

the laundry list

To keep clothes in top condition, you need some basics in your arsenal (our suggested products are easily found in drugstores). Think of them as a first-aid kit for your clothing.

- two types of detergent—one for standard laundry (make sure it works in cold water) and one for delicates (Ivory Snow)
- all-purpose stain-remover to pretreat stains on washable fabrics (Zout, Shout or Spray 'n Wash)
- stain wipes to keep in your handbag for emergencies (Oxiclean or Shout)
- chlorine bleach for brightening white cottons (Clorox)
- nonchlorine bleach for getting out protein-based stains and washing colored clothes (Biz)
- drying rack for delicates
- standard- and travel-size tape rollers (below) to remove lint on flat fabrics
- lint brush with a velvety head for cashmere, wool and other plush materials
- clothing brush for coats and sturdy wool garments
- crochet hook to fix snags
- Static Guard to prevent cling



solution Use the delicate cycle on the washing machine. The trick is to protect the garments from twisting or snagging and minimize contact with other articles, which can cause abrasion. For bras, Brooke Newton says the Woolite Bra Wash bag (\$5; 800-786-7315 or containerstore.com) makes machine-washing “as good as hand-washing.” Because the bag

is made from a superfine mesh, detergent gets through, but not hooks. Another unique feature: Zippered compartments at each end keep underwires and straps from getting mangled. You can fit two bras in each bag. For other delicates try the Woolite Fine Washable bag (left, \$5; 800-786-7315 or containerstore.com), which has room for one sweater or about a week’s worth of lingerie. Wash garments in the gentle

cycle with cold water and a mild detergent and hang them to dry.

problem Just before heading to work, you notice your knit top is wrinkled.

solution Rather than getting undressed and steaming or ironing the top, try this easy fix for T-shirts and other lightweight knits: Fill a spray bottle with water, spritz the air, and walk into the mist. “The dampness helps the wrinkles fall out,” says Joe Lupo, co-founder of Visual Therapy. ■

down—that’s what makes the fabric feel great but it also causes it to wear more quickly. To keep jeans in good shape, turn them inside out before you wash them and close zippers and other fasteners so they don’t get caught on other pieces of clothing. Susan Ede, a research fellow at Procter & Gamble Laundry, recommends washing denim garments



together in small loads, on a short cycle of six to eight minutes. To maintain color and fabric, Boorstein advocates dry cleaning. It’s gentler and “the solution used doesn’t shrink clothes or cause dyes to bleed,” he says. “I’ve had some jeans for 10 years, and they still look good.”

problem Your hand-washables spend more time in the waiting-to-be-washed pile than in active rotation. Are there any shortcuts for laundering lingerie, hosiery and sweaters?