

How To Use Laundry Detergent Correctly



What if you learned that you could increase the lifespan of your washing machine, preserve the quality of your clothes, and save yourself a little cash in the process? You'd be crazy not to listen, right? Well, this isn't just a fanciful thought: by making one small change in your laundry habits, you can enjoy all the benefits listed above.

It's really simple: cut back on the detergent! In just four steps, you can make your laundry practices significantly more efficient and effective.

- 1. Select a type of detergent.** There are three main forms of detergent: self-contained packets powder, and liquid. Figure out which one is best for your machine by consulting the manual. Typically, high-efficiency (HE) washers require a special type of detergent, since regular ones will damage the machine and cause it to smell musty. Otherwise, you will have a choice, so pick your favorite!
- 2. Gauge your load size.** The amount of detergent you need is directly related to the size of your load. If you throw in

the same amount of detergent for every load, your clothes likely have a soapy film on them and will wear out faster. A good rule of thumb for estimating your load size: a quarter full is small, half-full is medium, and full is large.

- 3. Calculate how much detergent you need.** Check your detergent's packaging to see how much is recommended for each load size. Make sure you also measure the soap correctly—for instance, not mistaking teaspoons for tablespoons. More soap does not mean your clothes will be any cleaner, and in fact, it could degrade them rapidly.
- 4. Administer detergent properly.** Front-loading washers and HE washers are simple to use; throw in the clothes, add detergent on top, and you are good to go. Top-loaders are a little different. For best results, let the drum fill with water first, then pour in the detergent, and finally add the clothes. This is so that the detergent can be evenly distributed before the clothes are thrown in.

These four steps can really make a difference for you. Detergent can be expensive, so this is how you can make it last longer. You will probably notice the difference for your clothes and machine as well! If you've been using too much detergent for a long time, then you might first need to clean out your machine thoroughly. This is simple, too—just run an empty load and add 3/4 cup of white vinegar to the hot water.