

The Problem with Hardness

Hard water contains a lot of calcium. This is healthy for humans, but it leaves lime deposits.

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Soft in the south, hard in the midlands: Swiss groundwater varies in hardness depending on the region.

The quality of drinking water in Switzerland is very high, and in principle, no additional treatment is necessary. Hard water, which has absorbed a lot of calcium from rocks, is considered healthy drinking water. However, it can cause problems in the household and laundry room: when heated, limescale deposits form.

In Switzerland, water hardness is measured in **French degrees (°fH)**:

- **0 °fH** means very soft water,
- **50 °fH** means very hard water.

Soft water leaves fewer limescale residues in appliances such as kettles and fewer limescale stains on faucets.

The industry association **SVGW** recommends descaling the water only from a hardness level of **32 °fH**. Filtered water can have a positive effect on its taste and help reduce scaling in pots and appliances, lowering maintenance costs for boilers, washing machines, and dishwashers.

However, caution is advised with very old pipes, as softened water can corrode old iron or copper lines. It is also essential to have softening systems serviced regularly by a specialist to ensure drinking water hygiene.

Ion Exchange, Table Filters, and Drinking Water Filters

The most commonly used softening method is **ion exchange**: in a chemical equilibrium reaction, calcium and magnesium ions in the water are replaced by sodium ions.

Nowadays, softened water can also be **re-enriched with magnesium**, which is said to have a positive effect on the taste of the water as well as on coffee and tea.

Table water filters are available as pitchers or containers. The **under-sink filter** is installed directly under the sink, and **anti-scale filter systems** for showers and baths are attached directly to the faucet or showerhead.

It is also possible to install a **drinking water filter or water softener** directly on the main water supply line of a house.

How Hard Is My Water?

- Those who want to know exactly how hard their tap water is can enter their **postal code on www.wasserhaerte.ch**.