

Clearing a blocked lavatory

A blocked lavatory pan causes the flush water to rise almost to the rim, and then drain away very slowly. It will probably be blocked in the pan outlet, often by something like a disposable nappy being flushed down the lavatory. If the blockage is not in the pan outlet, it could be a problem in the main drainage system. Blockages can be cleared by mechanical or chemical means, but mechanical methods tend to be faster.

1 Try pouring a bucket of warm water into the pan from a height; this often clears a minor blockage.

2 Place a large WC plunger over the pan outlet and pump the handle up and down vigorously.

3 If that doesn't shift it, use an auger designed for a lavatory. Wear protective gloves and read the manufacturer's instructions.

4 Push the lavatory auger into the pan outlet. The probe will extend around the U-bend and rotate as you turn the handle, dislodging the blockage.

YOU CAN DO IT

Clearing pipe blockages

A vital part of the drainage system is the trap, a water seal that prevents drain smells from entering your home through the waste outlets of the sinks, basins and WCs. Every plumbing installation that discharges waste water into the drainage system will be fitted with a trap, or incorporate one in its design. Essentially a trap is a U-shaped loop of pipe directly below a waste outlet. Whenever you pull a plug or flush a lavatory, a small amount of water remains in the trap, providing a seal. Traps are designed to be dismantled so blockages can be cleared. This arrangement not only allows the trap to be cleaned, but provides access to the waste pipe when a blockage occurs further along the system.

Ideal for the job

Unblocking

The powerful **Drain Unblocker Suction Pump** comes with large and small cups so you can be sure it will be the right size for your drains.

A **drain auger** has a flexible rod that extends into a waste pipe as you rotate the handle, dislodging any blockage as it probes. The rod then winds back for hygienic storage. Suitable for sinks, baths, showers and small pipes.

A **lavatory auger** is designed to extend around the U-bend and rotates as you turn the handle.

The traditional device for clearing a blocked sink, basin or bath; pump the sink **plunger** up and down to create pulses of air and water. You need a large plunger for unblocking a lavatory.



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Every effort has been made to ensure that the instructions given in this leaflet are accurate and will enable you to do the job safely and successfully. Please follow instructions carefully and seek expert advice in the event of difficulty.

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All information correct at time of going to print.

HOWT0060



how to... fix plumbing problems

tools

- sink plunger
- cloth or rag
- safety goggles
- protective gloves
- bucket
- drain auger
- adjustable spanner or pliers
- screwdriver
- pipe wrench
- WC plunger
- lavatory auger

materials

- chemical drain-cleaning product
- petroleum jelly
- tap washer
- cardboard
- silicone grease

If sinks, basins or baths become slow to drain, or a tap is dripping, deal with the situation straight away to prevent the job becoming more complicated.

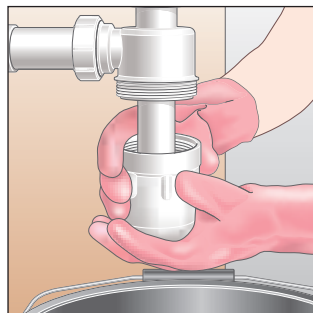
Clearing a blocked sink

An accumulation of grease in the trap, or fibres caught below the grid on the plug-hole, will result in water draining away slowly. If water doesn't drain away at all, then there is a complete blockage in the waste pipe.



1 Partially fill a blocked sink with water and place the cup of a sink plunger over the plug-hole. Stuff a damp cloth into the overflow to prevent loss of pressure. Pump the plunger up and down vigorously. Repeat, if necessary, a couple of times.

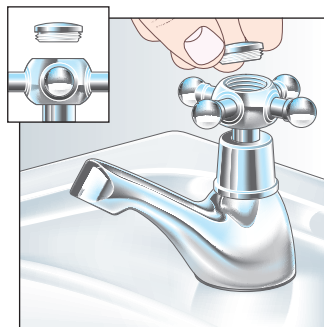
2 If that fails, try using a chemical drain-cleaning product. Wear gloves and goggles and follow the instructions carefully. Smear some petroleum jelly around the rim of the plug-hole to protect it from damage.



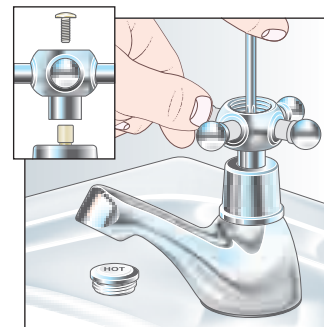
3 If you have not been able to clear the blockage, then you will have to remove the waste trap. Put a bucket underneath the trap to catch any spillage. Unscrew the trap, and empty the contents into the bucket. Replace the trap making sure you replace any washers or O-rings. Don't overtighten or it will be difficult to undo if it needs cleaning out in the future. If there was nothing blocking the waste trap, use a drain auger to probe into the waste pipe.

Repairing a dripping tap

Don't ignore a dripping tap! The sooner you tackle it, the easier it will be to fix, and the less damage will be done. Even if you don't have a spare washer, take a look inside the tap – if the washer is only slightly damaged on one face, you can reinsert it the other way up. But even if that stops the drip, do remember to replace it with a new washer as soon as possible. Standard mixer taps can be repaired as shown here, but monobloc taps – often controlled by levers, and needing only a quarter turn between fully off and fully on – have ceramic disks rather than traditional washers. The disks are very hardwearing, but if one does develop a problem you will need a replacement cartridge from the tap manufacturer.



1 Turn off the water supply and open the tap to drain water from the system. Put the plug into the plug-hole, just in case you drop any small nuts or screws. Unscrew the top plate (this has the hot/cold emblem on it) with your fingers, or pliers or an adjustable spanner.

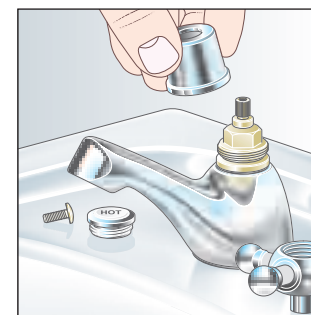


2 Not all taps are made the same way so you will have to work out how the handle comes off. In the type shown, you need to unscrew the retaining screw, and pull off the headgear nut.

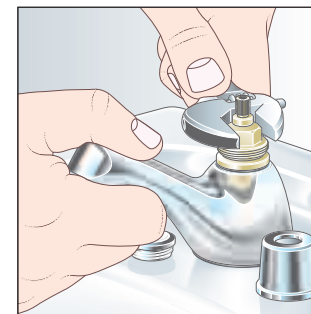
YOU CAN DO IT

Valve seating damage

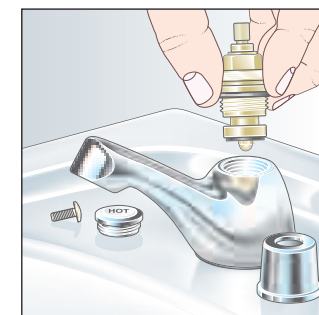
If a tap carries on dripping even with a new washer, then the valve seating is probably eroded. This can be repaired with a special grinding tool or with a washer and seating set.



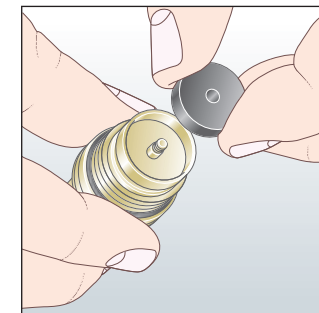
3 Unscrew the tap body cover. If you can't do this by hand use an adjustable spanner, but protect the chrome with a cloth.



4 Undo the headgear nut using an adjustable spanner. If the nut is difficult to turn, don't force it or you risk twisting the base of the tap and putting a strain on the inlet pipe. Instead pad around the base of the tap with cardboard and use a pipe wrench to grip it firmly as you apply the necessary force to the nut.



5 Remove the headgear assembly by unscrewing the headgear nut. The washer sits in the jumper and is either pressed in place, often over a small button, or retained by a nut. If necessary, unscrew the nut holding the washer in place with an adjustable spanner. Prise out the old washer; you can use a screwdriver to dig it out if necessary.



6 Insert a new washer and push it down into the jumper. Reassemble the tap in the same sequence. Apply a little silicone grease to the threads on the base of the headgear assembly before reinserting it in the tap body.