Clearing Clogged Drains


My upstairs bathroom sink drain always needs attention: I think toothpaste is the culprit, but whatever, it always needs help.

You don’t need powerful industrial chemicals as the household cleaning industry would have you believe! Find out the surprisingly easy and non-toxic way I keep that drain open.

SIMPLE SOLUTION: When our drains get clogged, we have been unwaveringly convinced that nothing short of the most powerful chemical arsenal will work. As a result, most of us resort to commercial drain cleaners that are some of the most dangerous chemicals found in the home. Lye or acid, these products can harm health, the wastewater stream, and PVC pipes.

If water hasn't yet backed up in your drain, pour 1 cup of baking soda followed by 3 cups of boiling water. The boiling water will change the chemical composition of baking soda, making it more alkaline. Repeat a few times until the drain is clear.

Washing Soda Drain Cleaner

If the water isn’t going down the drain, pour a cup of washing soda over the drain area and let it sit for a while to work its way down to the clog. Once the clog is loosened, use the baking soda method, above. Washing soda is more alkaline than baking soda, with a pH of 11. You never want to use washing soda if a commercial acid drain cleaner has recently been used in the drain, as they will strongly react with each other. You also shouldn’t overseat washing soda if you have PVC pipes, as the caustic nature of washing soda can slowly damage the plastic.

The Bubbling Method Using Vinegar and Baking Soda

Baking soda and vinegar react with each other to cause bubbles and fizzing. Sometimes the fizzing can unblock clogs. Follow the baking soda and boiling water formula, above, with 1 cup of vinegar.

Enzyme Drain and Garbage Disposal Maintenance

All natural living enzyme culture drain cleaners will actually eat and break down any organic matter. Using enzyme drain cleaners once a month, such as Bi-O-Kleen Bacout, will help not just your drains, but your septic system. They will also significantly reduce odor from garbage disposals. Colonies of enzymes will actually continue to grow and break down organic matter in your drains.

Washing Soda Maintenance

Enzymes don’t work as well on hair clogs, so to keep drains clear that tend to collect hair, such as in the shower and bath, a few times a month pour 1 cup of washing soda followed by a thorough flushing of water.

13 Comments

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Wendy McLennan
Monday, October 15, 2007, 2:21 PM

Does this work on drains that are plugged with hair?

Wendy McLennan
Monday, October 15, 2007, 2:20 PM

Our bathtub is plugged, due to hair. I think. Will these solutions work on hair and vinegar to unclog each side of my kitchen sink yesterday (9/28). However, I didn’t use boiling water, but vinegar instead.

Tammagha Laughing Leaf
Tuesday, September 18, 2007, 4:52 PM


11/13/2007