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Special to the Forum

To clear a sink clog, you should try a couple of other tricks before shelling out money for special equipment.

First, try a plunger, making sure the bell completely covers the drain and touches the sink

How to Clear a Clogged Sink

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surface in order to create a vacuum. Plunge up and down about 15 times. If the sink drains, run hot water through the pipe to clear the remaining clog.

If plunging doesn't work, try to clear the clog through the sink trap (at the bottom of the U-shaped drain pipe under the sink). Put a bucket under the trap and put on rubber gloves.

Using an adjustable pipe wrench, unscrew the plug at the bottom of the trap. Water and gunk will start draining immediately, but that doesn't mean the clog is cleared. Use a wire coat hanger or something similar to probe the pipe via the trap, and try to pull out any additional material. Then screw the plug back in and turn on hot water.

If the clog still isn't cleared, now it's time to try a plumber's snake — a tool that has a flexible steel cable extending from a spool and hand-crank assembly, with a wire snarl on the far end. It can be purchased at any home-improvement store for around \$25.

The salesperson might ask what you're using the tool for. There are longer cables, up to 100 feet, as well as versions like closet augers (which are specifically for toilet clogs) and power augers (which are rented by the day, and something I wouldn't recommend for a first-timer or a small clog).

Unscrew the plug at the bottom of the trap again and thread the end of the snake cable into the pipe, toward the wall, as far as it will go. To navigate pipe bends, turn the handle to adjust the cable end. Once the cable is extended as far as it will go, or won't go in any farther, slowly wind it back out.

Clog material that the snake pushed through will likely be tangled up in the wire snarl at the front of the cable. Be sure to clean this off before storing the tool.

Now, close up the drain plug, turn on the hot water, and let it run for a couple of minutes to clear out the rest of the clog.

If this still doesn't do the trick, contact a professional plumber.

Home Tip: A drain filter or screen is one of the most cost-effective tools to combat pipe clogs.

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CAPTION: After clearing the drain, run hot water for a couple of minutes to clear out the rest of the clog.