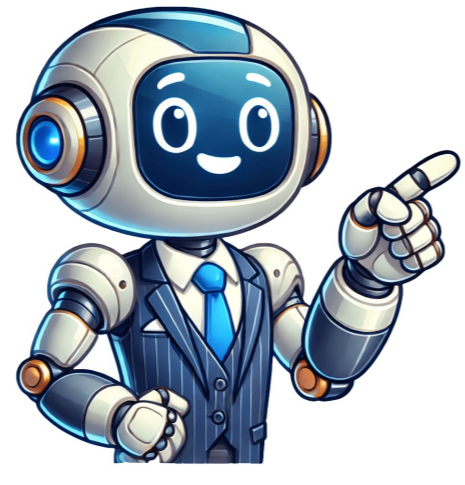


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See those little symbols printed on the tags on the back of your clothes? The tags you probably ignore or snip off because they're itchy or just seem like a bunch of confusing hieroglyphics? Turns out, those tiny icons are actually trying to save your clothes from shrinkage, fading, or getting totally ruined in the wash. They're basically care instructions in code—but if you don't speak the language, it's easy to overlook their importance. In this guide, we break down those seemingly mysterious tags in plain, easy-to-understand terms, so you can wash, dry, and care for your fabrics with confidence, starting today!

01 Washing Symbols: How to Clean Your Clothes Properly

Washing symbols tell you whether a garment can go into the washing machine, needs hand washing, or shouldn't be washed at all (dry clean only). Understanding these symbols is the first step to preventing damage to your clothes. A plain bucket/tub Machine wash is allowed. A hand inside the tub Hand wash only. A crossed-out bucket Do not wash (dry clean only). Numbers inside the tub Maximum water temperature (e.g., 30C/85F, 40C/105F, 60C/140F). One bar under the tub Use a gentle cycle. Two bars under the tub Use a delicate cycle. Word of Advice: If you're unsure about a garment, use cold water and a mild detergent to be safe.

02 Water Temperature Symbols: What's the Right Temperature?

Water temperature is a big deal when it comes to laundry. Use the wrong setting, and you could shrink, stretch, or ruin your favorite fabrics. One dot Cold water (up to 30C/85F). Suitable for delicate fabrics like silk, wool, and lace. Two dots Warm water (up to 40C/105F). Ideal for synthetic fabrics and blends. Three dots Hot water (up to 60C/140F). Best for white cotton, linen, and heavily soiled clothing. Word of Caution: Higher temperatures are good for killing bacteria, but they can cause shrinkage and color fading.

03 Bleach Symbols: Can You Use Bleach on This Fabric?

Bleach can be a gamechanger for stain removal, but if you use it on the wrong fabric, you could ruin your clothing. If you see these symbols, they pertain to the proper way of using bleach. Plain triangle You can use any type of bleach. Triangle with two diagonal lines Use only non-chlorine (oxygen) bleach. Crossed-out triangle Do not use bleach. Word of Advice: If bleach is restricted, opt for gentle stain removers or natural alternatives like baking soda.

04 Drying Symbols: How Should You Dry Your Clothes?

Drying your clothes the wrong way can lead to shrinkage, fabric warping, or even permanent wrinkles. The drying symbol is a square, sometimes with a circle inside. Plain circle inside a square Tumble dry is allowed. One dot inside the circle Low heat setting. Two dots inside the circle Medium heat setting. Three dots inside the circle High heat setting. Crossed-out tumble dryer Do not tumble dry. Air drying is required. Square with three vertical lines Drip dry (hang while wet). Square with a curved line on the top Line dry. Word of Advice: Always follow drying instructions to prevent damage to delicate fabrics.

05 Ironing Symbols: What Temperature is Safe for Your Clothes?

Ever burn a shirt with an iron? That's why ironing symbols exist to prevent scorching and damage to your clothes. One dot inside the iron Low heat (for silk, nylon, and delicate fabrics). Two dots inside the iron Medium heat (for wool, polyester, and synthetic blends). Three dots inside the iron High heat (for cotton and linen). Crossed-out iron Do not iron. Iron with steam crossed-out Do not steam (use a dry iron). Word of Advice: If you're unsure, start with a low heat setting and gradually increase if needed.

06 Dry Cleaning Symbols: Which Clothes Need Professional Care?

Some clothes should never go into the washing machine. Instead, they need professional dry cleaning. The dry cleaning symbol is a simple circle. Plain circle Dry clean only. Circle with a cross Do not dry clean. Letters inside the circle (P or F) Indicates the type of solvent required by dry cleaners. Word of Advice: If you see the dry clean only symbol, don't risk washing it at home! Take it to a professional service.

07 Fabric Softener and Special Instructions

Fabric softener can make clothes feel smoother and reduce static, but it's not safe for every fabric. Some garments specifically warn against it. A crossed-out twisted towel symbol Do not wring. A bucket with a wave inside Hand wash only. A crossed-out softener bottle Avoid using fabric softener.

08 Laundry Symbols for Bedding, Pillows, and Comforters

Washing bedding isn't as simple as tossing it into the machine. These bulky items need extra care to stay clean and fluffy. Large drum symbol Safe for large-capacity washing machines. Crossed-out tumble dryer Must air dry. Circle with a P inside Dry cleaning is recommended. Word of Advice: Washing bedding incorrectly can lead to clumping, fabric wear, or loss of fluffiness. Always follow label instructions.

09 Common Mistakes to Avoid When Following Laundry Symbols

Even when you know what the symbols mean, it's easy to make mistakes that damage your clothes. Here are a few common laundry mishaps to avoid: Using hot water on delicate fabrics. It can cause shrinkage and fabric breakdown. Throwing bleach in without checking labels. Some fabrics can't handle bleach at all. Overloading the washing machine. Clothes need space to get properly cleaned. Ignoring drying instructions. Some fabrics shouldn't be tumble dried. Mixing colors and whites. Color bleeding is a real problem. Foaming it all up. Laundry symbols might seem complicated at first, but once you get the hang of them, they make washing clothes much easier. Whether you're tossing a load into the washing machine, deciding if bleach is safe to use, or wondering if that silk blouse needs dry cleaning, these tiny icons provide all the answers. Still Confused by Laundry Symbols? Let In The Bag Cleaners Care for Your Clothes Instead! If laundry symbols are too overwhelming to remember, let In The Bag Cleaners handle the washing and dry cleaning of your clothing items and other household textiles. We'll make sure every piece you send to us is washed, dried, pressed, ironed, or dry cleaned according to its care label instructions. We have 12 convenient locations in the Greater Wichita, Kansas community. But if you can't spare some time to drop by one of our locations, feel free to call our customer service team instead at 316-267-3407. Proper laundry helps appropriately clean and efficiently dry clothing. It also increases its longevity, helping garments retain their size and shape. Not only do you need to understand and select the best settings on your washer and dryer, but you should also follow the care symbols found on everything from clothing to bedding and bath towels. Although some tags and packaging offer written care instructions, laundry symbols are standardized to provide universal imagery for how to care for items. The graphics represent five types of laundry care, and the symbols will always be presented in the same order: washing, bleaching, drying, ironing, and dry cleaning. Each of the five types has a base symbol and variations to indicate specific care details. Here's a quick guide to deciphering laundry care symbols. The basis of the washing symbols looks like a wash basin or tub of water. Washing symbols offer directions for machine washing as well as hand washing. Basin with a hand above: Hand wash only; do not clean in the washing machine. Basin with dots inside: The maximum water temperature you should use to wash items. The most common variations are described here, though you may find even more dots for higher temperatures. Basin with one dot: Cold water. Basin with two dots: Warm water. Basin with three dots: Hot water. Basins with numbers inside: Also indicate a maximum temperature for washing. However, instead of dots, it's represented in a Celsius temperature. Basin with 30: Cold water. Basin with 40: Warm water. Basin with 50: Hot water. A basin with lines under it: Indicates the cycle you should choose on your washing machine. Basin with one line underneath: Permanent press cycle. Basin with two lines underneath: Delicate/gentle cycle. Basin with an X: Do not wash. You may also find a laundry symbol that looks like a twist of rope, a piece of candy, or even a bowtie. This is the ring symbol, referring to ringing out an item. If you see the ring symbol with an X over it, that item should not be rung out when washing. A triangle is the basis for symbols related to bleaching guidance. An empty triangle: Use any bleach. A triangle with two diagonal lines inside: Use non-chlorine bleach only. A triangle with an X over it: Do not bleach. A square is the foundation for drying symbols. A square and circle indicate directions related to tumble drying with a machine, and the circle will vary to indicate heat settings for the dryer. A square with other elements inside: A circle gives direction for non-machine drying. Square with a filled-in circle inside: Tumble dry with no heat. Square with an empty circle inside: Normal setting or tumble dry with any heat. Square with a circle and one line underneath: Permanent press setting. Square with a circle and two lines underneath: Delicate/gentle setting. Square with a circle and one dot inside: Low heat. Square with a circle and two dots inside: Medium heat. Square with a circle and three dots inside: High heat. Square and circle with an X over it: Do not tumble dry. Square with a curved line connecting the top two corners: Line dry or hang dry. Square with two small diagonal lines in the top left corner: Line dry in the shade. Square with three short vertical lines inside: Drip dry. Square with a dash inside: Dry flat. Look for an iron symbol for ironing guidance, including the use of steam. Variations in the symbols largely refer to maximum temperature settings. Iron with one dot inside: Iron with low heat, 110 Celsius. Iron with two dots inside: Iron with medium heat, 150 Celsius. Iron with three dots inside: Iron with high heat, 200 Celsius. Iron with an X over it: Do not iron. Iron with dots underneath: OK to steam. Iron with dots underneath and an X over it: Do not use steam. A circle symbol represents dry cleaning guidance. Some variations, like letters inside the circle or dashes outside the circle, are intended for professional dry cleaners only. Here are the two you need to know: Empty circle: Dry-clean only. Circle with an X over it: Do not dry-clean. You've done laundry for years so you just ignore the labels. Have you ever had a T-shirt shrink so small it fits the dog? Have you ever had a silky blouse come out looking dull and covered with balls of fuzz? It might be time to take a few seconds and look at the care symbols. Laundry symbols on clothes labels are there to help you. Every circle, triangle, and square has a meaning. You can become a laundry expert once you master the five basic symbols. Most clothing manufacturers recommend the most conservative cleaning method to ensure the best results for the consumer. For instance, some fabrics that are labeled as dry clean can be hand washed. This is why it's important to note the fiber content of the fabric so you can make an informed laundry decision. Manufacturers also want to limit their legal liability. Even if an item might be fine when cleaned in a more risky manner, if that riskier washing does go poorly, the customer could demand a refund and threaten to sue for false product claims. Familiarize yourself with the following laundry symbols to best care for your clothes. The laundry symbols on clothing and linen labels provide important information on how to care for your clothing and fabrics. The labels were developed as part of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Symbols, rather than words, were chosen to better convey information around the world. While there are variations in Europe and Asia, the basic shapes transcend continent borders. Care labels are mandated by the government in the United States and many countries to identify the fiber content of the fabric and provide care instructions. The international community uses five basic symbols for washing, drying, bleaching, ironing, and dry cleaning. Once you learn the basic shapes, interpreting the rest is pretty simple. An "x" through any symbol means "Don't do this!" Credit: The Spruce / Ellen Lindner The washtub shape indicates washing instructions. If there is an "x" over the tub symbol, do not wash the item. If the washtub has a hand reaching into the water, the garment should be hand washed. Although washing machines have added a delicate or gentle cycle for hand washables (water temperature must be 104 degrees Fahrenheit or lower). Tub with a hand: Handwash only. Silk or cashmere: Handwash instead of delicates cycle; less risk of snagging or shrinking. Twisted cloth (looks like a piece of wrapped hard candy): Wringing. OK. An "x" over the twisted cloth symbol: No wringing (instead, squeeze gently or wrap in a thick towel to absorb water). A number inside the washtub: Celsius water temperature to use. Dots inside the washtub (Water temperature range): One dot for cold, two dots for warm, and three dots for hot water. Lines under the washtub (washing machine spin cycle): One for permanent press, two for gentle. No lines under the washtub: Any washing machine cycle. OK. Credit: The Spruce / Ellen Lindner Symbols on how to bleach the clothing may not appear on every garment. But when you see the triangular shape, it will offer help on how to select a type of bleach. Often a label may have no triangular symbol, but instead, states "No Chlorine Bleach." You can still use an oxygen-based bleach (Clorox 2, OxiClean, OXO Brite, or Nellie's Natural Oxygen Brightener), only exceptions are wool, silk, and leather (do not use any bleach of any kind on those fabrics). Credit: The Spruce / Ellen Lindner Excessive drying is one of the most damaging things we do to our laundry. International drying symbols help you select a dryer cycle and a temperature. The square drying symbol also helps you know how to dry clothes naturally or with a tumble dryer. Drip dry only: Three vertical lines in the square indicate the clothes should be hung to drip dry. Line dry only: A curved line in the square. Line dry in shade: Two slanted lines in the corner of the square mean line dry in the shade away from harsh sunlight. Dry flat: A horizontal line in the center of the square means to dry the garment on a flat surface to prevent stretching. A circle in the square: You can tumble dry. Dots inside the circle suggests the temperature of heat you can use: one dot for low, two dots for medium, three dots for high heat. Lines under the square: The dryer cycle you can use. No lines: You can use any tumble dry cycle; one line: permanent press; and two lines: gentle or delicates. An "x" over the tumble dry symbol: Do not tumble dry. Credit: The Spruce / Ellen Lindner Look for the iron-shaped symbol to guide you as you select a temperature setting and whether to use a dry iron or steam. An "x" through the steam coming from the bottom of the iron means use no steam. The dots in the iron indicate temperature. Zero dots: You can use any temperature. One dot: Low-temperature setting (silk or wool). Two dots: Medium-temperature setting (synthetics). Three dots: High-temperature setting (linen or cotton). Credit: The Spruce / Ellen Lindner If the care label has a small circle the manufacturer is stating you must dry clean it. Unless you are an expert at clothing care, always trust the dry clean only symbol. If you are going to risk hand-washing a dry clean-only garment, here are some basic rules of thumb to reduce your risk as much as possible. Use cold to lukewarm water (hot water can cause shrinking) to hand-wash the garment. Use a mild detergent like Woolite or dish soap. Test a few drops of water in an inconspicuous spot, like excess fabric in a hem, to see how the fabric responds to water. Let it dry to see if a water ring appears. If it discolors or shrivels up, abort mission. Try to rub and handle the garment as gently as possible (scrubbing and wringing can deform fabric, cause pilling, and pop off ornamentation like beads). The following dry-cleaning symbols specifically address the cleaning chemicals and the type of cleaning cycle that the dryer should use. A letter inside the circle: Chemical the dry cleaner can use. Number of bars with the circle: Amount of care the dry cleaner must take with item (more bars, more care). An "x" over the circle: Do not dry clean item. If you decide to use a home dry cleaning kit, don't worry about the choice of chemicals. The kits use universal stain remover that works for all fabrics. Lets face it: The laundry tag on your clothes or linens can often look more like a collection of cryptic hieroglyphics than a clear set of instructions. That's why we put together this handy laundry symbol cheat sheet to help you quickly decode the most common care symbols with ease. For extra convenience, print it out and hang it in your laundry room, or save it to your phone for on-the-go reference. You might even find yourself pulling it up while shopping, just to double-check whether that trendy boyfriend blazer is secretly dry-clean only. The first thing you need to know is what each of the general symbols means. The icon that looks like a bucket of water describes how to wash the piece. The square with a circle in the center refers to drying. The iron instructs you on how to iron. The remaining laundry tag symbols refer to bleaching (triangle), dry-cleaning (circle), and non-machine drying (square) requirements. Each of the above-mentioned laundry symbols has specifications within them: One dot on the icon means to perform that function on a cold or low cycle, two dots mean warm or medium, and three dots mean hot or high. Credit: RealSimple.com Save our laundry symbol cheat sheet printable. All the symbols that depict a bucket with waves indicate various washing methods you can use on that fabric. Here's the deets on what each one means: The dots indicate the temperature you should choose when you machine wash the item. It's one dot for cold, two dots for medium/warm, and three dots for hot. As you might expect, a hand symbol means you need to hand wash the garment. You can't wash this item. (There's likely a dry-cleaning symbol in the mix then.) These washing symbols indicate specialized wash settings. One line means permanent press setting, while two lines means gentle or delicate settings. The square symbols give you the details on how to dry your laundry. Again, there are an array of little codes that'll give you insight into how to step away from the clothes dryer if you see these symbols! If it's a flat, horizontal line, dry the item flat. If it's a curved line, you can line dry. The main circle indicates that you can use your clothes dryer to dry your clothes. Dots give you a sense of the temperature to use: one dot for cool, two dots for medium temperature, three dots for high temperature. If the circle is solid with an empty square around it, it means no heat on the dryer. You'll sometimes see lines below the clothes drying symbol. A single line indicates using the permanent press cycle, while double lines indicate the delicate or gentle cycle. That cute little iron-shaped symbol gives you a sense of how (and whether) you can iron your clothing. The iron symbol with dots means that it can definitely be ironed, but you need to stick with their temperature recommendations. Again, one dot is low, two dots mean medium, and three dots is high. As you can imagine, the X means no-ut for the ironing symbols, its placement matters. If the X is over the iron proper, it means the item can't be ironed. If it's below the iron, it means not to use steam. You may encounter a few additional laundry symbols you'll need to decipher, to help you learn about dry cleaning, bleaching, and other laundry needs. The triangle gives you information about whether you can use bleach on it. A triangle means you can bleach it, a triangle with an X through it means you cannot bleach it, and a triangle with several angled stripes within it tells you to use non-chlorine bleach. The circle without a square around it is all about dry cleaning. A circle means it can be dry cleaned, the circle with an X through it means no dry cleaning allowed. You might see a bowtie-shaped symbol with a big X through it. That indicates that you shouldn't wring out the clothes, or you might risk damaging them. If decoding symbols wasn't enough, we're also sharing a couple of game-changing laundry insights that'll help your clothes, towels, and other laundry last longer. Sort by type, not by color. Most of us automatically separate lights from darks. But the experts say that sorting by fabric is a tactic you can take to preserve your pieces. Instead of sorting by color, combine hardy items (like towels, denim, and twill) and keep T-shirts, nightgowns, and other delicates aside for a separate load. Likewise for other large or bulky items like throw blankets and sheets. (A little laundry room organization can help keep everything neatly separated.) Put your items in the dryer one by one. Untangle the items as you pull them out of the wash and add each to the dryer separately. This will help them dry completely within one cycle. Don't overstuff your washer (or dryer). Keep your laundry load around half or three-fourths of the way full for optimum efficiency. Laundry symbols are often overlooked, yet they hold the key to extending the life of your clothes. Misinterpreting these symbols can lead to shrunken sweaters, faded jeans, and delicate fabrics ruined beyond repair. Understanding these icons ensures that every wash leaves your garments looking fresh and lasting longer. In this guide, we'll break down the most common laundry symbols and what they mean for your washing, drying, ironing, and more. Whether you're a laundry novice or looking to refine your routine, our comprehensive breakdown will help you master the art of garment care. At BY Design And Viz, we believe that every detail matters, from the fabrics you wear to the spaces you inhabit. As you perfect your laundry routine, don't forget to perfect your living spaces with our interior and exterior architectural design services. The washing symbol is usually represented by a bucket filled with water. But it's not just about whether you can wash the item or not; the subtle additions to the icon provide crucial details. A plain bucket icon: Machine wash safe. A bucket with a line underneath: Use a gentle cycle. A hand in the bucket: Hand wash only. No exceptions! A crossed-out bucket: Do not wash. This straight to the dry cleaners. Bucket with Numbers: Indicates the maximum temperature for washing (e.g., 30C, 40C, 60C). Choosing the right washing method prevents fabric damage. Using the wrong setting on your machine could result in shrinkage, especially with brands like Lululemon activewear or Everlane cotton basics that require specific care. Washing temperatures are often overlooked, but they are essential for preventing damage. Look for dots inside the washing bucket symbol: One dot: Cold wash ideal for delicate items like silk scarves from Nordstrom or lace lingerie from Victoria's Secret. Two dots: Warm wash perfect for everyday cotton tees from Uniqlo or Levis denim. Three dots: Hot wash best for linens from Brooklinen or durable towels from Target. Washing at the correct temperature ensures colors stay vibrant and fabrics remain intact. Drying symbols are easy to miss but critical for avoiding shrinkage and damage. The symbol is often a square with a circle inside, indicating tumble drying instructions: Plain square with a circle: Safe to tumble dry. Circle with a single dot: Low heat essential for synthetic fabrics like those from Adidas sportswear. Circle with two dots: Medium heat great for heavier cotton items like Gap hoodies. Circle with three dots: High heat suitable for towels and linens from Macys. Crossed-out circle: Do not tumble dry. Air-dry your garment to avoid damage. For delicate items, using a collapsible drying rack like the Brabantia HangOn Drying Rack from Amazon ensures they dry safely without heat exposure. Bleach can be a lifesaver for white clothes but a nightmare for colored fabrics if misused. Look out for these symbols: A plain triangle: Safe to bleach. Ideal for white cotton shirts from Banana Republic. A triangle with diagonal lines: Use only non-chlorine bleach, like Clorox 2 Stain Remover. A crossed-out triangle: No bleach. Keep your bleach away from these fabrics! Blackened Triangle: No bleach allowed. Triangle with CL inside: Chlorine bleach can be used. Bleaching correctly preserves fabric integrity, ensuring long-lasting brightness and vibrancy. Ironing might be a chore, but it's essential for keeping clothes crisp. Ironing symbols usually depict an iron with varying dots: No dots: Iron at any temperature. Perfect for cotton and linen from Pottery Barn. One dot: Low heat ideal for delicate fabrics like silk from Anthropologie. Two dots: Medium heat great for polyester blends from H&M. Three dots: High heat suitable for linen shirts from J.Crew. Crossed-out iron: Do not iron. Fabrics like cashmere from Everlane may not survive the heat. Some fabrics simply don't belong in your washing machine. Dry cleaning symbols usually come in the form of a circle: A plain circle: Dry clean only. Essential for structured blazers from Zara. A circle with a cross: Do not dry clean. Common for certain waterproof outerwear like The North Face jackets. Dry cleaning preserves the quality of delicate and structured fabrics, making it a necessary step for many high-end garments. Not all garments come with care labels. In these cases: Identify the fabric: Cotton and polyester blends from brands like Old Navy can usually handle machine washing, while silk or wool from Free People may need hand washing. When in doubt, hand wash: Use a gentle detergent like Woolite Delicates from Walmart. Avoid heat exposure: Air-dry your items and avoid using high-heat settings when ironing or drying. When unsure, it's always safer to be gentle with your garments. If you want to avoid laundry disasters: Separate colors: Wash darks like black jeans from Madewell separately from whites like shirts from Everlane. Don't overload the machine: Leave space for water and detergent to circulate. Use the right detergent: Tide Pods from Amazon are convenient and effective. Clean your washing machine regularly: Use Affresh Washing Machine Cleaner to maintain your appliance. Following these rules ensures that every wash is a success. How do I wash clothes without labels? Identify the fabric type. Hand washing with a mild detergent like The Laundress Delicate Wash is the safest option. When in doubt, opt for a cold wash and air-dry to avoid damage. What are the most important laundry symbols to know? Focus on washing instructions, temperature guidelines, and drying symbols. Understanding these prevents common issues like shrinkage, color fading, and fabric damage. At BY Design And Viz, we understand that details matter, whether it's preserving your wardrobe or designing your dream space. Contact us today for expert interior and exterior architectural design services that bring your vision to life.

What are the symbols for washing clothes. Laundry meaning symbols. Laundry symbols make no sense.

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