



# Uninstalling an Electric Water Heater

This guide provides instructions on how to uninstall an electric water heater to prepare for a replacement.

Written By: Lindsay Martin



## INTRODUCTION

This guide will show you how to safely disconnect an electric water heater from power, drain any remaining water, and remove the appliance for replacement.

An electric water heater is a tank that heats water using high-voltage electric rods that run through the tank. Water is heated starting at the center of the tank and radiates outward. These heaters can range in size from two to 50 gallons.

An electric water heater may need to be replaced when you notice decreased performance and/or it is nearing the end of its lifespan (about 10-15 years). Before starting this project, learn whether your electric water heater needs to be [repaired or replaced](#). It is also important to find out how to safely [get rid of your old water heater](#).

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### TOOLS:

- [Pipe Wrench](#) (1)
  - [Phillips #0 Screwdriver](#) (1)
  - [Garden Hose](#) (1)
  - [Multimeter](#) (1)
  - [Channellock Groove Joint Pliers](#) (1)
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## Step 1 — Water Heater



- At the breaker box, locate the breaker for the water heater. Switch the breaker bar to the off position.
- Using a [multimeter](#), check the line voltage at the water heater. The multimeter should read "0 VAC."

## Step 2



- Using a [Phillips #0](#) screwdriver, remove the access panel (or panels) to access the thermostat and element.
- ⓘ Some electric water heater models may have only one access panel, located near the bottom of the tank. Some may have two— both an upper and lower access panel.

### Step 3



- Set aside the access panel cover and screws. Remove the insulation to expose the wires, thermostat, and element.
- Disconnect the wiring from the electrical components in the panel.

### Step 4 — Draining the tank



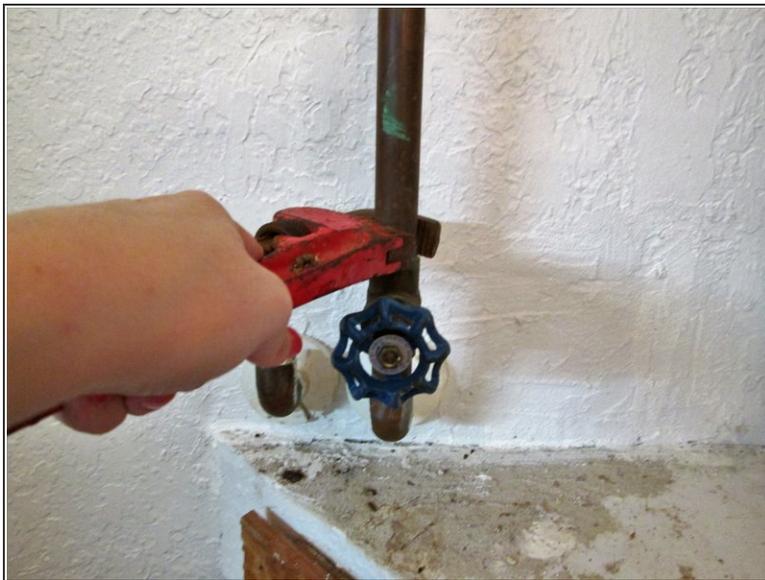
- Attach a [hose](#) to the drain valve located at the bottom of the tank, near the lower access panel. Place the other end of the hose in a safe location for the water to drain.
  - Open the drain valve on the water heater by turning it counter-clockwise.
  - Once you have a steady flow of water coming out of the hose, slowly close the cold water valve to the water heater by turning it clockwise.
- i** If the water flow slows down, you can open a sink or tub faucet to help the tank drain quicker.

## Step 5



- Using [adjustable pliers](#), disconnect the water lines from the tank.
- ⓘ If the lines are glued in place, you will need to use a [steel wire saw](#) to disconnect the water line.

## Step 6



- Using a [pipe wrench](#), detach all remaining pipes from the tank.

## Step 7



- Remove the water tank.
- ⚠ The tank will have sediment and some water in it. It will be heavy and require at least 2 people to move it safely.
- ★ To install a new water heater, follow the manufacturer's installation instructions included with the new appliance.

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