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Washing Machine Won't Turn On



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Last updated on August 11, 2023



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First Steps

Before you go forward, here are a few questions to consider:

- Did you just run a very heavy load in your machine? You can have issues where the thermal protection for the motor trips after the motor has stopped. Give it a few minutes.
- Is your machine giving an error code? There are some codes that will prevent a machine from starting. Codes that deal with the door lock, or draining the machine are good candidates for no start. Your owner's manual will help with those.
- Does the machine fill with water, but then nothing more? Obviously, you have power, and the start button works so that the machine will fill, so skip to [Child Lock](#).
- Does the machine hum after it fills? Skip down to [Shorted Capacitor](#).

Causes

1 No Power

You might think we are kidding, but this is a common reason why your machine won't start. And it's easy to check.

Unplugged

Make sure it is plugged in. If it isn't this will likely fix things. If not go to Tripped GFCI.

Tripped GFCI

Many laundry areas may have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protected outlets. Sometimes those outlets can be tripped by certain conditions (like moisture) and they act dead. There are two buttons on the face of many of them, one marked **Test** and the other marked **Reset**.

- If your outlet where the washing machine is plugged in doesn't have those buttons, see if another outlet nearby does. If you don't find any, especially on an older home, go to No Power at Outlet, below.
- Unplug your washing machine. Push the button marked **Reset**. You may hear a faint click.
- Plug your machine in again.
- See if it starts. If it does, you are done! If not, go to the next item.

No Power at the Outlet

Make sure the outlet has power. Sometimes the Circuit breaker can trip because another device was plugged in like an electric heater or an electric clothes iron and overloaded the circuit.

- Use a lamp that you know works, and see if it turns on. If it doesn't then do the next item on this list.
- Check the circuit breaker at the panel that feeds the outlet for the dryer.
 - It may be marked "Laundry" for example because your washer can share an outlet with a gas dryer. (Not an electric dryer)
 - Is it tripped or off? If so, turn it on.
- Does your machine start now? All done!
- No Go? Let's keep checking stuff.

2

Control Problems

No, not psychological ones, but your washing machine's controls. From the almost insulting to the tricky, we have:

The Start Button or Knob

Push the start button. Many machines need to be told to start even after you set a cycle. Many older machines with timers need the cycle knob pulled out to start.

Child Lock Is On

This can make your appliance just sit there when this is set, and not respond to any buttons you (or any children) push.

- Look carefully as often there may be a small light lit on the control panel, often like a baby or a smiling lock to tell you this is engaged. Some allow you to engage it when the cycle is running and it flashes CL (looks like an error code).
- Check your operating guide or owner's manual to find out more about the indicator, and about how to turn the lock off.

This can often be accidentally set while trying to program the machine for a certain cycle and you push the "magic" sequence and suddenly it won't turn on.

- If it is on, turn it off. You should be fine now.
- If your machine doesn't have it or it isn't turned on, go to the next item, Broken Knobs or Shafts, below.

Broken Knobs or Shafts

A knob may have come loose on the shaft so it doesn't turn it but you think you are doing so. This applies mainly to older machines with knobs that don't cause indications on a control panel display.

- Check all the knobs to make sure they are firmly on the shafts.
- Check the shafts to see that they are actually turning something and not just spinning uselessly.
- If these are all checking out, go on to the next item, if not, replace the knob or control as needed.

3 Lid Switch / Door Switch Failure

When your washing machine won't turn on the most common component failure is probably the lid or door switch.

Older, traditional top-load machines have a lid switch that simply lets the machine know the lid is shut, and if the switch fails many of these machines will not start their cycle. Some might fill with water, but then they will stop.

- The switch on this type of machine can be checked for continuity with a multimeter set to Ohms or Continuity function.
- With the switch in the lid closed position, if it tests open (no continuity/or OL), it is defective and should be replaced.
- Here's an [example of an older style Whirlpool/Maytag/Kenmore Lid Switch replacement](#) procedure.

If your machine has a door latch incorporated with the switch, especially if it has electronic controls, it may need a signal from the latch that confirms that the door is locked before it will start. If it doesn't show a door-locked symbol or the door-locked light doesn't come on when you try to start the cycle, this could be an indicator of this problem.



Kenmore 80 Series Washing Machine Lid Switch Replacement

25 minutes

Easy

[View Guide](#)

4 Start Switch Failure

Older traditional machines use a switch that is built into the cycle timer knob that can fail. It will show continuity when the timer knob is in the on position (pulled out in most cases) and often there is a diagram or schematic near the timer which will show what switch contacts should be closed when the machine is operating.

- You can check the continuity of the switch with a multimeter.
- Look on the schematic (often included inside the washer control console) to see which contacts on the switch to check. There are usually contact numbers listed.
- If no continuity, replace the timer. This can be fairly costly as it is kind of like the control board for such a machine.
- If you have continuity go to the next item.

Newer machines generally use touch-style controls and failures in these parts are much more difficult to diagnose. It may be that your Motor Control Board or Control Board has failed, which may be more likely.

5 Shorted Capacitor

A failed capacitor will allow many non-motor functions to take place, including on some machines pumping out, but the drum or agitator won't move. A humming sound without any movement of the washing parts is a sign of a failed capacitor. It will be a small cylinder with two electrical connections located near the motor or sometimes on the back panel of the machine.

6 Worn Motor

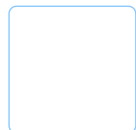
You can use a multimeter to check the various contacts on the motor for continuity and proper resistance. You should consult the diagrams in the console or any tech sheet that is in the machine so you can know the right values. As a rough guide around 5-10 ohms is reasonable for most motor windings.

7 Faulty Motor Control Board

Another place to check if you don't even get a hum but the machine might fill is the Motor Control Board. This will usually be located close to the motor and be connected to it directly. Take a look for burnt components or signs of darkening on the board. if nothing is wrong, go to the next item.

8 Faulty Control Board

A dead control board makes for pretty much a dead machine. On machines with electronic controls, the control board is the brains of the system and if you have reached this point, it could be all that is left that is causing the problem. If your machine will do little and you have checked all these other items, your remaining fix is the control board.



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