

Using a Plunger to Clear a Clogged Toilet

Clearing a clogged toilet can be a simple task, depending on what and where the obstruction is. Enzyme-based products can work on slow-flowing drains by digesting built-up paper and organic waste. But don't bother with drain clearing chemicals. They may clear floor, tub and sink drains, but they won't reach the area of a clog in a toilet. And they can etch and damage the porcelain in the toilet bowl. Instead, try the trusty plunger.

1. PREP

- First, turn off the water supply to prevent overflows. Spread some newspaper or old towels around the base of the toilet to soak up any spills. Run hot water on the plunger so it's more flexible.

2. USE THE RIGHT PLUNGER

- In most cases, a plunger can create enough pressure to clear a clog. A force ball-type plunger, has a flap on the bottom and gets the best seal for a toilet. The larger the plunger, the more force you can put behind the clog.

3. COVER THE EDGE

- You'll need enough water in the toilet bowl to submerge the edges of the plunger completely. This helps to form the seal.

4. USE THE PLUNGER RIGHT

- You want to churn the water back and forth to work the clog loose. So press down firmly, but slowly. Let the plunger pop up - and keep repeating that action. Don't overdo it on the pushing action – you may just force the clog in further.

5. REPEAT

- If the bowl drains a little but the drain is still blocked, fill the bowl to its normal point and start plunging again.

6. CLEAN UP

- Disinfect the toilet bowl and any other tools you used so you don't spread bacteria.

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Enzyme-based drain cleaners can help prevent build up when used regularly.
- Regularly clean under the rim under the toilet bowl's edge. If the jets clog with minerals, the toilet won't flush at full power. This leads to clogs.
- To stop an overflow, quickly turn off the water supply valve behind the toilet or open up the toilet tank and push the flapper down.
- If the bowl overflows, use a wet vac to clean up any spills. Then disinfect.

For more helpful tips and advice, visit your neighborhood Ace and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and Google+.

NOTE: Always follow manufacturer's recommended safety precautions and instructions for the products you use.