



Lighten your load

*Create a
laundry room
that works.*

BY HELLEN BUTTIGIEG

Let's face it. Dirty laundry is a fact of life. But doing laundry becomes less of a chore when you have an efficient, pleasing room to do it in.

Create a laundry room that not only looks good but also works well.

Here's how.

Purge first

Before making any attempt to organize the laundry room, do a thorough purge

of old, unused supplies. Toss out misshapen hangers, the box of hardened laundry detergent and all those socks

HOME ORGANIZATION

without partners you've been saving in hopes of a reunion. Any items that don't belong in a laundry room can be placed in a 'move elsewhere' box for now and distributed to the appropriate room later.

Create zones

Consider the various tasks that have to be done, then create proper places for these activities. In addition to a washer, dryer and sink, you'll need an area to sort, air-dry and iron. You'll also need a convenient storage area for supplies.

Sorting strategies

Save time and trouble by keeping a hamper for dirty clothes in each bedroom.

Lightweight hampers with handles can be carried to the laundry room easily. Vented hampers let clothes breathe to prevent mildew.

Use a laundry sorter to divide dirty clothes into three basic groups: whites, darks/colours and delicates/hand washables. Invest in a durable sorter; one with canvas bags that hang from a metal frame will hold up well.

To avoid the missing sock syndrome and make it easier to distribute clean socks to their rightful owners, give each family member a colour-coded mesh laundry bag for his or her dirty socks. Wash and dry the socks while they're still in the bag. Then, deposit the bag of clean socks in each person's laundry basket.

Drying delicately

To air-dry delicate items, use a retractable clothesline, a folding drying rack, or a shower curtain tension rod hung over the washer and dryer.



Ironing with ease

If you have a front-loading washer and dryer, install a countertop over the machines for folding clothes. If you want to use it as a handy ironing surface, build the countertop out of MDF, glue some foam on top and cover it with heat-resistant sailcloth. Alternatively, you can install a hinge-top table that hangs from the wall and folds out of the way when not in use. Hang the ironing board and iron on an over-the-door hanger to save space.

Storing strategies

Store laundry supplies in built-in cabinets or shelving over the machines or in a nearby free-standing unit. For both convenience and safety, make sure you install these at a height where you are not reaching too high – no more than about six inches above shoulder height.

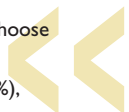
If space is tight, slide a skinny rolling caddy in the gap between the washer and dryer to store laundry supplies.

Use wicker baskets or clear plastic bins to house dust rags, mesh garment bags and dryer sheets. Designate a basket for stain-removal products and sewing supplies (for quick repairs). Group items by type and label each container for easy access.



DID YOU HEAR...?

- When it comes to identifying a favourite colour, Canadians resoundingly choose blue (42%), while green at 16% and red at 13% trail far behind.
- Black is the colour of clothing Canadians feel most confident wearing (35%), with blue a close second (31%).



A mini-sized wastebasket on a shelf is a handy place to keep lint from the dryer or used dryer sheets until garbage day.

A small, clear jar can act as a temporary home for loose change and buttons that mysteriously appear in the machines after you've done a load.

Timesaving tips

Designate a laundry basket in a different colour for each family member. Label it with their names so there's no confusion. As clean clothes come out of the dryer, place them in the appropriate basket. Deliver each person's basket to their bedroom and have them fold and put away their things.

Teach everyone in your home (over the age of about 10) how to do his or her own laundry. This is a life skill that everyone needs to learn eventually. Post instructions



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on the wall for easy reference. If your children are too young, get them involved by helping to match socks or fold towels.

Brighten up

Now that you've made your laundry room functional, reward yourself by making it esthetically pleasing as well. Paint it a cheerful colour, add a bright throw rug and hang something decorative on the wall.

Once you've created an attractive, functional space with easy access to all your supplies, you'll spend less time doing laundry and more time enjoying life. 🌿

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