

Unblocking a Drain

Practical skills

The order to try things in, from least to most drastic.

Educational reference. Escalate only if the previous step fails.

1

Boiling water

For grease. Not on plastic pipes with a full standing blockage.

2

Plunger

Block the overflow first, or you are pushing air in a circle.

3

Bicarbonate and vinegar

Then hot water. Mild, and safe for pipes.

4

Clear the trap

Bucket underneath, unscrew the U-bend, clean it out.

5

Drain snake

Reaches further than the trap.

AVOID

Caustic drain cleaner on a fully blocked pipe — it sits and does not drain
Mixing chemical cleaners — some combinations release chlorine gas
Chemicals before plunging: it splashes caustic liquid

Educational reference. If several fittings back up at once, the problem is the main drain and needs a professional.