

if your dryer could talk

Here's what it would tell you to do to keep it running smoothly.

Dryer sheets can gunk me up.

If you use softener-coated sheets, keep in mind that, over time, the residue sticks to the lint filter and clogs it. Twice a year, scrub the filter with a nylon-bristle brush and an all-purpose cleaner. Then rinse the filter and pop it back in place.

Yikes, I may not be up to code.

If the vent pipe (the hose that leads from the dryer to the outside) is flexible plastic, it no longer meets fire codes—the dryer's heat could cause it to collapse and catch fire. Get a metal duct instead.

Wipe away stains, stat.

See ink or dye on your dryer's interior walls? Clean them with a solution of ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon water before the stains become permanent. Then tumble dry some damp rags to catch any ink residue that could transfer to future loads.

Wrinkles? Run a smaller load.


The more room clothes have to move around, the less likely they are to wrinkle. So fill your dryer only half to three quarters full. But if you're drying just one thing, toss in two similar items to balance out the drum and ensure even tumbling.


I hate, hate, hate lint!

A lint-jammed dryer not only takes longer to work, it's also a major fire hazard. Clean the lint filter after every cycle. And every year or so, hire a service technician to clear out the vent pipe and the inside of the dryer's front panel.

GIVE THESE CYCLES A SPIN

A quick guide to what certain settings mean.

 **Permanent press:** Uses medium heat to protect colored clothes from fading and prevent wrinkles from forming. It's best for synthetic fabrics like nylon and polyester.

 **Steam refresh:** A 15-to-20-minute cycle that blasts dry clothes with steam or heated mist to help remove wrinkles or static without washing.

 **Reverse tumble:** Alternates the direction the dryer drum spins to prevent loads from twisting and wrinkling—good for delicate clothes when you don't have time to iron, and bulky items like bedding.