

How to Clean a Sink P-Trap

A slow or clogged sink is usually caused by buildup right under the drain. In most cases, that blockage is sitting in the P-trap, which is the curved pipe under your sink. The good news is this is one of the most straightforward plumbing fixes a homeowner can do.

What the P-Trap Does

The P-trap is the U-shaped section of pipe under your sink. It holds a small amount of water at all times, which helps block sewer gases from coming back up into your home.

Over time, it also collects:

- Hair
- Soap scum
- Food debris
- Grease buildup

That's why it's often the first place a clog forms.

What You'll Need

Before you start, gather a few simple items:

- Bucket or small container
 - Adjustable wrench or pliers
 - Towels or rags
 - Rubber gloves (optional but helpful)
 - Old toothbrush or small scrub brush
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Step by Step How to Clean a Sink P-Trap

1. Clear the Area Under the Sink

Remove anything stored under the sink so you have room to work. Place a towel on the floor to catch any water drips.

2. Put a Bucket Under the P-Trap

Position a bucket directly under the curved pipe. When you remove it, water and debris will spill out, and the bucket will catch it.

3. Loosen the Slip Nuts

The P-trap is held in place by two large slip nuts, one on each end of the curved pipe.

Turn them counterclockwise by hand. If they are tight, use a wrench or pliers, but be careful not to overtighten or crack the fittings.

4. Remove the P-Trap

Once the nuts are loose, carefully remove the curved pipe. Let any water drain into the bucket.

You may notice sludge or buildup inside the pipe, which is usually the source of the clog.

5. Clean the Pipe Thoroughly

Take the P-trap outside or to a utility sink. Rinse it out with warm water.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO NOT DUMP INTO THE SAME SINK THAT YOU JUST REMOVED THE DRAIN FROM! LOL WE'VE ALL DONE IT!

Use a brush or even a straightened coat hanger to remove any stubborn debris inside.

6. Check the Connecting Pipes

Before reinstalling, take a quick look at the pipes coming from the sink and wall. Wipe away any buildup or residue you can easily reach.

7. Reinstall the P-Trap

Put the P-trap back in place and hand-tighten the slip nuts first. Then gently tighten them a bit more with a wrench.

Do not overtighten, as this can cause leaks or crack the fittings.

8. Test for Leaks

Run water in the sink for a few minutes and check underneath for any dripping.

If you see a small leak, slightly tighten the connection until it stops.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Not placing a bucket underneath before removing the trap
 - Over-tightening plastic fittings
 - Reinstalling without checking for leftover debris in connecting pipes
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When to Call a Professional

If your sink continues to drain slowly after cleaning the P-trap, the clog may be further down the line. You may also need help if:

- Pipes are leaking or damaged
- The clog keeps coming back quickly
- You notice multiple drains backing up in the home

If that happens, you can call our team at 979-260-2020 and we'll take care of it for you.