



Step-by-step guide for doing the laundry

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It pays to be careful with your laundry. Did you know, for example, that the value of an average load in the washing machine can be as high as the cost of the machine itself?

Laundry is a step-by-step process. First, sort and prepare your wash. Then, choose the correct washing programme and laundry product(s) and follow dosing instructions. Handwash-only detergents should never be used in the washing machine, because they cause high foaming levels. After washing, it is important not to wait too long before removing the wet laundry from your machine and drying it using a clothes-line or tumble-dryer. Finally, iron and/or fold your clothes and store them.

1. Sort into piles

Sorting the laundry is the first step to a clean wash and helps to keep clothes, linens, and other household items looking their best through repeated washes. It is important to look at the [care label](#) (link to Annex 3) on your textiles. Sort the laundry until you come up with a reasonable number of compatible, washer-size loads.

Tips

- Keep mixing and matching items into loads that require similar detergents, wash cycles and water temperatures.
 - a. Sort into dry-cleaning, hand-wash only and machine wash (read [care label](#) (link to Annex 3)).
 - b. Separate dark colours from colours and pastels and whites.
 - c. Sort according to the type of fabric (cotton, synthetic, delicate, wool).
 - d. Sort according to required washing temperatures and spin speeds (read [care label](#) (link to Annex 3)).
- Always dose according to the highest soil level of any textile in your particular wash load, especially if you include heavily soiled items. When you under-dose (use too little detergent), the extra soil from the wash water may deposit on the less-soiled items (whites may become grey or yellowish, colours will become duller).
- Very dirty laundry should be washed sooner rather than later. Old stains are more difficult to remove.
- Wet laundry should also be washed immediately. If this is not possible, hang it to dry before you wash it.
- Make sure that you mix small and large items. This allows clothes to move more freely, resulting in better washing.

2. Prepare your laundry

Follow these tips to minimize damage to the articles you are washing (or your washing machine!) and to help clean them thoroughly. Coins, paper handkerchiefs or pens may cause a lot of damage if they are not removed before washing.

Tips

- Empty pockets.
- Close buttons and zips.
- Turn clothes inside out.
- Put a knot in duvet covers to prevent them from collecting small laundry items.
- If you have accidentally washed with a paper handkerchief, you can remove the bits of fluff by rinsing the laundry with a pair of nylon stockings.

3. Select your laundry product

The type(s) of laundry product(s) required depend on the load. Typically, you will be able to use a main-wash detergent. Very delicate fabrics, such as silk or wool, require special care.

Annex 1 provides guidance for choosing the correct laundry detergent. Check if you need to use a pre-wash stain remover or a bleaching additive to remove difficult stains. Fabric conditioner can be helpful in softening fabrics, reducing drying time and making ironing easier, as well as providing laundry with a pleasant fragrance. In hard-water areas, your laundry and washing machine may benefit from using a water softener.

Use compact products as they allow you to dose less, which saves product and reduces packaging waste.

4. Dose according to water hardness and soil level

Adjust for partial wash loads.

Manufacturers provide dosing instructions, usually with an illustration like below:

	 1/2 	 1 	 1 1/2  
Soft	44 ml	66 ml	110 ml
Medium	44 ml	88 ml	132 ml
Hard	44 ml	110 ml	154 ml

Tips

- Do not use more than the recommended amount of detergent. Over-dosing will not provide better results and leads to an extra burden on the environment, as well as being more expensive!. Moreover, an excess of detergent can leave residues on clothes.
- Check the instruction manual to find out how many kilograms can be washed in your machine. You may have to adjust the amount of detergent (i.e., double the dose for a 10kg machine that is fully loaded).
- Do not use less than the recommended amount of detergent. Soil particles cannot be efficiently removed and may be left on the laundry causing a dull haze on your clothes, or on the heating element of your washing machine if too little detergent is used. Stains that are not removed entirely can be 'burned' into the fabric, which makes them extremely difficult to remove. Under-dosing also increases the need for a rewash.
- If you use a tumble-dryer, you may reduce the dose of fabric conditioner during washing by 50% and still benefit from the fact that the dryer will use up to 8% less energy, since softened fabrics retain less water. (source: Henkel Richtig Waschen). Alternatively, there are tumble-dryer sheets that soften fabrics and enhance your laundry's fragrance.

5. Choose the appropriate washing programme, or wash by hand

There is a special care symbol for items that are 'Hand-wash only' (see [care label](#) (link to Annex 3)).



Tips for hand wash

- Sort the items by colour: keep white and light colours separate from darks and make a separate pile of non-colourfast items.
- Pre-treat stains and heavily soiled areas. Pay close attention to the textile care symbol for bleaching. If bleaching is not allowed (crossed triangle), try the product on a concealed area first.
- Use a light-duty hand-wash detergent. Dissolve it in wash water of the desired temperature before adding the clothes. Let them soak for no longer than 3-5 minutes. Gently squeeze the suds through the fabric, being careful not to rub, twist, or wring excessively. Rinse articles thoroughly in cool water until the water runs clear.
- Take special care with wool and silk - use a wool/silk detergent. Do not soak these articles. Do not squeeze, rub, twist or wring. The rinse water should be the same (lukewarm) as the washing temperature.
- Hang blouses, dresses, scarves, and lingerie to dry. Use towels to blot excess moisture from sweaters, stockings, delicate underwear. Hang these items to dry only if the weight of the water will not stretch them out of shape; otherwise, dry them with a towel on a flat surface.



Tips for machine wash

- Read manufacturer's instruction to familiarize yourself with the washing machine's operating procedures and recommended cycles.
- Fill the machine, add detergent according to the dosing instructions and, if appropriate, a bleaching additive, water softener or fabric conditioner. Select a wash cycle, close the door and press the 'Start' button.
- Make sure that small and large items are placed in each load. This allows clothes to move more freely, resulting in better washing.
- Everyday loads of laundry (towels, children's clothes): Fill the drum but leave some room for the items to move around. You should at least be able to move a fist above the laundry in the drum.
- Use a normal or eco-setting on your washing machine. The appropriate temperature setting depends on the load you are washing, but in many cases 30 or 40 degrees Celsius gives excellent results. In general, it is recommended to use the 'eco-setting' on your washing machine with a good detergent, to benefit the environment. This saves energy without compromising cleaning performance or convenience. Washing at lower temperatures will also allow you to properly clean delicate items without any risk of colour fade.
- Delicate laundry: Reduce the load (please refer to machine instructions).
- If you are washing a mixed load, always select the lowest recommended temperature and spin speed.
- Do not overfill the machine. This may cause permanent damage to your clothes - the mechanical friction between the clothes can cause light marks where dyes are rubbed off and prints on T-shirts may be damaged. Jeans, printed T-shirts and similar laundry should therefore always be washed inside out.

6. Dry your washing on a clothes-line or in a tumble-dryer

The laundry can be dried on the line, preferably outside or in a well-ventilated room (see [care label](#) (link to Annex 3)).

Tips for line-drying

- Make sure that pegs and clothes-lines are clean.
- Attach items to the clothes-line by their sturdiest edges.
- Hang tops (T-shirts) from their bottoms, and bottoms (jeans) from their tops.
- Dry white and light items in the sun and bright or dark items in the shade.
- Hang blouses, dresses, scarves and lingerie to dry.
- Use towels to blot excess moisture from sweaters, stockings, delicate underwear. Hang these items to dry only if the weight of the water will not stretch them out of shape; otherwise, dry them with a towel on a flat surface.

Always check the care label first to see if an item can be put in a tumble-dryer at low or normal heat.

Tips for tumble-drying

- Read the manufacturer's instruction book to familiarize yourself with the dryer's operating procedures and recommended cycles.
- Do not overload the dryer; this will cause uneven drying and excessive creasing.
- Remove items from the dryer as soon as it stops and hang or fold them to prevent creases.
- Clean the lint filter after each use of the dryer.

7. Iron clothes if needed

Fabrics differ in their sensitivity to heat. The textile care symbol (see [Annex 3](#)) for ironing indicates how hot your iron may be: one dot is a cool setting, three dots means maximum temperatures.

Tips

- Sort the clothes according to their recommend ironing temperature. As a rule of thumb, put heavier items at the bottom of the pile, and light-weight fabrics on the top.
- Start ironing with the '1 dot' garments, finish with '3 dot' clothes. This way, delay between items (because the iron needs to cool down) as well as damage to clothes can be avoided.
- It is also important to bear in mind that a reduced number of dots means that you must be more careful in choosing your ironing method.

One dot: Iron with a press cloth or inside out. Apply caution when using steam irons (as a rule, try to work without steam). Do not deform.

Two dots: Iron under a moderately moist cloth. A steam iron may be used. Avoid heavy pressure. Do not deform.

Three dots: iron whilst damp; treat and if necessary moisten; shiny or pressure-sensitive pieces should be ironed with press cloth or ironed inside out. A steam iron may be used.

- Immediately place the ironed clothes on clothes hangers, but give them time to cool before storing in the closet.

8. Fold and store