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How to remove kohler shower head flow restrictor

By: Tanya EdwardsIs your shower head not blasting water the way it used to? Has it turned from a torrent to a trickle? Then it might be time for a proper scrubbing to get your shower head back to the way it used to be – and make it much more efficient at keeping you and your family squeaky clean. Skip to main contentHome House & Components Rooms Kitchen Kitchen StorageEvery editorial product is independently selected, though we may be compensated or receive an affiliate commission if you buy something through our links. Ratings and prices are accurate and items are in stock as of time of publication.Over time, calcium and hard water buildup can block faucets and shower heads, preventing maximum water flow and hampering water pressure. In extreme cases it might be necessary to break out your tools and take apart these plumbing fixtures to really dig in and remove all of the gunk. Most of the time, though, faucets and shower heads can be cleaned without removing them, using a few common household items.Family HandymanHow to Clean Shower Heads and Faucets With VinegarHere's what you need:Here's the step-by-step process:Fill a plastic bag about halfway with vinegar. Use quart-sized for faucets and gallon-sized for shower heads. (If you have a large shower head you may need to get creative.)Wrap the vinegar-filled bag around the shower head or faucet so that any place where water exits is completely submerged in the vinegar.Hold the bag in place by snapping a rubber band around it, affixing it to the shower head or faucet.Wait approximately one hour to let the vinegar eat away at any hard-water deposits or calcium buildups.After the hour has passed, remove the bag and scrub the faucet or shower head with a toothbrush to clear up any stubborn residual.Run water as a final rinse.If you turn the shower on and the individual spray holes in the shower head are still blocked, trying poking them with a small tool like a toothpick. The vinegar will have loosened any buildup so that it can be easily dislodged.Family HandymanHow to Clean Faucets With a LemonIf you don't have vinegar on hand or prefer a more "natural" solution, try this:Cut a fresh lemon in half.With one of the halves, use your thumbs to gently open up the center.Press the lemon onto the end of the faucet.Put a small plastic bag around the lemon and secure it around the faucet with a rubber band. Be sure the rubber band is cinched tightly and the lemon covers the end of the faucet.Leave the lemon in place for a few hours to allow the citric acid to work its magic.After removing the lemon, use a gentle scrubbing pad or a toothbrush to wash off any loosened hard water buildup.Wipe the faucet with a damp cloth to remove any leftover lemon juice, and your faucet will be squeaky clean.On a cleaning kick? Here are some cleaning tips from the pros: Originally Published: March 05, 2020 Photo: shutterstock.comInstalling a new shower head is not quite as easy as changing a light bulb, but almost.Tools & MaterialsStep 1As you begin, decide whether or not to keep the existing shower arm—that is, the angled pipe to which the shower head attaches. If the shower arm has become corroded over time, or if it doesn't match the finish of your new shower head, scrap it. A pipe wrench does the job when you're bare hands fail. Note that while shower heads don't usually come with shower arms, you should be easily find an appropriate one for sale separately.Photo: shutterstock.comStep 2Skip this step if you've opted to keep your existing shower arm. To install a new shower arm, start by wrapping its threads, two or three times over, with thread seal tape. Stretch the tape slightly, as you apply it. Next, carefully turn the pipe into the wall fitting, and then seal the wall opening with plumber's putty. Slide the shower flange over the arm and press it into the putty. Wipe away excess.Step 3The next step depends on the type of shower head you've purchased. If yours is the type that attaches directly to the arm, here's what to do: Use thread seal tape to wrap the threads at the base of the shower arm, then turn the shower head into position, taking care not to over-tighten. (If using pliers instead of a wrench, protect the finish on the fitting with several layers of cloth or plastic tape.)Homeowners who have purchased a handheld shower head probably do not need to add thread seal tape at the shower arm base (to be certain, however, check the manufacturer's directions). Here, installation consists only of threading the handheld onto the shower arm, before threading the handheld shower head's flexible hose onto the bracket.ADDITIONAL TIPSArguably, handheld shower heads are more practical than fixed ones.A low-flow shower head saves both water and the energy your water heater must use to deliver a comfortable bathing experience.Metal shower heads generally perform better than plastic ones. Look for chrome finishes and brass construction. Ease of adjustment and problem-free longevity justify the added cost of such fixtures.Metal hoses on handheld shower heads are more flexible, and thus easier to manipulate, than plastic hoses.Shop online for greater choice, but visit stores for a chance to see and feel the shower heads you're considering. Expect to pay at least \$80 for a quality model. Is your showerhead blocked by unsightly calcium deposits? Hard water, particularly from wells, can be high in calcium, magnesium, lime, silica and other minerals. Once hard water passing through a showerhead dries, it leaves behind deposits. This mineral buildup is both unattractive and problematic, as it can plug up the waterways, and prevent your showerhead from flowing at full blast. Illustration: The Spruce / Alex Diaz Dos Here's an easy and frugal fix to remove those deposits left behind by hard water: Just fill a small plastic bag half full with white vinegar and attach the bag over your showerhead with a rubber band. Leave the bag in place for an hour or two. Then, remove the bag, and scrub the showerhead with an old toothbrush or rag. Your showerhead should now look and function like new! Tip: This same method can be used to remove mineral deposits from faucets in both bathrooms and kitchens. Save yourself a bunch of scrubbing, by soaking your faucets in vinegar first. The Spruce / Jessica Lombardi The acetic acid in white vinegar acts as a solvent, which helps to dissolve the mineral deposits that are clogging up your showerhead. After soaking in vinegar for an hour or two, that build up should wash away the next time you turn your shower on. There are many reasons to make cleaning with vinegar a regular part of your housekeeping routine. First, it's inexpensive, virtually pennies for each cleaning. You'll save several dollars by not purchasing unnecessary specialty cleaners. And given that it's all-natural, there are no harsh chemicals or fumes to worry about. You can even use it to clean children's bedrooms and bathrooms with no additional concerns. Although it's very safe to use, you will want to take some precautions when using vinegar as a cleaner. First, be sure to avoid contact with the eyes. If any vinegar gets in your eyes, promptly rinse the entire eye with fresh water, until the sting has completely dissipated. Also, note that while it's safe to use vinegar to clean areas where children play, it's best to do so when they aren't present. Like adults, children shouldn't consume large amounts of vinegar, so be sure to store it out of their reach. The same hard water that clogs up your showerhead can leave off-white or brown spots on glass or ceramic surfaces, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens. Sinks, tubs, glass shower walls, and doors are all common places for mineral deposits to collect. Although it's not as problematic as a clogged showerhead, it's still unattractive. Rinsing the area with a solution comprised of half vinegar and half water will eliminate such spots, without a lot of elbow grease. The solution can be mixed in a spray bottle and sprayed directly onto the affected area. Allow it to soak in. Then, wipe the surface clean with a soft cloth or sponge. Repeat the process, if any mineral deposits or streaks remain. Yes, you can stay ahead of mineral deposits by keeping your shower and tub clean, and by using a squeegee or towel to dry off wet surfaces after each shower or bath. It only takes a minute or two to do, so it's just a matter of forming the habit. Keeping your shower and tub free of soap scum (residue left behind by bar soap), will also allow the minerals that are present in your water to wash down the drain, rather than stick to the soap scum. A portable steam cleaner makes quick work of the soap scum removal and can be purchased for minimum investment. Using a daily shower spray is another cheap and easy way to keep soap scum at bay. You might also consider waxing the surfaces in your shower after you've removed all the soap scum. This will prevent new soap scum from forming. If the water in your home is especially hard, consider installing a water softener system to remove the excess minerals from your water. It will save you the hassle of dealing with clogged showerheads and mineral deposit stains. The Spruce / Jessica Lombardi Shut off both hot and cold water to the room where you'll be working. This can be done using the main house valve. Start by removing the shower handle. In this example, there is a screw behind the cap that holds the handle in place. In other cases, you may need an Allen wrench to remove the screw and then the handle. Use a rag to cover the shower or tub drain so that screws and small parts don't fall down the drain. Aaron Stickley Remove the escutcheon trim plate to access the shower valve. With the handle out of the way, you can easily get to the second set of screws that hold the trim plate in place. Unscrew both and then pull the plate off the wall. If there is any caulk around the trim plate, you may need to use a utility knife to cut the bead of caulk before the plate comes off. If there is a protective plate covering the valve, remove it as well. In this example, the faucet opening in the wall had to be enlarged to remove the protective plate. If you need to do the same, make sure that the hole is only as large as it needs to be in order to minimize wall repair after the new faucet is installed. Aaron Stickley Cut or break open a bigger hole, if necessary, for removing and installing the valves. There are two options: cutting into the wall behind the plumbing cavity or working through a small opening in the surround. In this example, the hole in the fiberglass shower surround was enlarged from the front side by breaking out pieces with pliers. Other types of wall surfaces might require different techniques for enlarging the faucet opening. Keep in mind this hole should ideally be hidden behind the cover plate on the new faucet when the project is done. To make sure the hole isn't too big, use the new cover plate as a guide for gauging how big you can make your hole. Aaron Stickley Determine how to remove the old valve and install the new valve. The shower valve used here has both outside-threaded connections and inside sweat (solder) couplings. Position the new valve in front of the old to determine where the pipes should be cut. Mark the cut locations onto the pipe with a marker. Every valve may is different, so plan your cuts carefully before you begin. You may need to use other couplings or fittings to route the water pipes into the new valve. Make a list and get all of your materials ready so that the installation goes smoothly. Aaron Stickley Shut the water off and cut the old valve out of the wall, leaving the appropriate amount copper for the new valve. While a copper tubing cutter is generally the best tool for cutting copper pipe, for the tight spaces in a project like this, a mini-hacksaw works well. Now you are ready to install the new shower valve. Aaron Stickley Few morning experiences can be more frustrating than turning on the shower and expecting a nice, hot stream of water—yet getting a lukewarm trickle that barely does the job. Your shower head has likely become clogged over a period of months or years, a situation that you have long been meaning to address. Now is the time. Reasons for the clogged shower head will vary, but solutions are always easy and inexpensive. Hard water is a term that means that your water has high levels of calcium, magnesium and, sometimes divalent and trivalent metallic elements. Indicators of hard water around the house include stiff laundry, white mineral deposits on dishware, soap that refuses to lather up, and scale build-up in sinks and appliances. Hard water also results in scale build-up in water heaters and pipes. When this scale is moved by force of water to the faucet, the scale gets trapped behind the shower head's wire or plastic screen. While scale deposits are the primary type of debris clogging shower heads, there are other types of debris unrelated to water quality that may be the source of the problem. If your home has copper water supply pipes, the copper will eventually begin to corrode and develop a type of scale build-up inside the pipes. This condition can become so serious that pinhole leaks develop in the pipes, requiring total replacement. Other types of debris may clog the shower head, as well. Over time, the rubber gasket between the shower head and the water pipe may degrade, sending small rubber particles up against the filter screen, where they remain. Additionally, other parts of the shower head may degrade and fall apart over time. Some shower heads have a built-in flow restrictor designed to save water and energy. These simple plastic disks do save water but at the expense of water pressure. Flow restrictors can be easily removed. Clearing a clogged shower head is easy enough for a beginner and won't cost you more than \$20, depending on what tools and materials you may already have. You can expect to spend 20 to 30 minutes clearing your shower head. Channel-lock style wrench Clean rag Old toothbrush Needle-nose pliers Latex or nitrile gloves Teflon pipe tape Disposable plastic container Old towel First, try to remove the shower head by hand. Do this by turning the top section of the shower head counter-clockwise. Do not turn the head itself, as the head is designed to rotate. If you cannot remove the shower head by hand, wrap the top section with the rag and very gently turn it off with the wrench. Lay the towel out on a table and disassemble the shower head. The large flared, cone section of the shower head will not disassemble, but the smaller ball joint area that attaches to the pipe should come apart, revealing a screen and gasket. Shower head flow rates may be mandated by law in your area. If you have a flow restrictor and wish to remove it, first check to see if this is possible where you live. Use the needle-nose pliers to grab the side of the flow restrictor and pull it out. Put on the latex or nitrile gloves. Pour enough of the calcium, lime, and rust remover in the plastic container to immerse the entire shower head. Add an equal amount of warm water. Place the shower head and all of the removed parts into this solution. Let the parts soak for no more than two minutes or as recommended by the manufacturer. Pour out the solution and rinse the parts thoroughly in cool, fresh water. Rub the toothbrush gently on the screen, gasket, and flow restrictor (if you plan to re-install it). Gently knock out the shower head upside-down onto the towel. Hard particles of scale or other debris may fall out. Rinse again, reassemble the shower head, and replace it. Be sure to first wrap the water supply pipe several times with Teflon thread tape before screwing the shower head in place. With the shower head firmly in place, turn on the water and test out the water flow. Dispose of the toothbrush, gloves, and the plastic container; be sure that they do not get used again. The towel can be washed and used again for household projects again. Because the lactic acid and the lauramine oxide in the solution are irritants, be sure not to use the towel for bathing and skin contact.

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