



Coming Clean... a few laundry basics.

Laundry is one task that will never be done. As soon as you are sure that every piece of laundry has been done, someone will throw another item down the chute. Once you face that fact, you can move on to strategize.

Assess your system. Is it working well for you? Is everything arriving in the laundry room in a timely manner or are things trailing in just as you've started the rinse cycle? Decide on a way to get all of the laundry to the laundry room for laundry day.

Set a schedule and let it be known to every family member. "I will be doing laundry on Friday, please have everything to the laundry room by that time, if you want me to wash it for you." If you do different loads on different days, let everyone know that you will do a load of whites on Wednesdays or darks on Friday.

SORT:

Select a laundry sorter that has compartments or line up a series of plastic laundry baskets. Teach each family member to first empty their pockets. Keep a small dish or basket on the dryer to collect the prizes found in the pockets. Then show them how to sort their clothing by color. Train them to zip zippers, unroll socks and turn dark clothes inside out.

PRETREAT:

Clean stains as quickly as possible. Dabbing or dipping the stain in ice-water is the best way to remove blood or red wine. Carrying products like Tide-to-go or Shout Wipes Plus is a great way of catching the stain before it sets.

If you didn't treat it immediately, have stain sticks or sprays conveniently located in the laundry room, so that each person can pre-treat their own clothes. If stain treatment is required and children are too young to do it themselves, have them place the item on the top of the washer to give you a signal that the item needs to be treated.

WASH:

Keep everything within easy reach. Store products from left to right in the order that you use them. For me that would be stain stick, detergent, Downy. Keep the

things you use frequently close and things you don't on a higher shelf or toward the back.

Wash clothing at the temperature suggested in the care label. To reduce fading in dark clothing wash them inside out.

The Queen of Clean has a helpful test to see if a fabric is colorfast. She suggests turning the garment inside out and putting a drop of water on the inside seam. Blot it with a cotton ball. If it is clean, it is safe to wash. If not, you know that this item will bleed and should be washed separately.

She recommended Fels Naptha® to remove yellow perspiration stains and 20 mule team® Borax to remove perspiration odor.

Double check that stains have been removed before drying. If the stain is still present rewash. Don't dry the clothing until the stain is removed or the heat could set the stain.

DRY:

Clean the lint trap before you use the dryer. It will work more efficiently and excess lint can cause a fire hazard. Dry clothing and towels until dry, unless they have a tendency to wrinkle or shrink. Then pull them out of the dryer while they are still damp and hang to dry. This trick prevents shrinking and cuts down on ironing time.

Sock Tips:



- I had a friend who safety pinned each pair of socks together before he threw them in the hamper. He liked the idea that they were mated for life.
- If you lose one sock you have a better chance of reuniting it with its mate if you keep it in the laundry room.

AND FINALLY:

Perhaps you already knew all of the above information and were just looking for a strategy to stay ahead of the piles. Here are four different techniques that I have tried over the years.

- 1) Load washer in the evening before you go to bed. Dry and fold in the morning before work.
- 2) Do one load of wash every morning. Just one. You'll never have that unending pile to deal with again.
- 3) Do all of your laundry while you are cleaning the house. You'll be moving around the house anyway. Just throw a load in when you pass by.

4) Throw a load in when you get home from work. Dry it while making dinner.

Regardless of which approach you use, always fold immediately. It is so much more enjoyable to fold things when they are still warm. Plus, it eliminates wrinkles which means less ironing!

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