

# How to Unclog a Toilet with Dish Soap

Explore this Article ■ Pouring Hot Water ■ Adding Dish Soap ■ Expert Q&A ■ Things You'll Need  
■ Tips and Warnings ■ References

Co-authored by Allen Lee 🍀, Hannah Madden , and 7 contributors

Last Updated: January 4, 2022

A clogged toilet is something we've all experienced: the rising of water to the brim, the sense of panic as it doesn't stop, the scurrying for the plunger. But dish soap is a simple solution that can bring you back from the fate of a flood of toilet water with nothing but your favorite product and some hot water! You can break up clogs quickly and stop an overflowing toilet fast with this hack.

## Things You'll Need

- ☐ 1 gallon (3.8 L) bucket
- ☐ Pot
- ☐ Dish soap
- ☐ Plunger (optional)

### Part 1

## Part 1 of 2: Pouring Hot Water



**1 Turn the valve behind the toilet if it's overflowing.** Since you'll be adding more water to the toilet bowl in just a second, it's important to stop the flow of water into the bowl. Reach behind the toilet near the floor and turn the valve in a clockwise direction. If the valve is stuck, use a little bit of WD-40 to loosen it up.<sup>[1]</sup>

- After you've unclogged your toilet, simply turn the valve counterclockwise to turn the water back on.



**2 Heat a 1 gallon (3.8 L) pot of water.** Turn your stove on high heat and place a water-filled pot onto the stove. Cover your pot with a lid and wait until the water heats up, but don't let it boil (this should take about 5 minutes). If the water starts steaming or it gets above 120 °F (49 °C), it's time to take it off the stove.<sup>[2]</sup>

- Pouring boiling water into the toilet can crack the wax ring around the toilet or even the toilet bowl itself. Get your water hot, but don't let it boil.<sup>[3]</sup>
- If you're worried about getting your water too hot, just use hot water from the tap.



**3 Pour the hot water into the toilet bowl.** Pour gently and make sure the water doesn't pass the rim. Be careful not to spill any to avoid burning yourself. If the clog is minor, the hot water may be enough to loosen it up all the way.<sup>[4]</sup>

- Depending on how clogged your toilet is, you may have to pour a little water in, stop, and then wait for the water to go down before pouring the rest.

## Part 2 of 2: Adding Dish Soap



**1 Pour about 8 ounces (230 g) of dish soap into the water.** The dish soap will float to the bottom of the bowl because it is heavier and denser than water. Don't be afraid to use too much—in this case, the more the better.<sup>[5]</sup>

- Use grease-fighting dish soap to break up the clog.



**2 Let the soap sit for 5 to 10 minutes.** After a few minutes, the soap will work to dissolve the clog at the bottom of the bowl.<sup>[6]</sup> You might even start to see the water level lower a bit, which is a good sign!<sup>[7]</sup>

- If the soap doesn't do much in terms of unclogging your toilet, don't panic—there's one more step that will hopefully flush all your problems away.



**3 Pour another 1 gallon (3.8 L) of hot water into the toilet.** Fill another 1 gallon (3.8 L) pot with hot water and place it onto the stove to get hot, but not quite boiling. If you don't want to wait, just use the hottest water from your tap instead.<sup>[8]</sup>



**4 Continue pouring water into the toilet and let it sit.** After about 2 to 3 rounds, flush the toilet to check if the clog is gone. Be sure to give each 1 gallon (3.8 L) of hot water about 20 minutes to settle.<sup>[9]</sup>

- Wait overnight if your toilet is still not flushing properly. If it's not unclogged in the morning, try using a plunger.<sup>[10]</sup>
- You can even use a toilet drain snake.<sup>[11]</sup>





**5 Plunge your toilet if it's still clogged.** Even if you've already tried to plunge the clog, dish soap can weaken it, so it's always worth a second shot! Place the plunger into the bowl directly over the hole. Press down sharply in short, fast strokes, and be sure to lift sharply to create suction. After 4 or 5 full strokes, lift the plunger on the last upward motion.<sup>[12]</sup>

- Run the plunger under hot water for 30 seconds before plunging to warm the rubber up.
- If the clog still doesn't come loose, call a plumber.



## Expert Q&A

### Question

Can I use a detergent to unclog the toilet?



**Allen Lee**  
Home Improvement  
Specialist  
Expert Answer

You can put plenty of detergent in the toilet bowl. It will break up the toilet paper and other things blocking the toilet. This method may take some time to work.

Helpful ☐ Not Helpful ☐

### Question

What are the most effective ways to unclog a toilet?



**Allen Lee**  
Home Improvement  
Specialist  
Expert Answer

Get a plunger or a toilet drain snake and use them to unclog a toilet. These are the most effective and quick means to clear the clog.

Helpful ☐ Not Helpful ☐

### Question

## Can it be warm water instead of boiling water?



**Sarah Alexander**  
Community Answer

It could be warm water, but that might not work as well as boiling water. The boiling water would be a better choice.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 3



## Warnings

- Never plunge your toilet immediately after using drain cleaner.
- Always wash your hands clean with warm water and soap after working on your toilet.

## References

1. ↑ <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/how-to-unclog-a-toilet-with-dish-soap-257570>
2. ↑ <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/how-to-unclog-a-toilet-with-dish-soap-257570>
3. ↑ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/pouring-dish-soap/>
4. ↑ <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/how-to-unclog-a-toilet-with-dish-soap-257570>
5. ↑ <https://www.bobvila.com/slideshow/no-plunger-needed-7-easier-ways-to-clear-a-clog-49465>
6. ↑ Allen Lee. Home Improvement Specialist. Expert Interview. 10 July 2020.
7. ↑ <https://www.bobvila.com/slideshow/no-plunger-needed-7-easier-ways-to-clear-a-clog-49465>
8. ↑ <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/how-to-unclog-a-toilet-with-dish-soap-257570>
9. ↑ <https://www.bobvila.com/slideshow/no-plunger-needed-7-easier-ways-to-clear-a-clog-49465>
10. ↑ Allen Lee. Home Improvement Specialist. Expert Interview. 10 July 2020.
11. ↑ Allen Lee. Home Improvement Specialist. Expert Interview. 10 July 2020.
12. ↑ <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/how-to-unclog-a-toilet-with-dish-soap-257570>

## About This Article



Co-authored by:  
**Allen Lee**  
Home Improvement  
Specialist

This article was co-authored by **Allen Lee** and by wikiHow staff writer, **Hannah Madden**. Allen Lee is a Home Improvement Specialist and the Owner of Honest Lee Handyman Services, a licensed and insured handyman business servicing Sacramento, California, and surrounding areas. Working with homeowners and businesses to get their small repairs done in a timely and efficient manner, Honest Lee Handyman Services provides gutter and dryer vent cleaning along with fixture, fence, drywall, and toilet repairs. This article has been viewed 29,939 times.

Co-authors: **7**

Updated: **January 4, 2022**

Views: **29,939**

Categories: **Home Maintenance** | **Bathroom Cleaning**

<https://www.wikihow.com/Unclog-a-Toilet-with-Dish-Soap>

