

LAUNDRY

Doing the laundry means that you take it to the machine, you wash, dry, fold, hang up and get this....PUT IT AWAY WHERE IT BELONGS!

I suggest 1 small load every single day, this way you get the backlog of laundry taken care of and get yourself into a routine of doing it.

Color Coding

There's nothing worse than realizing your favorite white shirt is now tie-dyed because someone mixed in colors with the whites! To prevent mishaps, invest in a good hamper (one that has two or three sections for whites/colors/darks) to divide and conquer the pile ahead of you. Not only will it help keep your laundry room floor clean, but it will prepare each load for washing. Request each family member deposit their clothing in the appropriate section to help ease sorting.

Sorting

As you sort, make sure to empty pockets, unbutton shirts, hook up bras, tie up strings, and for clothing rich in colors, turn them inside out. This will help prevent color transfer and keep your clothes looking new.

Always Read the Label!

In the process of sorting your clothes, be sure to read the labels! Put aside any items listed as hand-wash, delicate or dry cleaning, since you'll want to treat these separately. For lingerie, swimwear or socks, mesh bags will be your life-saver. If you follow these steps the days of bras hooked on t-shirts, or time spent investigating the case of the missing sock, will be gone!

Pre-Treating Tips

The faster you catch a stain, the better chance you have at getting rid of it entirely. Leaving a stained item until laundry day hinders the garment's chances for a full recovery. Ask family members to pre-treat their own stains as soon as they happen using one of these very simple techniques.

Food Stains

Give your clothes a fighting chance and use a little dish soap and water to deal with some of the toughest food stains—think tomato sauce, blueberries, curries, and grease. After blotting up the stain, apply a quarter-sized squirt of dish soap directly onto any cotton or polycotton fabric (avoid using it on delicate fabrics like silk), covering the entire stained area, and rub it in using your finger. Remember, you always want to spot test on a small area to make sure the material won't be damaged. Then, ideally, launder as soon as possible.

Delicates

For delicate fabrics or difficult stains, oxygen bleach is a staple in our stain removing arsenal. It's safer to use than chlorine bleach and can be used on colors. It's best to err on the side of caution, so always read the care label and test a small area on the fabric first.

Odors

If you're a fitness buff or find your clothes have a certain unwanted smell, you can try pre-treating your clothes in 1 part vinegar to 5 parts water before washing. Don't worry, your clothes won't come out smelling like vinegar!

It seems easy to take a pile of clothes and throw it into the dryer, but a few modifications will keep you from breaking out the iron or running a second cycle.

Shake it!

Try shaking out your clothes when you remove them from the washer. This will help prevent wrinkles and save drying time.

Load It Up

It's also best to dry full loads of laundry as opposed to a few items at a time. That being said, try not to overload the dryer, it needs room to tumble so as to reduce wrinkles and dry completely. As a bonus tip, I like to add in dryer balls to help increase efficiency as well as beat out static cling.

Air Dry

Make sure you always read the labels—some items may need to skip the dryer. Other garments will need to be dried on low (or fluff) instead of high heat. For bulkier items like bedding, you can, once again, try adding dryer balls to help move items around better as they dry.

Putting It All Away

Always remember to remove clothes from the dryer as soon as possible to prevent wrinkles and either fold or hang them up immediately.

Baskets

Organize your baskets by room or family member to make sure it gets to the right person. Determine a delivery system that works best.

Delegation

Maybe one family member collects items from the dryer and sorts them, while another folds and places them in the right person's basket or on their bed, etc. However you decide to do it, the biggest time saver will be to share the work load. Delegate tasks to kids or a partner to get clothes folded and put away quickly. With kids, you can make it into a game, like who can pair the most socks in 15 minutes or who can hang their clothes the fastest. The more hands on deck, the less daunting the task will be! Leaving it to one person is not reasonable given how much laundry a family goes through in an average week.

Machine Care

Believe it or not, laundry machines need a little love too. If you've ever been the victim of long drying times or a moldy smelling machine, these tips will benefit you.

Lint Trap

Remember to clean the lint trap after each drying cycle. It's a good idea to vacuum it out monthly to keep it running smoothly and efficiently.

Washing Machine Door

Whether you have a top load or a front load washer, wipe it down after each use (along with the gasket on front load machines), and leave the door open to air dry when not in use—this will help prevent odor-causing mold and mildew from forming.

Monthly Maintenance

Once a month, it's suggested to perform minor maintenance on your washing machine. For front-loading machines, clean the rubber seals on the door and dispensers as needed. It will help clear up any detergent, hair and other debris that has built up. If you've noticed a mildew stench forming, perform a tub cleanse using vinegar. Set your washer to the hottest temperature and add white vinegar to the bleach dispenser to the max fill level (make sure there is absolutely NO bleach in there first). For top-load washers, add 4 cups of white vinegar after setting the washer to the hottest temperature at the highest capacity. Lift the lid to stop the machine once it's filled and allow it to sit for a few hours before closing to finish the cycle.

The following may seem redundant but just a quick check list.

Your Laundry Routine looks like this:

Get clothes into the laundry area

Separate Laundry into colors (dark, towels, whites and delicate piles.)

For each load that you are about to do, turn the clothes right side out and unroll the balled up socks.

Check for stains so you can hit them with a prewash treatment Put Laundry in Washer, add soap and or bleach

Add Fabric Softener (if you do this at this stage)

When Laundry is washed, put into dryer, check your time, we waste a lot of time and energy by over drying our clothes.

Hang anything that needs to be hung. Do it right then out of the washer or dryer, this saves on the wrinkles

Fold clothes immediately out of the dryer. Do not throw the clothes in a laundry basket and take the basket to another area of the house to be folded ! You know why! It will stay in the basket unfolded and then everything needs to be re-washed because it is so wrinkled.

Put Laundry away as soon as it is folded.

Then start the next load into the dryer.

If you are really good about staying on top of your laundry, then throw in a load into the washer once you have put the other load in the dryer. If you have a tendency to forget, then don't start another load until one is COMPLETE! Complete is from sorting to put away.

PS - NEVER LEAVE THE HOUSE WITH THE WASHER OR DRYER RUNNING!! WHY? THINK FIRES AND FLOODS. ENOUGH SAID!

NEVER wash towels with clothes unless you like the lint look!