

How to...

Help with laundry



Learning to do your washing is a top skill.

Doing the laundry – in other words, cleaning dirty clothes, sheets and towels – is a common chore that every adult has to do, unless they want smelly clothes. This would once have involved washing everything by hand, which took a long time and a lot of effort, lifting sopping wet clothes and wringing them out. Luckily, washing machines were invented and became popular in UK homes in the 1950s. Thanks to these machines, helping with the laundry is far quicker and easier today. Ariel, which makes detergent to wash clothes, did a survey in 2021 of 2,000 UK adults and their washing habits. It found that the average washing machine will go through four loads of laundry each week. If you'd like to help around the house more, why not try doing some laundry? Taking on just one load a week would be a great help. Here are some tips for tackling the laundry.

HEAVY LOAD
A study in 2021 worked out the average adult will do about 13,000 washes in their lifetime.



Sort your laundry

You'll need to check how different items should be washed. Everyone has their own way of doing things, so ask an adult for advice. White items should be washed separately from coloured ones and some fabrics are more delicate than others. Cotton sheets, for example, can go on almost any washing machine cycle, but a top made of silk or wool will need a gentler cycle or should be washed carefully by hand.

Load the machine

If the machine is too full there won't be enough space for the water and soap to slosh about and the clothes to turn, which means they won't get cleaned properly. It's best to fill the drum about three quarters full. Don't underfill it either, because it's a waste of energy and water if you are running a whole cycle to clean just a few items. Ask an adult to show you which cycle to select and how to add detergent.



Take it out to dry

When the cycle is over, take the clothes out straight away so they don't get smelly and creased. Shake things out to help get rid of creases. If you hang things outside you'll need pegs to stop them blowing away. Space items out because they won't dry well if they sit on top of each other. If you're using a tumble dryer, ask an adult what cycle to put it on and check that all the items can go in – some fabrics shrink in a dryer.

Fold away

Make sure your washing is dry by checking the thicker parts that take longer to dry. For example, the waistband of jeans or cuffs of a shirt. If you put things away when they're still damp they will smell later. Fold things up and sort them into piles for putting away or ironing – you could even make piles for different people so they can put their own things away. Pair socks together so they don't get separated.



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