

6 Ways to Keep Basements Dry

- 1. Surface regrading.** To improve drainage around the house, fill in gullies that send water toward the house and any depressions along the foundation. Add compacted dirt to create a slope away from the building. Even a few inches of slope in the first 2 feet will help.
- 2. Water diverters.** Keep roof water from the foundation by extending downspouts. An elbow fitting starts the flow away from the building. A splash block takes water a few feet farther and prevents water-trapping erosion along the foundation.
- 3. Dry wells.** Add more water-holding capacity with a dry well. (See below.) The porous well can reduce surface puddling in heavy rains and provide a drainage outlet for downspouts. If you don't want to see rocks, cover them with a double layer of filter fabric and sod. The fabric lets in water but screens out dirt that can clog the system.

- 4. Area drains.** To intercept water before it gets to the house, dig an area drain. (See at left, bottom.) The best place for an area drain is the edge of the yard or the high side of the house, where it can collect water before it reaches the foundation. Ground water drops down through the porous gravel, collects in the pipe, and flows to the new release point. You can lay filter fabric and sod over the gravel.
- 5. Last-minute trenches.** When heavy rain saturates the ground, puddles in the yard, and heads for the house, divert at least some of the surface flood by digging a shallow trench. As a last resort, cut out sections of sod and deposit them like a seawall on the house side of the temporary drainage ditch.
- 6. Last-minute coverups.** Temporarily cover window wells and doors so that water won't flow into the basement. Roll plastic sheeting or a tarp around a strip of wood, tack it onto the house above the opening, and weight the other ends to create the slope of a water-shedding roof.



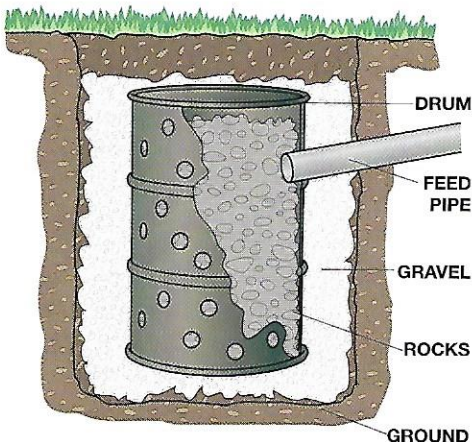
Dripping roofs and leaking gutters can create a gully at the foundation that traps water and fosters leaks.



Turning a gully into a hill that slopes away from the building helps to take the strain off leak-prone foundations.

Building Dry Wells

DRUM DRY WELL



Many older houses have excellent drainage features such as downspouts that empty into clay pipes near the foundation and drains in basement light wells—except they don't work because the pipes empty into clogged dry wells. You may be able to restart dead drains by building a new well and running new feed pipes to the old drain outlets. Check your trench slope between house and well with a level on top of a long, straight 2x4. The feed pipe should enter near the top of the well.

BLOCK DRY WELL

