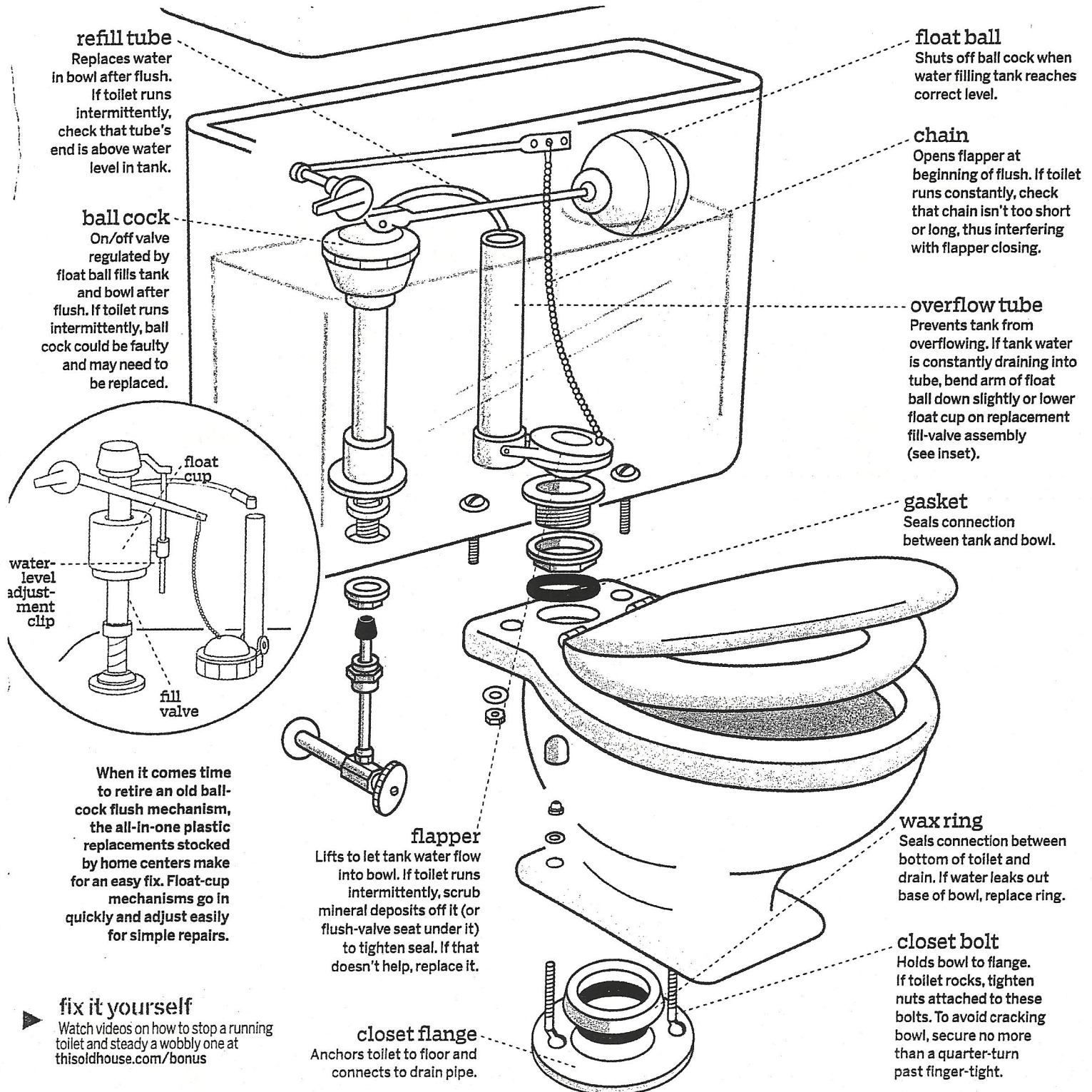


whaddaya
call it?

How to speak toilet

A toilet that leaks or runs is an easy homeowner fix—if you know how to diagnose the trouble. ID parts and problems with this handy guide, and hit the hardware store with confidence By THOMAS BAKER + Illustration by HARRY CAMPBELL



refill tube

Replaces water in bowl after flush. If toilet runs intermittently, check that tube's end is above water level in tank.

ball cock

On/off valve regulated by float ball fills tank and bowl after flush. If toilet runs intermittently, ball cock could be faulty and may need to be replaced.

float ball

Shuts off ball cock when water filling tank reaches correct level.

chain

Opens flapper at beginning of flush. If toilet runs constantly, check that chain isn't too short or long, thus interfering with flapper closing.

overflow tube

Prevents tank from overflowing. If tank water is constantly draining into tube, bend arm of float ball down slightly or lower float cup on replacement fill-valve assembly (see inset).

gasket

Seals connection between tank and bowl.

flapper

Lifts to let tank water flow into bowl. If toilet runs intermittently, scrub mineral deposits off it (or flush-valve seat under it) to tighten seal. If that doesn't help, replace it.

wax ring

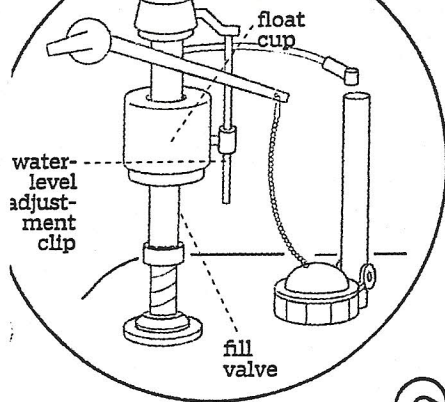
Seals connection between bottom of toilet and drain. If water leaks out base of bowl, replace ring.

closet bolt

Holds bowl to flange. If toilet rocks, tighten nuts attached to these bolts. To avoid cracking bowl, secure no more than a quarter-turn past finger-tight.

closet flange

Anchors toilet to floor and connects to drain pipe.



When it comes time to retire an old ball-cock flush mechanism, the all-in-one plastic replacements stocked by home centers make for an easy fix. Float-cup mechanisms go in quickly and adjust easily for simple repairs.

fix it yourself

Watch videos on how to stop a running toilet and steady a wobbly one at thisoldhouse.com/bonus

Checking your toilets:

1. Place food coloring in the back holding tank. If the food coloring drips into the bowl without being flushed, the rubber flapper needs to be replaced
2. Make sure your overflow level is an inch or more below your overflow tube
3. Make sure the chain that lifts the rubber flapper does not have excess links that may become lodged underneath the rubber flapper or tangled

Checking your water softener:

1. Make sure your softener is not cycling more water than it should

Checking your water meter:

1. Take a water meter reading when you know that no water consumption will be occurring for several hours. Your water meter reads just like a car odometer.
2. After several hours take a new reading.
 - a. If your water meter has moved and you know that no water has been used, you have a leak and should consider contacting a plumber.
 - b. If the water meter has not moved you are using the water and probably do not have a leak
3. Consider repeating these steps over several days. While a leak in a pipe will always leak until repaired, a toilet can be self-correcting, (i.e. sometimes sealing tightly, sometimes getting chain tangled, etc.)