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Home Maintenance 101



EASY STEPS TO UNCLOG YOUR DRAINS



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Home Maintenance 101: Easy Steps to Unclog Your Drains

Sooner or later it's going to happen! Your plumbing is going to get backed up.

WHEN THIS HAPPENS, DON'T PANIC!



Before you rush to call a plumber, there are some quick and easy things you can try to unclog your system.

They are not hard to do and any homeowner can usually make these work. But, when in doubt, if it doesn't, be sure to call your local plumber.



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Toilets

Ah, the most common clog of them all and the most frustrating. Who wants to unclog a toilet? Um, not really anybody. It's not the most elegant task there is but it has to be done. Ok, roll up those sleeves and let's get to work. With these tips that puppy should be unclogged in no time.

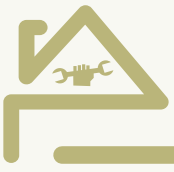
PLUNGER METHOD

A clogged toilet is generally a big mess and not fun to deal with. The easiest way to unclog a stopped up toilet is with a plunger.



1. Turn off the water supply to the toilet. It should be a knob located right behind the toilet.
2. Make sure there is enough water in the toilet to cover the head of the plunger or it won't work correctly.
3. If there is not enough water, add water by using a bucket or other container.
4. Don't flush the toilet as it might overflow.
5. Just in case, put something around the toilet on the ground such as newspaper.





6. Start plunging. The back and forth action of the plunger may cause the clog to break loose.
7. Put some muscle into it and plunge repeatedly for at least a few minutes. Be determined!
8. If the water drains, turn the water back on and give it a flush.

Still clogged? Keep trying!

*Handy Tip: Adding hot water and some dish soap into the toilet bowl can help dislodge a stubborn clog during the plunging process.



If the clog still isn't budging, you can try a plumber's snake but be warned, this will be a very messy job. If you didn't have a pair of gloves on already, it's time to put them on.





SNAKE METHOD

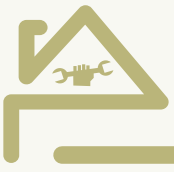
A plumber's snake can be used to try and unclog the toilet. This auger-type device rotates to eat into the clog and helps to free it. You can also try a coat hanger to try and reach the clog. These are both a little messy but may free the clog.

1. If you have an actual snake (not a real one, of course) you bought from the store, great. If not, you can try bending a metal clothes hanger into one, however this is not ideal because it could potentially scratch the porcelain in your toilet. It also won't reach down the pipe very far.
2. Insert one end of the snake into the drain and push it down the pipe.
3. Twist and push the snake through the clog until the toilet bowl drains down.



If this does not work, you may have an object stuck in the pipe such as a children's toy. That's when you'll need to call your local plumber so they can disassemble the toilet or use some sort of suction method.



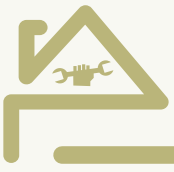


CHEMICAL METHOD

This should be your last resort. Chemicals are not only harsh on the environment but also on your pipes.

1. Make sure the product you buy specifically says it can be used in toilet bowls (most can't).
2. Follow the instructions on the bottle.
3. Be extra cautious. Do not touch the chemical and have lots of ventilation in the room.





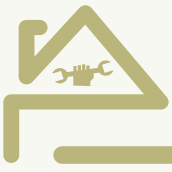
Bathroom Sinks

A bathroom sink will generally get clogged up by hair. We all lose hair and there is generally nothing we can do about it. Over time our hair may get clogged in the drain and stop it up. A plumber's snake is the best way to try and unstop a clogged bathroom sink.

1. Unscrew the stopper on the drain.
2. Insert the snake in the drain and turn it by its handle to help grab the hair.
3. Pull up on the snake to grab the hair and free it from the drain.

A plunger is also an option but may not work the best on hair clogs. As a last resort you can try Drano or some other type of chemical drain opener. However, these substances are dangerous to people and can harm pipes.



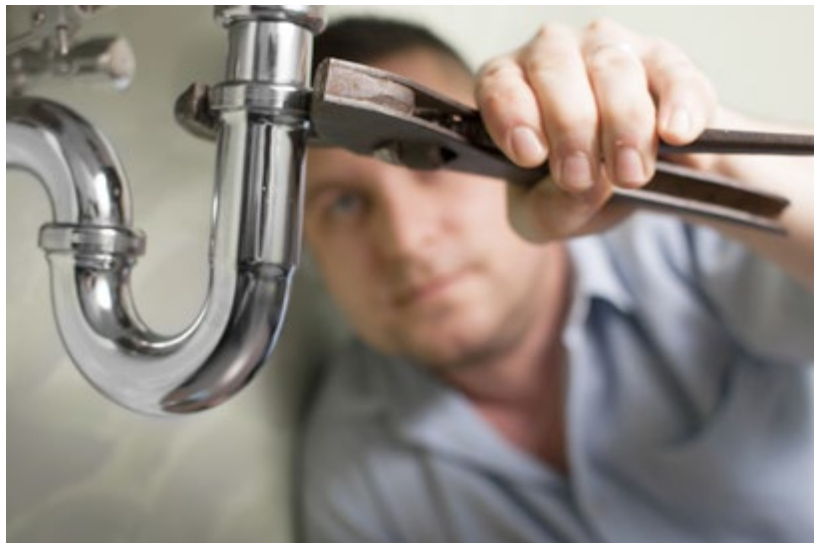


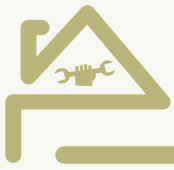
Kitchen Sinks

Kitchen sinks are usually stopped up by grease that has cooled and expanded in your pipes. That grease then catches other particles and adds to the problem. The best way to prevent problems with your kitchen plumbing is to keep the sink from getting clogged in the first place by not putting grease down the drain.

Once clogged a plunger can be used to try and unclog the drain. The plumber's snake can again be used as it might easily clear the pipe. Again, Drano or something similar can be used, but be very careful using any product such as this.

The problem also may be that the garbage disposal didn't chop up the food enough, thus getting caught in the curved part of the pipe, which is called the trap. There's a way to check this out but it is a little more involved and takes a few tools.





CHECK THE TRAP

Tools You Will Need: Bucket, wrench or channel lock pliers, rags, cleaning brush, masking or duct tape.

1. Place a bucket under the trap (the curved part of the pipe) before you start working.
2. Turn off the water to the sink.
3. Unscrew the slip joint nuts on each side of the trap. You may be able to do this by hand, but if your plumbing is older, it is likely you will need to use pliers or a wrench to loosen them.
4. Scrape out any of the blockage from the trap into your bucket.
5. Put the slip nuts back on with your hands and then tighten with pliers or a wrench.

If that doesn't end up working and it is actually an issue with your garbage disposal, we suggest calling your local plumber. After all, you want to keep all of your fingers and messing around with a garbage disposal can be dangerous!

When you have a clog in your plumbing system, don't panic. Using the tips above try to clear out the problem with your plumbing yourself. If those don't work, or you find yourself in over your head, don't drain your energy trying to fix it.





Let the Hignell Companies Help You

We know that home maintenance could be a full-time job. We value your time, so let The Hignell Companies help you ease the stress so you can enjoy your home. Our licensed experts will make sure that your plumbing job is done right. Whether you need emergency plumbing service or just some advice on good preventative plumbing maintenance, we can help.

Call Hignell today at 530-419-5817 or submit your request online

If you are experiencing problems with your drains or noticing they are getting clogged more than usual, request a quote from the Hignell Companies today!



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