

How to Unclog Drains by Yourself

Sometimes, a simple solution is all it takes to get your drains back up and running. You can use common household items to do this without having to resort to harsh chemicals.

Start by looking for any visible obstructions. That pesky clog may be hiding right under the foot plug or drain cap.

1. Look for visible obstructions

While clogs often take us by surprise, there are some warning signs that you can watch for. For instance, if you notice an unusual smell coming from your drain or if it takes longer than usual for water to drain, this could indicate that a blockage is in the works.

Another warning sign is when you hear gurgling noises from the pipes. This is an indication that there is some kind of obstruction blocking the flow of water and it can get worse if you don't deal with it immediately.

It's also a good idea to be mindful about what you put down your drains. For example, never flush disposable wipes, even if they are labeled as "flushable." These wipes can easily form tough clogs that require professional help.

2. Use a plunger

A plunger is one of the oldest [plumbing tools](#) in existence. When the rubber cup seals over a drain opening, it creates an air pressure change that can dislodge blockages.

The basic rule is to add enough water to make it possible for the plunger cup to form a seal over the drain opening. This allows the plunging action to direct the water directly at the clog.

Before you begin plunging, put on some rubber gloves and keep a garbage pail nearby. It may get messy!

If you don't have a plunger, try using boiling water, or a combination of baking soda and vinegar. If these don't work, you should call in a plumber. A professional plumber can use other tools and techniques to dislodge even the toughest clogs.

3. Use a wire snake

If neither cleaning the trap nor plunging clears your drain, a wire snake—also called a plumbing snake or drain auger—may be able to help. It consists of a long, coiled metal cable with a hook at the end that can get into clogs.

To use it, loosen the thumbscrew on the snake's drum and then manually feed its cable into your clogged drain. Turn the handle to push it along and crank it until you feel some resistance or reach your p-trap, which is where many clogs are trapped.

Once you reach the clog, revolve the snake's head to latch on it. Gnat away at the clump of food, hair, or other debris until it breaks up or is pulled out of your pipe.

4. Use a combination of baking soda and vinegar

Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and vinegar are household staples that can work wonders when used together to unclog drains. Both are natural, inexpensive, non toxic, and environmentally friendly. This combination can also be used as a drain refresher to prevent future blockages.

Pour one cup of distilled white vinegar down your drain. The audible fizzing reaction that occurs between the acid and alkaline is the chemical action that often loosens clogs. Wait a few minutes until the fizzing stops before attempting to flush the drain with boiling water.

Repeat this process as needed to unclog your drains. If you continue to struggle with a blocked drain, consider calling a professional plumber.

5. Use a clean-out fitting

If a drain snake fails to dislodge your clogged pipe, you may need a more powerful tool. This is where the clean-out fitting comes in handy.

Plumbing code requires that a clean-out fitting be installed at the point where all drainage lines meet the main sewer line. This is usually a Y-shaped fitting, topped with a square nut and threaded plug, possibly covered by a plastic cap.

To access a main sewer line blockage, locate the clean-out fitting and remove its plug. Set a large pail or container under the opening to catch the water that will seep out. Next, use a plumber's snake equipped with an auger bit to clear the clog. Then, open the drain and make sure everything's working as it should. Sites like <https://www.fixitrightplumbing.com.au/plumber-geelong/blocked-drains-geelong/> have helpful information on plumbing services