

THE GREEN GUIDE to laundry care

How green is your... laundry?

Becoming a greener consumer really can make a difference - and save you money. Small changes to the way we carry out everyday tasks like washing and drying clothes, combined with eco-friendly buying decisions, can bring big benefits.

By now, everyone should know about the simple things we can do for the environment when dealing with laundry - such as always putting on a full load, cleaning out lint filters, avoiding unnecessary or daily washes on 'hot', and drying clothes outside when the weather is fine. That's all very well, but this guide takes things a step further.

Here are a few tips you may not have thought of, to help you clean and dry your laundry as ecologically - and economically - as possible.

Choosing a new machine



- **All the AAAs**

Kitchen appliances are getting more efficient. On average, a modern washing machine from Miele, uses 40% less water and 30% less electricity than 15 years ago, thanks to clever motors, insulation, sensors and controls. And high performance tumble dryers use up to 50% less energy than other models. So, look out for top performers in energy efficiency, electrical and water consumption. On a scale of A to G, an 'A' grade is the most efficient while 'G' is the least. By contrast an 'E' grade stands for average. Washing machines like Miele's most recent top of the range W3923 WPS fit into in the 'A' grade category. But whatever your choice of model or make, don't forget to keep your eyes open for the Energy Saving Recommended logo.



- **Price and value are not the same**

It's not just about the price on the ticket, you need to consider reliability and longevity as well. A good quality washing machine or tumble dryer will give you up to 20 years of loyal service. The average is about 12 years, though some may give you a much shorter lifespan. The longer an appliance lasts and the less frequently it needs repair, the lower the impact on the environment.



- **The machines are taking over!**

If you pick a machine that makes use of the latest microprocessors and sensors, you can optimise the washing or drying performance for each individual load. The benefit of a machine like this is that it does the thinking for you and is more energy efficient. Top-of-the range appliances will also often offer you a greater variety of programmes than cheaper ones, and possibly more able to deal efficiently with a wider range of fabrics.



- **Easier on the ears**

When choosing a new washing machine do think about the spin factor. Although most modern models are quiet, potential 'noise' levels, however minimal, are worth bearing in mind if you want to secure the best deal for years to come, and especially if your kitchen or living area is open plan.



Choosing a new machine *continued*

- **Sending eco-unfriendly packaging packing**

New washing machines and tumble dryers need to be packaged to keep them safe in transit. Damaged goods are a waste of resources, after all. But modern technology means we've been able to cut down the amount of packaging used by about 20% in the last ten years. Look for manufacturers who use more sustainable packaging – like corrugated cardboard and untreated wood – and run packaging return schemes that ensure materials are recycled rather than dumped in landfill.

Using your machine



- **You can teach your old machine new tricks**

Technology moves fast. Technology is now being developed to update appliances by fitting new software that is designed to turn 'old faithful' appliances into 'washing wonders'. Potentially, an upgrade means significant savings and long term benefit for the environment.



- **Save while you sleep**

Some washing machines have a 'delay start' feature which lets you set your machine to start later. This means you can do your washing overnight and take advantage of cheaper electricity rates.



- **Down with ironing!**

You can sometimes avoid the job we all hate – ironing – by tumble drying clothes, giving them a good shake and hanging them up while they are still warm from the dryer. Gravity will do the rest. When you hang clothes out on the line or over a dryer inside, spend a couple of minutes smoothing them out while they're damp. Also look out for dryers and washing machines with 'reduced ironing' or 'anti crease' programmes.



- **Tune in to turning off**

Over £1 billion worth of energy is wasted by leaving combined household appliances on standby, so do remember to switch off your washing machine and tumble dryer off when not in use, and particularly if you are going away on holiday. (Source: Energy Saving Trust)



- **Final Farewells**

How much of your old appliance can be recycled? Is the counterweight in your washing machine made of recyclable cast iron or non-recyclable concrete? Was your dryer manufactured to be easily dismantled? Ask about appliances that have this kind of recyclability built in. Incidentally, the more recyclable the item, the easier it is to take it apart for servicing and repairs – another saving.

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