

Washing Machine Maintenance Tips for Energy Efficiency

Control Your Clothes Washer's Thirst for Water

Most of the energy consumed by a conventional top-load clothes washer is heating the water for its wash and rinse cycles. So, you can significantly reduce the amount of energy used by choosing the cold-water setting and adjusting the water level to the lowest amount necessary for each load. Also, carefully sort loads and pretreat tough or greasy stains so you won't have to wash items twice. For more tips, check the owner's manual.

- Adjust the settings for each load.
- Wash full loads.
- Combine half loads into full loads whenever possible; if you can't set the load size, wait until you have a full load. (Check the owner's manual for guidance on what constitutes a full load; you might even want to weigh a couple of loads to make sure.)
- Don't overload the washer.
- If packed together too tightly, clothes and other items won't get clean because the water won't circulate properly.
- Use cold water with a cold-water detergent.
- In most cases, washing clothes and other items in cold water will get them clean. Coldwater prolongs the life of most fabrics too.
- If a cold-water wash doesn't work, try warm—not hot.
- Choose the warm-water cycle when necessary for extra dirty clothes. Save the hot-water cycle for diapers or severely stained loads.
- Use the right amount of detergent.
- Using too much detergent can cause color fading and create excess suds, which the washer may not be able to rinse away during a normal cycle.
- Choose a cold-water rinse. Warm or hot water doesn't rinse more effectively than cold.
- Select an extended spin cycle: this option will force the greatest amount of water from clothes, reducing drying time. (Note: This setting may not be appropriate for delicate and specialty fabrics.)

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