

Today, the most common question in the residential water treatment industry is regarding systems that do not require filling a salt tank. Also, we are often asked if a water softener harms the environment. The overall environmental impact is actually very positive. Although water softeners use salt to function they are beneficial because they help households save energy and substantially reduce the amount of detergent and chemicals required for household cleaning. It's a bit of a trade off, but cleaning products are actually more harmful to the environment than the salt consumed by a water softener. Potassium can be used to even further reduce the environmental impact.

It's important to note that most of the negative information being promoted about typical salt systems is by private companies who claim to have "salt free" products, which in fact do not come close to the performance of a water softener. People who purchase products from these companies are gravely disappointed by the fact that calcium deposits still build up on their faucets, and their soap and detergent usage is not reduced.

Many companies on the Internet and elsewhere advertise no salt softeners. These companies are misleading the public into thinking that their systems will remove or change the chemical characteristics of the calcium in the water, and produce soft water. Any consumer who is considering one of these units should check for research by independent sources like a university or credible laboratory. These salt free units are never sold by reputable companies in the water industry. If you measure the water hardness with a hardness test kit you will find that the hardness level is the same as before the units. These companies cannot provide any independent analysis that will verify that these units provide soft water and they can't get the Water Quality Associations to approve their units. They are similar to the companies that sell magnets and claim to give better gas mileage, but have never worked. We have replaced many of these units with real softeners after customers have spent thousands of dollars only to find out they do not soften the water. They generally make the water taste better, but do nothing to remove the calcium from the water which is what causes all the problems associated with hard water, especially in Arizona. The only cost effective way to remove calcium from water is the ion exchange method employed by conventional water softeners. Salespeople love the thought of being able to provide soft water without using salt because it would be a great sales benefit to offer soft water without having to add salt to the unit. But, right now it is just an impossible dream.



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