# How to Level a Washing Machine or Fridge With Your Phone

A tilted washing machine shakes itself apart. A crooked fridge kills its compressor early. Here is how to fix both in minutes using only your smartphone.

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## Why Leveling Your Appliances Actually Matters

Most people assume that as long as a washing machine or refrigerator is standing upright, it is fine. In reality, even a few millimeters of tilt can cause a surprising amount of damage over time.

A washing machine that is not level rocks during the spin cycle. That rocking creates metal fatigue in the drum bearings, loosens hose connections, and can slowly walk the machine across the floor until it pulls a water line out of the wall. Beyond the mechanical damage, an unlevel machine is simply loud — the kind of thumping that travels through the entire building.

A refrigerator has its own set of problems when tilted. The door gasket relies on gravity to seal properly; tip the fridge even slightly backward and the door no longer closes flush, letting cold air escape and forcing the compressor to run longer cycles. Uneven cooling zones develop inside the cabinet, and over a few years the compressor wears out well ahead of schedule. Most fridge manuals specify a slight backward tilt — typically 3–5 mm/m — so the doors swing shut on their own, but beyond that the problems compound quickly.

## How to Check Level With Your Phone

Place your phone flat on top of the appliance. Open Bubble Level & Angle Gauge (also available on Android) and switch to **bullseye mode**. This mode shows a circular bubble that represents the 2D orientation of the surface all at once — left/right tilt and front/back tilt simultaneously. You can see at a glance not only that the appliance is off-level but in which direction you need to adjust.

The app displays readings in multiple units. For appliance work, the **mm/m** unit is the most useful because appliance manuals and installation specs use the same scale, so you never have to convert anything.

## Reading the Tolerance Indicator

Bubble Level & Angle Gauge includes a tolerance band system that labels the current tilt as **OK**, **NEAR**, or **OUT**. For a washing machine, the target is within roughly 2 mm/m (about 0.11°). Front-loading machines are more sensitive than top-loaders because the horizontal drum and door seal demand a more precise plane — aim for the tightest tolerance your feet

allow. For a refrigerator, up to 5 mm/m is generally acceptable, with that slight intentional backward tilt toward the rear.

## Adjusting the Feet

Nearly every washing machine and refrigerator ships with threaded adjustable feet. Turn a foot clockwise to raise that corner, counter-clockwise to lower it. The sequence that wastes the least time: level the machine front-to-back first, then tackle side-to-side. Check with the phone after each adjustment rather than at the end — small corrections are far easier than large ones.

Some machines lock the feet with a jam nut. Loosen the nut before adjusting, then re-tighten it once the reading is in the OK zone. This prevents the feet from drifting back to their original position during operation.

## Front-Loader vs Top-Loader

Top-loading washers tolerate a small amount of tilt without serious consequences because the drum rotates around a vertical axis. Front-loaders are a different story: the drum axis is horizontal, so any side-to-side tilt puts asymmetric load on the bearings with every rotation. If you own a front-loader and the spin cycle rattles the walls, incorrect leveling is the first thing to investigate.

## Anti-Vibration Pads

Rubber anti-vibration pads placed under the feet reduce transmitted noise noticeably, especially on hard tile or wooden floors. They are worth using, but they are not a substitute for proper leveling. A pad under an unlevel foot simply compresses unevenly and the rocking continues. Level first, then add pads if noise is still an issue.

## The Hold Function Saves Your Hands

Reaching under a machine to turn an adjustable foot while simultaneously watching a phone screen is awkward at best. Bubble Level & Angle Gauge has a **hold function** that freezes the current reading on screen. Place the phone on top, tap hold, then crouch down and adjust the foot without losing sight of the last measurement. Tap again to refresh and check the new position. When the tolerance indicator shows OK and stays there, you are done.

The app is free with no ads, so there is no reason not to keep it installed for any leveling job around the home.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How level does a washing machine need to be?

Most manufacturers specify a maximum tilt of about 1 degree — roughly 2 percent grade — in both directions. Within that band the drum bearings wear evenly and the suspension can absorb spin vibration. If your phone shows more than that, adjust the feet before the next wash: even a small permanent tilt multiplies bearing load at 1,200 RPM.

## What if the floor itself is sloped?

Level the appliance, not the floor. Extend the feet on the low side until the phone reads OK on both axes, then lock the counter-nuts. On badly sloped floors — more than about 2 cm per meter — put a rigid board under the appliance first, because fully extended feet amplify wobble instead of damping it.

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