

## Doing Laundry the Green Way

The greenest way to wash those dirty clothes is to head to the nearest antique shop and inquire about washboards. Think about it, while scrubbing clothes clean on the washboard, you can also give yourself one of those calorie burning, nineteenth century workouts. However, unless you have several hours of free time and a strong urge to only use your own energy in lieu of electricity, this option for **doing laundry the green way** isn't very feasible.

That's ok though, because there are other green options for doing laundry. Stow the washboard until the next spontaneous, country music jam session and try the following suggestions:

- **If you don't have a front-loading washing machine, buy one (they use less energy than a top-loading washing machine).** This will be a rather large expense for most folks but that's what credit cards are for and as a bonus, you will save money on electrical bills in the long run. You might also be able to use a credit card that contributes to green programs or foundations.
- Wash clothes with less frequency. This might be a tough one to handle for those of us who are obsessive about spotless, sterile-smelling clothes but the formula is simple- the fewer clothes we wash, the less water and electricity we use. This isn't to say that you should waltz around covered in stains and dirt, it just means that you probably don't have to wash clothes, towels, and sheets after using them for a day, or even a few days if they aren't obviously dirty. Just be more conscious about washing and drying clothes.
- Wash clothes with cold water. You might be surprised to hear that cold water also washes clothes but there you go, yes it does (!) and it's a greener way to wash laundry than using hot water (which takes more energy). Sure, you might need hot water to wash certain items of clothing but most will come out nice and clean after a wash and rinse in cold water.
- Use a green laundry detergent. Of course by "green" we are talking about detergents that are biodegradable. All of that soap and volatile, stain-removing stuff has to go somewhere and I doubt that the fish, invertebrates, and microorganisms living in our waterways want anything to do with it.

Some of the green brands of laundry detergents available are [Method](#) (possibly the most environmentally friendly detergent available), Oxy-Boost, Biokleen products, and Ecover ecological washing liquid. These brands tend to cost more than non-green, detergents but because you end up using less per load, the bottle lasts longer. Of course, if those non-green brands had to include the costs they impose upon the environment, their prices would be astronomical.

- Hang your clothes out to dry. If it's sunny outside, there's no point in wasting energy to dry clothes with electrically produced heat when you can use the sun's rays to dry them. Put up a good, old fashioned laundry line and let the sun do its work. Or, you can also lay them out to dry in the backyard or on the patio.

These are just a few suggestions for doing laundry the green way. Like many green ideas, all it takes to live in a more sustainable fashion is an understanding of energy dynamics, a good imagination, and the will to change.