

# How to Fix a Clogged Shower Drain

(these methods can also work on sink drains)

## How to Prevent Shower Drain Clogs

We all know that it's better to prevent a bad thing from happening than have to deal with the bad thing once it happens. To that end, here are two ways you can try to prevent shower clogs:

### 1. "Flush" your shower drain regularly.

Showers don't send enough water down the pipe to clear out the debris they accumulate, which is one of the primary reasons for shower clogs. Luckily, many showers are also baths, which makes it easy to flush out debris with a blast of water. To do this, exit the shower and turn the heat to the highest setting. Once the water is hot, switch it over to the bath tap and let it run for 15–30 seconds. Doing this once or twice a week will help keep your drain clear of debris. If your shower does not have a bath tap, you can imitate this effect by filling a bucket with hot water and pouring it down the drain at the end of your shower.

### 2. Use a hair catcher.

One of the easiest ways to keep your shower drain from clogging is to install a hair catcher over the drain opening. These handy devices come in many shapes and sizes, but most are a mesh sieve that allows water, but not hair, to go into the drain. After each shower, you can remove the hair catcher and empty it into your bathroom trash can.

>While these methods can help you prevent drain issues, they aren't foolproof. And you can still end up with a drain clog after a sufficient amount of time.

## Unclogging a Shower Drain with a Drain Snake

**Materials needed:** Drain snake, disposable gloves/dish gloves

**Instructions:** A tried-and-true method of taking out clogs is to use a drain snake. While this is few people's favorite method (frankly, it can be a little gross), it does tend to work quite well.

1. Put on your gloves and insert the drain snake into the drain.
2. Feed the snake into the drain until you feel the obstruction.
3. Rotate the drain snake when you reach the obstruction in order to corkscrew the edge into whatever is blocking the pipe.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to clear deeper into your drain pipe, if desired.
5. Pull the snake out of the drain. If done correctly, the clog should come out with the drain snake. If nothing comes out, or a small amount comes out, repeat steps 2 through 5.
6. Run the bath tap or shower to see if the water flows normally.

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## Unclogging a Shower Drain with Boiling Water

**Materials needed:** Large cup or bucket, boiling water, funnel (optional), dishwashing gloves

**Instructions:** As you likely learned in chemistry class, or just while doing the dishes, hot water is more effective for removing material than cold water. You can use this to your advantage when you have a clogged shower drain.

1. Boil water in a pot, electric kettle or other heating device.
2. Pour boiling water down the drain and wait for 10-15 minutes. We recommend using a funnel in order to avoid damage to the tub shell (though it is probably not necessary as most tub shells are designed to withstand high temperatures).
3. Run your shower or bath tap. If it was cleared, it will drain normally. If it is still clogged, try this method again or resort to another method.

## Unclogging a Shower Drain with Baking Soda and Vinegar

**Materials needed:** Measuring cup, boiling water, baking soda, vinegar, disposable gloves/dish gloves

**Instructions:** While vinegar and baking soda is typically the realm of elementary school science projects, it can also be a powerful clog clearing tool.

1. Pour boiling water down the drain.
2. Pour one cup of baking soda down the drain followed by a two-cup mixture of half vinegar and half water.
3. Cover the drain with a tight seal (close the drain or use a drain stopper) and wait for about 10 minutes.
4. Uncover the drain and run the shower or bath tap. If the clog is not cleared, repeat the steps or try another method.

## When to Call a Professional to Fix Your Clogged Shower Drain

Typically, a clogged shower drain can be handled on your own, but there are some situations where a professional may need to come and take a look.

If you try every method in the book, and the clog persists, chances are you need to call a plumber. The other times when calling a plumber is necessary are when the drain is producing a foul odor or water is backing up from the drain at any point. Both of these signs point to serious issues that could affect more than just your shower.

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