

Tips to Help with Laundry and Laundromats

Label your washer and dryer with tactual markings

- If you are a **braille reader**, you can contact the manufacturer of your washer and dryer and request a free braille control panel or overlay for your particular model.
- You can also **tactually mark** your washing machine and dryer with tape or other adhesive-backed materials.
- The [large print washing machine labels](#) shown here, as well as other low vision products, are available from [Independent Living Aids Inc.](#)
- You can also count the number of clicks your washer and dryer dials make to determine specific settings.
- The National Federation of the Blind provides the [Accessible Home Showcase](#), which reviews a wide range of washing machines, dryers, washer-dryer centers, dishwashers, ranges, microwaves, and refrigerators for accessibility and safety for users who are blind or have low vision.
- American Foundation for the Blind's [Access World Newsletter](#) reviews the accessibility of a wide range of small and large home appliances for people who use low vision techniques.

Sorting Laundry

- Use different sized baskets or use plastic bags to separate clothing. This method can be helpful if you take your clothing to a Laundromat.
- Use mesh lingerie bags for undergarments and other fine washables. Lingerie bags are also helpful for keeping socks and other small items together.
- Separate new clothing items for the initial wash, in case the color runs.
- Wash different parts of the same outfit together. If one part is washed more frequently than the other, the colors will not remain the same. This is especially true of darker colors.
- Treat stains as soon as possible. One way to keep track of stains is to place a small rust-proof safety pin in the center of the stain before laundering the garment.
- Use a stick-style pre-treatment on the stain before laundering, which can offer more precise application and

control. When applying it to the stain, follow a pattern (such as left to right) and use overlapping strokes.

Measuring Detergent

- Measure liquid or powder laundry detergent by using individual measuring cups (1 cup, 1/2 cup, 1/3 cup, 1/4 cup) that nest inside each other.
- You can also use the cap of the laundry detergent or fabric softener as a measuring device.
- Use a one-ounce medicine cup to measure and add liquid fabric softener.
- Measure and pour detergent over your clothing after you've placed it in the washing machine. This helps to avoid spills.
- Remember: When adding laundry detergent, less is always better than too much.

Safety Considerations

- Do not use the washer and dryer doors for support; instead, keep a chair nearby for support and orientation.
- Check the lint filters frequently, since built-up lint can cause fires.
- Place a mat on the floor near the washer and dryer to absorb spilled water.

Suggestions for Using a Laundromat

Cues from colored lights

- Coin-operated machines in a laundromat usually have different colored lights that come on and off as the machine is going through specific cycles.
- If you are able to see these lights, you can use them as cues to help you know when to add detergent, fabric softener, or other solutions to the machine.

Cues from changes in sound

- You can also listen to the sound of the machine as it changes from one cycle to the next.
- If you want to rely on these sound cues, it's a good idea to visit the Laundromat when it's not too busy and background noise is minimal.

Ask for assistance

- Many Laundromats employ at least one person who is present during daytime hours to oversee the store, keep the machines clean, and do the laundry as a customer service.
- If the employee is unable to do your laundry, ask if he or she can let you know when each cycle changes so that you can add detergent or fabric softener at the appropriate time in the wash cycle.
- If you maintain a regular attendance schedule, the Laundromat employees can get to know you and will be more likely to assist you.