Indoors
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Laundry List
With these 11 tips that put everything in its place, laundry is a chore no more.

By Jody Garlock
Photos Helen Norman
Produced by Janna Lufkin

Spot treat
Laundry rooms tend to be dirty little secrets—raw spaces where clothes pile on the floor and washers and dryers stand alone. The irony wasn’t lost on Helen Norman, who had cobbled together a bare-bones laundry area in her 1850s Maryland home. Tired of the inefficiency, she and her friend, designer Janna Lufkin, redesigned the space with loads of function. Janna designated areas for laundering, folding, ironing, air-drying, and storage. “Everything seemed chaotic before,” Helen says. “Now, it’s a space I want to come into and treat with respect.”

1. Under cover
Helen had a cabinet built to house her front-loading washer and dryer. The top is made of linoleum flooring to provide a durable work surface. Marmorette flooring, $2–3/square foot; armstrong.com

2. Light loads
“A fresh coat of paint works wonders,” says Janna, who brightened the room with white beaded board that covers uneven walls.

3. Out to dry
An antique quilt rack augments wall-mounted drying racks. Helen air dries a lot of clothes and doesn’t iron much; space for those tasks was assigned accordingly.
4. HEAVY WASH
A shelf provides storage in the space above the washer and dryer. Detergents stored in clear, labeled jars allow Helen to gauge levels and prevent shelves from becoming a riot of packaging. Duet steam washer and dryer: $1599 and $1499; whirlpool.com

5. CLEAN SLATE
Store stain removers on a lazy Susan to keep them in reach and catch drips.
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6. TOP STORY
A freestanding table offers storage. Helen’s two boys can grab clothes stacked on the top. The iron rests on a heat-resistant old enamel tray. Varde base cabinet, $349; ikea.com

7. OUT OF SIGHT
Drawers conceal mending supplies, extra dryer sheets, stain removers, and the inevitable pile of unmatched socks.

8. HOLDING POINT
Baskets are used to tote clean rags and towels to their proper rooms. Closed boxes store seldom-used table linens that need ironing before use.

9. HANG TIME
A vintage drying rack has arms that fold in when not in use. If you can’t find an antique version, modern ones are available. Eight-arm wall dryer (similar to shown), $22; lehmans.com

CLEAN CUTS
Save time—and even money—with a few tweaks to your laundry routine.

■ Get thrifty A tablespoon of fabric softener rubbed into a washcloth takes the place of expensive dryer sheets. (Use an odd-color washcloth to differentiate it from everyday ones.)

■ Sort quickly Helen bought one white and one black laundry basket to make it crystal-clear to her kids where to toss their dirty lights and darks.

■ Lessen wrinkles Reduce ironing time by removing items from the dryer when they’re damp. Wrinkles iron out of damp items easier than over-dried ones. Many clothes won’t need ironing if you put them on hangers right away.
10. STRETCH SPACE
Tip-out drying racks are an alternative to a standing drying rack. These are custom, but there are many ready-made options. Beadboard drying rack (similar to shown), $89; ballarddesigns.com

11. HIGH AND DRY
A vintage coat rack lets Helen hang items to dry or to get wrinkles out before wearing. ☄

“For buying information see page 204.”

“When your home is organized you feel more energized.”
HELEN NORMAN