



# How To Change a Mixer Tap Cartridge

Everyone has experienced a leaking tap in their home at some point in their life. It's one of those very annoying issues that many tend to put off fixing until it's too late. However, if leaks are ignored for long enough, it has the potential to wreak havoc on your home and finances.

Replacing the ceramic cartridge is the most effective way to repair a leaking mixer tap. It's actually a very simple DIY job that anybody can complete, regardless of experience, and the sooner you start, the less water and money you'll waste down the drain.

## What is a Mixer Tap?

[Mixer taps](#) are a popular choice of tapware in Australian [bathrooms](#), [kitchens](#) and [laundries](#) because of their functionality and stylish design. Traditionally, Australian homes featured a 3-piece tap set that consisted of separate hot and cold taps and a spout.

Contemporary mixer taps have a more streamlined and modern design, allowing users to control the temperature and flow of water with a single handle.

## What is a Mixer Tap Cartridge?

The majority of 3-piece tapware contains an internal rubber seal or washer. Over time, this washer can deteriorate and cause leakages. Rather than a washer, most modern mixer tapware utilises a higher-quality and longer-lasting ceramic cartridge.

A ceramic mixer tap cartridge is a cylindrical component located at the centre of the tap and is responsible for regulating water flow and temperature. It consists of a pair of discs that sit atop one another - the bottom disc remains fixed while the upper disc rotates when the handle is operated.

When the handle is turned 'on', the upper disc moves, permitting water to flow through the mixer. When the handle is returned to its 'off' position, the ceramic disc blocks the water flow. Whilst mixer cartridges are far more advanced and durable than washers, they can still be prone to cracks and scratches which can cause leaks.

## What Causes a Mixer Tap to Leak?

There are a few different reasons as to why a mixer tap may leak, but the most common culprit is a worn-out or damaged mixer cartridge.

When this happens, the seals inside the cartridge start to break down, which allows water to escape. Other causes of leakage may include a corroded or blocked valve, faulty installation or a loose connection.

## How Long Do Mixer Tap Cartridges Last?

Generally, mixer tap cartridges should last anywhere from five to ten years. However, this will depend on how often the tap is used and also the water hardness in your area.

The Sink Warehouse offers a 10-year cartridge replacement warranty on all of our mixer taps.

## How to Change a Mixer Tap Cartridge

Replacing a mixer tap cartridge is a relatively simple task, but it's important that you read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. In most cases, you'll need to purchase a replacement mixer cartridge from your original tap supplier before you can begin.

If you are looking to replace a cartridge for a Sink Warehouse mixer tap, contact our support team on [1300 301 000](tel:1300301000) today.

## Checklist

In order to replace a mixer tap cartridge, you will need:

- A replacement cartridge (if you are unsure as to what cartridge you require, consult your tap manufacturer)
- An Allen key
- A small, flat-blade screwdriver
- A Stanley knife
- An adjustable spanner
- And a strap wrench

*Please note: Any plumbing tasks that are beyond replacing cartridges should be left to the professionals. Before carrying out any other plumbing work, check with your state's plumbing regulations. Performing unlicensed plumbing work is against the law and you will not be covered by insurance.*



### 1. Turn Off Your Water Supply

The first step to repairing a leaking mixer tap is to ensure that the water supply to your mixer tap has been turned off.

Turn off the water supply to your mixer tap by turning the isolation valves located on the supply pipes below your sink counterclockwise.

If you can't find your isolation valves, turn off the main valve at your water meter.



### 2. Remove Plastic Cap/Cover

Your first real challenge when fixing a leaking mixer tap is locating and removing the plastic cap that conceals the grub screw.

On most taps, this cap is the hot/cold indicator button found on your mixer handle. This will expose the screw that holds your mixer tap cartridge in place.

You can sometimes lift the cap off by using your nails, but if you are struggling, you can use a Stanley knife to carefully lift the button and a small flat-head screwdriver to finish prying it out.

If you're not careful you may damage the cap, but replacements can be found easily at most plumbing and hardware stores.



### 3. Use an Allen Key to Remove the Grub Screw & Handle

Once the cap has been removed from your mixer handle, look for a grub screw in the hole beneath. This screw is what joins your mixer handle to the base of your mixer tap.

Use your Allen key to undo the grub screw until you can lift the handle off the cartridge spindle. Grub screws can vary in size, but a 2.0mm or 2.5mm Allen key usually does the trick. Take care to not lose any pieces – it'll be much tougher to put everything back together correctly if things are missing!

Sometimes the mixer handle may get stuck to the base due to a build-up of calcium carbonate, also known as limescale. If you're having trouble removing your mixer handle because of limescale, soak it in a 50/50 water/vinegar solution for about 20 minutes and try again.



### 4. Remove Chrome Dress Ring & Retaining Nut

You can now move on to removing the chrome dress ring. Since there are no flat sides on this ring, you will have to remove it by hand or by using a strap wrench.

After removing the dress ring, you'll find a brass retaining nut. Use your spanner to unscrew and remove the brass retaining nut to find your mixer tap cartridge.

If you're concerned about marring your tap's finish, use an aged cloth between your tools and the mixer.



### 5. Replace the Mixer Tap Cartridge

Once you have access to the mixer tap cartridge, gently remove and replace it with a new one of the exact same model.

Make sure that you follow the manufacturer's guidelines and that the mixer tap cartridge's locator pins match up.



### 6. Reassemble the Mixer & Turn On Water Supply

Once the new cartridge has been fitted, reassemble your mixer tap by re-screwing the brass retaining nut and chrome dress ring, re-tighten the grub screw with an Allen key, then reactivate your water supply at either your stop or isolation valve.

We recommend that you keep towels in place in case there are any leakages.

If you've tested your mixer tap and are satisfied with the result, you're finished!