

How to Keep Bathroom Drains Flowing



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Bathroom sinks end up getting all kinds of "yucky" stuff going down them. Toothpaste, shaving cream, whiskers, hair and soap scum are just a few of the things that can end up causing a blockage in your bathroom drains, making them drain slowly or not at all. Here's how you can keep your bathroom drains clear and flowing freely, and if they do happen to get plugged up, how you can get them running again.

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions

Things You'll Need:

- Vinegar
- [Baking soda](#)
- Hot water
- Plunger
- Drain auger

How to Keep Bathroom Drains Running

1. Step 1

Running plain old hot water down your drain for about 30 seconds once a week will help clear the drain before any blockage can build up.

2. Step 2

Put 1 tbsp. of table salt down the drain, then slowly pour 1/4 cup of plain white vinegar into the drain.

3. Step 3

Let it sit for an hour or so, then run hot water down the drain to clear out the salt.

4. Step 4

Pouring a 1/2 cup of liquid bleach down the drain regularly will help keep it flowing.

How to Open Up a Clogged Bathroom Drain

5. Step 1

Clear a moderately clogged drain (one that drains slowly) by using a combination of baking soda and vinegar. Put about 1/2 cup of baking soda into the drain, then slowly pour 1/2 cup of vinegar down the drain. The baking soda is basic and the vinegar is acidic, so the mixture of the two will create a foaming action that will loosen the clog and can be rinsed away.

6. Step 2

Plunging a drain is usually a reliable way to clear drain blockages. In bathroom drains, be sure to block/cover the overflow opening in the sink before you try plunging. Put 2 to 3 inches of water in the sink, then place the plunger directly over the drain and plunge rapidly up and down several times. When you take away the plunger, the water should drain away. If it doesn't, try again.

7. Step 3



Auger

If your drain is still blocked after plunging, your next option is to use a drain auger. This is long thin piece of coiled metal with a small metal "hook" at the end. Feed the auger down through the sink drain, turning it as you push it through the drainpipe. The metal auger is stiff enough to either push through a blockage in the pipe by opening it up, or with the hook at the end, grab onto whatever is causing the blockage, so that you can pull it out of the drain.

8. Step 4

Run hot water down the drain once you have opened the blockage to rinse away anything that may be sticking to the sides of the drainpipes.

Tips & Warnings

- Sink plungers (available at home and plumbing supply stores) are smaller than toilet plungers. Although they work on the same principle as a toilet plunger, they are much easier to work with (and they've never been in a toilet bowl).

- Home stores sell a product for a few dollars that fits right into sink and bathtub drains to catch hair before it goes down the drain. Installing one of these can save you lots of aggravation. Just be sure you remember to clean it out regularly.
- Commercial drain cleaners are caustic and often contain lye that can burn your skin or eyes. If you decide to use one, never try to plunge a drain after pouring drain cleaner down it.
- Other commercial products use compressed air to force blockages out of drainpipes. The blast of compressed air could cause damage to your pipes.