

How to Use a Clothes Dryer Correctly

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An [automatic clothes dryer](#) is considered a necessity in most homes alongside the washing machine. Some neighborhoods don't allow outdoor clotheslines, drying large items like bed sheets is nearly impossible on inside dryer racks, and many of us are pressed for time and can't wait for clothes to air dry, but are you getting the best results from your dryer?

Get the Best Looking Clothes From Your Dryer

- Read the manual; almost all of us think we know how to use a clothes dryer—turn a knob and push a button. It takes a bit more thought for the effective use of a dryer than that. Take a few minutes to learn what your dryer can do and what the [various heat levels and settings](#) mean.
- Vary the heat level depending on the fabrics that are being dried. Not everything should be dried on hot. It may seem that that's the quickest, best way, but excessively high heat contributes to shrinkage and damage to clothes from overdrying.
- Never overload the dryer. The clothes need room to tumble freely for efficient drying and to prevent wrinkles.
- As you remove clothes from the washer, shake each piece to untangle. If different weight items have been washed together—like heavy cotton towels and lightweight pajamas—dry them in separate loads.
- You'll reduce wrinkles and the need to iron if you remove clothes of every type of fabric while they are still slightly damp. Hang the items, smooth with your hands and allow to dry.
- Protect fabrics by knowing the things that should never be placed in the dryer.

Reduce Dryer Energy Costs

A clothes dryer accounts for about twelve percent of your yearly home utility costs. Learn how to use a dryer efficiently and reduce yearly energy costs.

- Investigate opting for a [natural gas dryer versus an electric dryer](#). The cost of operating a natural gas clothes dryer is almost always less than an electric dryer. The dryers do cost a bit more and require professional installation so that should be weighed against operating costs.
- 2015 brought the first Energy Star rated clothes dryers. For many years, nearly every dryer (low-end to fancy) cost the same amount of money to operate. Take time to research the newest offerings if you are in the market to buy a dryer.
- When loading the dryer, separate lightweight fabrics from heavyweight ones for faster, more even drying.
- Whenever possible, dry full loads, not just one or two items, to save on energy costs.
- Drying several loads consecutively saves energy because the dryer doesn't have to warm up each time.
- Do not add wet items to a partially dry load. It will confuse the moisture detector in your dryer and over dry some of your clothes.
- Don't open the dryer door unnecessarily. You'll add time to the drying cycle by letting warm air escape.
- Clean the moisture sensor inside the dryer drum at least once per month. Dryer sheets leave a filmy coating on the sensor that will distort drying times. The sensor can be cleaned with a bit of isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol on a clean cloth or cotton swab.
- Clean the lint screen after every load. Lint—even a little—lengthens the drying time.
- If possible, install your dryer in a warm area. Unheated spaces make drying times longer.
- Install a rigid dryer vent system. A rigid dryer vent, as opposed to the flexible plastic vent, will attract and hold less lint and increase airflow for quicker drying. It will also help prevent fires from dryer lint.
- Choose the shortest possible route from the dryer to the outside for dryer vent systems. Clean the vents at least once per year to remove excess lint.