

Professional Guide to Laundering Your Cloth Diapers



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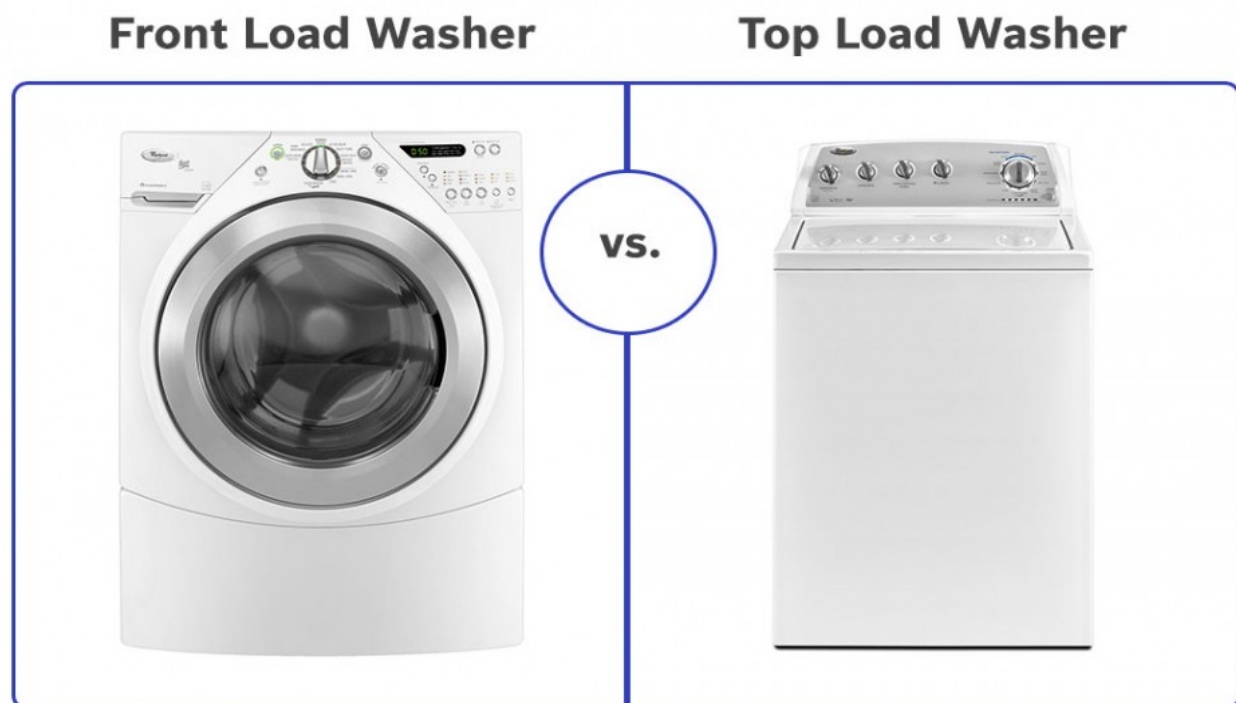
Learning Your Machine

20 years ago there was one type of washing machine. Today there are hundreds of brands & styles and they all have unique settings. Here are the basics for any HE machine.

Whether it be a front-load or top-loader, HE machines work by filling based on weight. They use less water, which is not great for washing dirty diapers. They need to be tricked into using more water. These are some tips and tricks you can use before/during your SECOND wash:

1. Use a "Rinse, No Spin" cycle: This will make your diapers heavier
2. Add water to the drum or into the detergent dispenser during the fill.
3. Add a thick towel, and saturate it so that its wet and heavy

If you have a machine that is not HE, you're in luck! You just set your machine on the water setting that puts water about 1 inch above your diapers and you're good to go! Too much water and you might not have enough friction. This is the only concern with non-HE machines.



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The Most Vital Component; Your Water Quality

How hard is your water? What is the PH level? Did you know that the cleanliness of your laundry is also related to these variables? Soft water and adjustable PH is how all the professionals get their linens so clean. We would know, we own a commercial diaper service!

1. Soften your water

Whether you have a whole home water softener or need to add a water softening agent to each cycle, this is extremely important for all laundry, but even more so for diapers. Diapers with mineral build-up cause all sorts of issues. The minerals can also react with your soap and cause rashes & ammonia stink.

2. Changing the PH

A higher PH is good during your wash routine. That's why adding [Baking Soda](#) as a deodorizer is a good idea, because it will also raise the PH of your water and help your soap work better. Soaps work better in an alkaline environment (anything over a PH of 8). However, you do not want to put an alkaline diaper next to your baby's skin. That will cause a burn. Babies' skin is naturally around a 6 PH, so your diapers should be as close to that as possible. We don't recommend worrying about this step unless your diapers start to show signs of a high PH (smell like ammonia or cause your baby's skin to turn bright red). Then, if that happens, it is important to know how to solve it.

White vinegar is a natural acid. When used in your fabric softener dispenser, it will lower the PH of your water to the appropriate level for your final rinse . However, if you get the PH too low it will damage your PUL (waterproofing), so it is important to TEST and not GUESS!

How do you test these things? You need [water testing strips](#), your hard water booster if applicable and some white vinegar. The easiest way to do it, since some machines you can't open once they start, is to test 1 gallon of water. Add ¼ teaspoon of Hard Water Booster and keep testing until your results are 0. Then add ½ oz of vinegar add a time until your results are a PH of around 6...a little higher is OK. Now you need to do a little math. Let's say your machine uses 15 gallons of water during the wash cycle (you should be able to find this information out by calling the manufacturer with your serial number, or looking it up in the manual). You used ¼ teaspoon to soften your 1 gallon of water. So you need 3 ¾ teaspoons or 1 ¼ Tablespoons in your wash to soften 15 gallons of water. Do the same for your vinegar and you never have to do it again! You will know exactly how much to use during every HOT wash cycle when you wash your diapers.

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Simplifying Your Laundry Routine

Laundry is not difficult; it is simple. You are about to change your entire world and learn a million new things when having a baby. Why not simplify your laundry? Take away all the fluff and your laundry will Thank You.

You REALLY only need 2 things for your laundry. But depending on preferences and your water, you may need/want a few more.

1. A cloth-friendly soap like [Charlie's Soap](#)
2. Wool Dryer Balls with Diaper Pins
3. If you have hard water: Water Softening Agent, like [Charlie's Hard Water Booster](#). We don't recommend Calgon, because it irritates baby's skin!
4. If your diapers become too alkaline (see above) or your clothes are not as soft as you would like, you may need some [White Distilled Vinegar](#).
5. If you want a pail deodorizer, use Baking Soda and that will also help your soap be more effective during your initial Warm Wash. You can also sprinkle some into your wash cycles to help your boost your soap's effectiveness. About ½ C.
6. If you really want your regular clothes to have a smell to them without damaging your diapers, we recommend Melaleuca's MelaBoost. They are scented with Essential Oils, not fabric softener, so they will not harm your diapers. However, there is NO need to use them on your diapers...this is just for regular laundry.

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Your Soap

Simplify, Simplify, Simplify. If a soap is good enough to wash dirty diapers, it is good enough for your lightly soiled clothes. Choose your cloth diaper soap and switch to it now! Use the same soap for all your laundry. It will keep your diapers from getting an accidental chemical mixture that could result in a burn on baby's skin. We have years of experience with Charlie's Soap and we love it. We also love Melaleuca's MelaPower for those that want their soap to have a nice scent. If you don't already have a Melaleuca account, it's a monthly shopping club and they manufacturer amazing all-natural, chemical-free products. Being more health and environmentally conscious like you are, you would love their products! If you want to check out a membership, you can request [one here](#). ←←←

Softening your water

As we discussed, softening your water is very important. Minerals are a big problem, especially when it comes to cloth diapers. Add [Charlie's Hard Water Booster](#) to every load to kill all the bad minerals in your water. If you do this with ALL your laundry, you will notice a huge difference in softness and your colors will not get dingy/fade.

Fabric Softener/Dryer Sheets and Bars

What is fabric softener? It is a coating that artificially softens your clothes. Because it is a coating, it will create a film on everything it touches: your washer, your dryer, your clothes and your diapers! For some of you this will be a BIG change. NO MORE FABRIC SOFTENER...on ANYTHING, not just your diaper laundry. This is very important. If you continue to use liquid softener, dryer sheets or a dryer bar on your other laundry, your diapers will eventually repel. Guaranteed. Softening your water will help on its own, but we have some other options too. This is where we recommend the [MelaBoost Scent Beads](#) instead!

You can use white distilled vinegar in place of your liquid fabric softener. Your clothes will not smell like vinegar and they will be super soft! Add it to your machine exactly like you would your liquid fabric softener. Then use 3-5 Wool Dryer Balls in your dryer instead of sheets or bars. I personally just use wool dryer balls with diaper pins. If you place 2-3 diaper pins in your wool dryer balls, the metal grounds your dryer and reduces static. An effortless way to reduce static is to avoid over-drying your laundry.

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Cleaning your cloth diapers

What Do You Do with the Poop?

1. Shake off all the excess you can into the toilet and put whatever is still stuck into your pail. Because it is water-soluble, it will wash away!
2. Use [Flushable Liners](#) against baby's skin so you can flush or toss the majority of the poop.
3. Hook up a diaper sprayer on your toilet and spray off the poop before placing in your pail.

Storing Your Dirty Diapers

Use a pail liner in a flip-top/swing top diaper pail or a [large wet bag](#). You DO NOT want to use a sealed diaper pail of any kind. This will potentially cause mildewing, which does not come out, and a terrible smell. The more you let your dirty diapers “breathe” a little, the less they will smell. You can also sprinkle plain Baking Soda or a [Pail Freshener](#) to help with odors if it bothers you. Our diaper service pail is specifically designed to hold a deodorant disc in the lid so that you only smell oranges when you open your lid.

Pre-Treating Diapers

If you want to Pre-Treat your diapers for staining, you must remove the poop. Whether you spray it off or use a flushable liner. Then your pre-treater can actually do the job. We love both [Bac-Out](#) and [Melaleuca's Pre-Spot](#). Both are enzyme-based and safe for your diapers. The enzymes actually attack organic-based stains, which is exactly what poop is 😊 If you do not wish to Pre-Treat, you can also use an oxygen-based bleach to whiten your diapers. Melaleuca's [MelaBrite + Oxi](#) works great on those yellow newborn stains!

Washing

Begin with a warm wash cycle. Why warm? Bodily fluids wash out best at body temperature. So you want your water to be as close to 98 Degrees as possible. This initial wash is not meant to really clean, but more to flush out all bodily fluids from your diapers. We recommend using your soap during this initial wash. This will help flush the waste down the drain where it belongs. If you don't use your soap, the particles will redeposit onto your diapers.

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Do an extra rinse on this first wash cycle. Warm if possible. This will act as a second flush to really pre-clean your diapers and prepare them to be washed. You could also do a rinse in-between your WARM and HOT cycles. You can't rinse them too much 😊

Now it is time to clean your diapers! Do your hottest, longest cycle on your machine. You should be using the water softening agent if necessary and putting your vinegar in your fabric softener dispenser if you need it. Use your soap. Do not do an extra rinse. This probably contradicts everything you read, so why would we recommend this? If you used vinegar, you just lowered your PH to the perfect level. If you do an extra rinse, this will ruin your PH balance. Also, there should be no fear of soap build-up if you are using a great cloth diaper detergent!

If you ever want to whiten your diapers, you would add Melaleuca's MelaBrite plus Oxi during your Hot wash. However, I would leave out the vinegar and then do an extra rinse (or two) and add your vinegar to that final rinse. Your vinegar should always be LAST when it comes to your diapers, because the purpose is to lower the PH.

DO NOT USE "REGULAR" DETERGENTS ON YOUR DIAPERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I CAN'T EMPHASIZE THIS ENOUGH. DETERGENTS LIKE THESE DESTROY YOUR DIAPERS...WORSE THAN ANYTHING BLEACH COULD EVER DO. Do NOT believe everything you read on these Facebook Groups that say it's great...it's not! With 10 years of expertise in this industry, the only destroyed diapers we have ever seen came from using the wrong detergent. I don't want you to ruin your whole stash and quit because your diapers fall apart.

Drying

When your diapers are clean and still wet, this is the best time to hang them in the sun. This will naturally bleach them. If you live somewhere cold, you can also hang them in a sunny door/window to get the same effect.

However, you do not HAVE to hang dry your diapering items. You can absolutely put everything in your dryer! Just know that over time this is a little harder on your diapers, but it isn't going to ruin them. You will get a higher resale value if you air/line dry them because they will stay "prettier." Make sure you use your Wool Dryer Balls with diaper pins to speed up dry time and reduce static!

When All Else Fails, Strip Them

If you are having issues with your diapers, don't worry! You can either switch your laundry process right away and see if that naturally solves the problem, or you can strip your diapers.

You can use our [professional diaper stripping service](#). Even if you live across the country! Just get your diapers to us and we do the rest. For a flat fee, we will save your entire stash...guaranteed!

Don't deal with the hassle of trying to "strip" your diapers at home. From our years of working with cloth diapering parents, we can tell you that it's a nightmare and usually doesn't work.

When stripping won't work: If wetness comes through the PUL (waterproof part), one of two things has happened. Either the quality just wasn't there from the beginning (we call these "China Cheapies") or when you pull at your PUL, it cracks. Unfortunately, Stripping will not fix poor quality or damaged PUL

We hope that you have learned a lot about what to do and what NOT to do with your cloth diapers. [Reach out to us](#) through Facebook if you have specific questions. Thank you!