

## Living Green in Your Laundry Room

### **Detergent:**

Add ½ cup washing soda and ½ cup of Borax to water as the machine is filling, then clothes. This is sufficient for a large load and will clean and deodorize your laundry as well as using soap. The first time you try this the water will look like you have added soap or detergent. That is how much soap is left in our clothes after washing and rinsing. If the water is hard, add ¼ -cup soda or ¼ cup vinegar during the first rinse. For heavily soiled items, try presoaking in warm water with ½ -cup washing soda for 30 minutes. Rub the soiled areas with liquid soap, or a solution of 2 Tbsp. washing soda in 1-cup warm water

**Softening fabrics (including wool):** Add ¼ cup white vinegar to rinse water.

**Wool De-shrinking:** Dissolve 2 cups salt in hot water and allow to cool to lukewarm. Soak the garment for 3 hours.

**Silk:** Soak in approximately 1-cup pure soap and 2 to 3 Tbsp baking soda. Squeeze garment gently and rinse thoroughly.

**Bleach:** Try adding ½ -cup washing soda to each load of wash to whiten whites and brighten colors. You can also add lemon juice to the rinse cycle and hang your clothes outside in the sun, which will bleach clothes naturally and save energy.

### **Dry Cleaning**

Most dry cleaning solvents are toxic — including chlorine and formaldehyde, which are highly toxic and carcinogenic. These chemicals can often remain in your clothes even after you bring them home. Try to buy clothes that you can wash rather than dry clean. Many of the clothes that are ‘dry clean only’ are actually washable by hand with soap and cold water, or can just be pressed or ironed.

If the item cannot be washed by hand, call around for a cleaning service that practices wet cleaning. Wet cleaning uses heat, steam, vacuum, water and natural soaps to clean your clothes. Wet cleaning also emphasizes skilled laborers who inspect and clean each item of clothing individually.

### **Quick Tips**

- Do full loads of laundry, use as little water as possible.
- Up to 90 per cent of the energy used for washing clothes goes to heating the water. A cold wash and cold rinse will work just as well as a hot water wash and a warm rinse on all clothes.
- Wash clothes that need it. Outer layers of clothing like shirts, sweaters and pants can be worn more than once without laundering.
- Hang clothing outside to dry or inside in a dry, warm room and save energy.
- If you use a machine to dry your clothes, clean your dryer’s lint trap after every load to keep the air circulating efficiently. Lint build-up is a fire hazard.

### **Stains**

The first rule of thumb with stains is the sooner you treat them, the more likely you are to

completely remove them. The second rule of thumb is to spot test any “remedy” on your fabric first. If the spot you are testing starts to discolor, you can stop it from leaving a stain by “neutralizing” the cleaning agent. For example, the effects of an acid like lemon juice or vinegar, will be neutralized or reversed by adding an alkaline like baking soda and vice versa. Remember to wash after the spot test.

**Soiled Diapers:** Pre-soak diapers in 3 Tbsp baking soda dissolved in warm water.

**Fruit and Wine:** Immediately pour salt or cold soda water on the stain and soak in milk before washing. In general, it is a good idea to keep some soda water in the fridge as a stain remover.

**Grease:** Strain boiling water through white cottons and follow with dry baking soda or rub with washing soda in water. For other materials, blot with a towel, dampen stain with water, and rub with soap and baking soda. Follow by washing in water as hot as possible using extra soap. Note: make sure to check washing instructions before using boiling water or washing in hot water.

**Ink:** Soak in milk or remove with hydrogen peroxide.

**Blood:** Immediately pour salt or cold soda water on the stain and soak in cold water before washing. For a more stubborn stain, mix cornstarch with either talcum powder or cornmeal in water, and apply mixture. Allow to dry and brush away.

**Coffee and Chocolate:** Mix egg yolk with lukewarm water and rub on stain.

**Chewing Gum:** Rub with ice. Gum will flake off.

**Lipstick:** Rub with cold cream or shortening and wash with washing soda.

**Rust:** Saturate with sour milk (add 2 tsp of vinegar to a cup of milk to make it sour) or lemon juice and rub with salt. Place in direct sunlight until dry, then wash.

**Mildew:** Pour strong soap and salt on the spots, or spray with vinegar and place in sunlight. Keep the spots moist and repeat as often as necessary.

**Scorches:** Gently boil scorched article in 1-cup soap and two quarts milk.

**Watermarks on Wood Furniture:** Using a dry cloth, rub the mark with vegetable oil, or a mixture of butter and enough cigarette ashes to make the butter brown.