

Simplify Life: Practical Laundry Tips

Set Up Systems

1. Develop a laundry routine. Pick a day and time that works best for blasting through laundry. Alternatively, assign days based on colors or categories. Mondays: whites, Tuesdays: lights, Wednesdays: dark colors, Thursdays: bed & bath linens, etc. Write the schedule on a family memo board so everyone's on the same page.
2. Enlist the help of all family members for sorting, folding, hanging, and putting away their own clothes. Schedule a family night for folding clean laundry while listening to music, catching up with the week's family news, or watching mindless tv. Reward yourselves after finishing.
3. Children, as young as toddlers, can help slam-dunk dirty clothes into labeled hampers. Create simple bin labels with colors and words so they see how to sort. This helps with responsibility, color identification, reading, categorizing, organizing, but mostly it makes your life easier.
4. Own enough underwear and socks to get through one week.
5. Stick with few colors and same brands for socks for less sock sorting.
6. Slip out of clothes "right side out" to save time after laundering.



Sorting and Prepping

1. Pre-sort whites, lights, and dark colors into separate hampers for each person or by bedroom.
2. Combine all family members' sorted hampers into one large sorted bin for easy toting and less trips to the laundry room. Or ask kids to carry their "bin of the day" load to the laundry room.
3. No basket? Place a fitted or flat sheet on the bed or floor and toss all the laundry inside. Grab the ends of the sheet to enclose all the contents to avoid a trail of dropped items. Then shake out the sheet to empty all contents into the machine.



Washing

1. Unless pants are super dirty, wear them multiple times before washing. They will last longer and save you time.
2. Use linen bags or zippered pillowcases for protecting fine washables, intimate apparel, and for keeping socks together (especially baby socks). Assign different colored bags for each owner.
3. Be mindful of givers and receivers. Some clothes are lint receivers while others are shedders. To avoid attracting lint build-up on your favorite yoga pants, launder givers and receivers separately. The shedders are cottons, terry cloth, chenille, bedspreads and rugs and anything that has been heavily bleached. While the receivers are synthetic fabrics, permanent press, knits (including socks), corduroy and any smooth, satiny fabrics.



Drying

1. Clean the dryer lint screen after each use for quicker drying times. Periodically and carefully vacuum the lint screen to reduce fire risks and a flexible vacuum hose to suction lint from the machine's lint trap.
2. Line-dry clothes not appropriate for the dryer such as fleece, polyester, bras, stocking/tights, bathing suits silk, suede, velvet, rayon, and chiffon.

Unloading, Folding, Hanging & Storing

1. Use clip or clamp hangers to hang dress pants to avoid crease lines and wrinkles. Use clip hangers for skirts.



2. Place a hanging rod or clothing rack in the laundry area. Immediately hang shirts, dresses, etc.

3. To keep hangers handy, when undressing place hangers on the door handle of your dressing area as a reminder to take them to your laundry room when you leave.



4. Hangers not your thing? Use hooks.
5. Roll sweaters to prevent wrinkles. Rolling enables easy grabbing without disturbing other garments.
6. Need to sort socks? Find an open surface to place each sock in rows after drying. As you find it's mate, fold them together.
7. No drawer space? Use baskets for storing socks, underwear, and sweaters.

Ironing

1. If possible, avoid clothing that needs ironing. If ironing is necessary, iron while clothing is damp to speed up the process.
2. Iron light clothes inside out to avoid any streaking from the iron.



Bed and Bath Linens

1. Add bath and bed linens to any of the loads above if there is room or once a week linen loads per manufacturer temperature recommendations.
2. Reduce towel washings. Presumably your body is clean when using bath and hand towels.
3. Purchase an extra set of bed and bath linens. Bedmaking and bath/shower time won't have to await the laundry. You'll be covered in emergencies (illness or accidents). Rotate sets to extend their lifespan.
4. Wrinkle-free linens save you time. If sheets and pillowcases wrinkle, don't stress, they will wrinkle when you sleep on them.
5. Help young children learn to make their beds, strip the sheets, and replace sheets and pillowcases.