean, it may need replacement (usually \$5-15 at hardware stores).

If you notice **reduced water pressure** even after cleaning, or if the faucet cartridge seems damaged during cleaning, that's when you'll want to call a professional. Sometimes hard water buildup indicates internal component wear that requires replacement.

For persistent hard water issues affecting your whole home, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can assess your water quality and recommend solutions like water softeners or filtration systems.

Q4

Can I replace a faucet myself?

Yes, replacing a basic faucet is one of the more manageable DIY plumbing projects for homeowners with some handy skills. Most kitchen and bathroom faucet replacements can be done with standard tools and don't require a permit in Ottawa.

The process involves shutting off the water supply valves under the sink, disconnecting the old faucet's supply lines and mounting hardware, then installing the new faucet in reverse order. You'll need basic tools like adjustable wrenches, pliers, and possibly a basin wrench for tight spaces under the sink. The trickiest parts are usually accessing the mounting nuts in cramped spaces and ensuring all connections are properly tightened to prevent leaks.

However, some situations require professional installation. If you need to modify plumbing lines, install new shut-off valves, or if the existing plumbing doesn't match your new faucet's configuration, you'll want a licensed plumber. Wall-mounted faucets and complex multi-handle systems are also better left to professionals. In Ottawa's older homes, corroded supply lines or non-standard connections often complicate what seems like a simple swap.

Before starting, turn off the main water supply if the under-sink valves don't work properly - this is common in older Ottawa homes. Take photos before disconnecting anything, and have towels ready for water spillage. If you encounter any surprises like damaged pipes or discover the job is more complex than expected, don't hesitate to call a professional to avoid water damage.

For a free estimate on faucet installation or if you run into complications, Ottawa Pro Plumbing can help ensure the job is done right the first time.

Q5

What is the difference between single and double handle faucets?

Single handle faucets use one lever to control both water flow and temperature by moving it up/down and left/right, while **double handle faucets** have separate controls for hot and cold water that you adjust independently to achieve your desired temperature and flow.

The main functional difference is in temperature control. With single handle faucets, you can quickly adjust to your preferred temperature with one motion once you learn the sweet spot. Double handle faucets require you to balance both valves, but they offer more precise control since you're directly managing the hot and cold water mix.

Many people find single handles more convenient for quick tasks like washing hands, while others prefer the precise control of double handles for tasks requiring specific temperatures.

Installation and maintenance also differ significantly. Single handle faucets typically have more complex internal cartridges that can be more expensive to replace (\$50-150 for parts), but you only have one mechanism to maintain. Double handle faucets have simpler individual valve stems that are usually cheaper to repair (\$20-60 per side), but you have two potential failure points. In Ottawa's hard water areas, both types can develop mineral buildup, but double handle faucets often show wear more gradually since the load is split between two valves.

From a **design perspective**, single handles offer a cleaner, more modern look and work well in smaller spaces since they require less counter or wall space. Double handle faucets provide a more traditional or elegant appearance and are often preferred in heritage homes or classic bathroom designs. Both styles are available in similar price ranges, typically \$150-800 for quality residential models.

For most Ottawa homeowners, single handle faucets are the practical choice for everyday use, while double handles work well when you want traditional styling or very precise temperature control for specific applications.

Q6

What causes a faucet to spray erratically?

Erratic faucet spray is typically caused by mineral buildup in the aerator, damaged internal components, or water pressure issues. The most common culprit is a clogged aerator that disrupts the water flow pattern.

Mineral deposits are the leading cause in Ottawa due to our moderately hard water. Calcium and lime scale accumulate in the tiny holes of the aerator screen, creating uneven water flow that causes spraying, splashing, or irregular stream patterns. This buildup happens gradually over months or years of normal use.

Internal faucet damage can also cause erratic spray patterns. Worn O-rings, damaged cartridges, or loose packing nuts allow water to escape where it shouldn't, creating side sprays or irregular flow. Single-handle cartridge faucets are particularly prone to this as the cartridge wears down from daily use. In older compression faucets, worn washers and seats can cause similar issues.

Water pressure problems contribute to spray issues as well. Inconsistent pressure from the municipal supply or issues with your home's pressure regulator can cause the faucet to spray unpredictably. Ottawa's water pressure typically runs 40-80 PSI, but fluctuations during peak usage times can affect faucet performance.

Start with the simple fix - unscrew the aerator from the faucet tip and soak it in white vinegar overnight to dissolve mineral deposits. Use an old toothbrush to scrub away stubborn buildup. If the aerator is severely damaged or the spray pattern doesn't improve, replacement aerators cost just a few dollars at any hardware store.

If cleaning the aerator doesn't solve the problem, the issue likely requires internal faucet repair or replacement. This involves shutting off water supplies and disassembling the faucet - work best left to a professional to avoid water damage from improper reassembly.

Why does my faucet have low water pressure?

Low water pressure in a faucet is usually caused by mineral buildup in the aerator, clogged supply lines, or issues with your home's water pressure system.

The most common culprit is a **clogged aerator** - that small screen at the tip of your faucet. Over time, mineral deposits from Ottawa's moderately hard water build up in this screen, restricting water flow. You can unscrew the aerator (turn counterclockwise) and soak it in white vinegar overnight to dissolve the buildup. If it's severely clogged, replace it entirely - aerators cost just a few dollars at any hardware store.

If cleaning the aerator doesn't help, the problem might be **debris in the faucet cartridge or valve**. This is especially common in older homes where sediment has accumulated in the supply lines. The cartridge may need cleaning or replacement, which requires shutting off water valves under the sink and disassembling the faucet handle.

Whole-house pressure issues are another possibility. If multiple fixtures have low pressure, check if your main water valve is fully open, or if you have a pressure regulator that needs adjustment. In Ottawa, municipal water pressure typically runs 40-80 PSI, but older homes may have undersized supply lines that restrict flow.

When to call a professional: If the problem affects multiple fixtures, involves the main water line, or if you're uncomfortable working with plumbing connections. A licensed plumber can diagnose whether you need new supply lines, pressure regulator adjustment, or if there's a larger issue with your home's plumbing system.

For persistent low pressure issues affecting your whole home, Ottawa Pro Plumbing offers free consultations to assess your water pressure system and recommend solutions.

Find a Plumbing Contractor

Ottawa Plumbing Pro connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://justynrookcontracting.com>:

- Pure Flow Water Solutions inc. ?
- SDR Electric, Plumbing & Heating Inc. ?
- Callandgone

[View all plumbing contractors ?](#)

How much does it cost to replace a kitchen faucet?

Kitchen faucet replacement in Ottawa typically costs \$150-\$300 for professional installation, with the total project ranging from \$250-\$800 depending on the faucet you choose and any complications that arise.

The **installation labor** usually runs \$150-\$300, which includes removing your old faucet, installing the new one, connecting supply lines, and testing for leaks. This assumes standard installation with existing shut-off valves and no complications. If your plumber needs to install new shut-off valves, modify plumbing lines, or work around corroded connections, expect additional costs of \$100-\$200.

Faucet prices vary widely based on quality and features. Basic single-handle faucets start around \$100-\$150, while mid-range models with pull-out sprayers run \$200-\$400. High-end faucets with touchless operation or commercial-style designs can cost \$400-\$600 or more. Most Ottawa homeowners choose faucets in the \$200-\$350 range for good quality and durability.

Additional costs may include new supply lines (\$20-\$40), a new shut-off valve if yours is old or leaking (\$50-\$100 installed), or modifications if your new faucet has different hole spacing than your old one. In Ottawa's older homes, plumbers sometimes encounter corroded connections or non-standard setups that add 30-60 minutes to the job.

Professional installation is recommended because it ensures proper connections, prevents leaks that could damage your kitchen cabinets, and typically includes a warranty on the work. Most installations take 1-2 hours for an experienced plumber. For a free estimate on your kitchen faucet replacement, request a quote from Ottawa Pro Plumbing.

Find a Plumbing Contractor

Ottawa Plumbing Pro connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://justynrookcontracting.com>:

- Best Hand2Hand moving company ?
- Super Plumber ?
- Humble Homes - property maintenance ?

[View all plumbing contractors ?](#)

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Pro Plumbing. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of September 13, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawaplumbingpro.ca for the latest answers.