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Get it together — Reclaim the space in your wash room

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By **Cindy Ramos** - Special to the Express-News [RSS](#) | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#) | [SAVE Recommend](#)

Doing the laundry is one of those chores you can't put off forever. Everyone needs a pair of clean socks eventually.

But if the detergent is hard to reach behind the gardening supplies or your washer is hiding under a pile of newspapers and soda cans you meant to take to the recycling bin, it's hard to start the laundry, much less finish it.

Turning a chaotic laundry room into an organized and serene environment takes some work, but in the long run will save you time and frustration. And everyone in the family will have the clean socks they need.

The first step in organizing a laundry room is making it a laundry room — only. "It quickly becomes a catch-all room," says Aimee Laun, professional organizer and owner of Tastefully Organized.

Clear the clutter — everything that is not laundry-related — and make doing the laundry the only purpose of the space.

Then, create a designated space for commonly used items: stain remover, detergent, bleach and fabric softener. It can be a decorative basket, a simple wire shelf or an existing cabinet. If space is really tight, Laun recommends a rolling storage caddy that fits neatly between the washer and dryer. Small woven baskets or plastic bins can hold dryer lint, solo socks and coins found in pockets.

"The key is to have all the supplies you need in a very accessible spot," says Helene Segura, professional organizer and owner of LivingOrder San Antonio. "If you have everything where you need it and when you need it, it helps emotionally and psychologically, and you save a lot of time."

The next step is to have a designated place to sort, fold and hang clothes. Not everyone has the luxury of a big laundry room, so if there isn't space for folding, an ironing board that hangs from the door can do double duty, Laun says. Folding clothes as soon as they come out of the dryer also means less ironing.

If there isn't a place to hang clothes, an inexpensive shower rod might fit between walls. Wall-mounted retractable hanging gadgets are another option. To stay ahead of the game, professional organizers also recommend a sorter to hold darks, whites and colors.

An organized laundry room with supplies in place means that the pile of dirty clothes won't grow into the stress-inducing mountain. "When the pile gets higher, you just don't want to do it and the pile grows and grows," Segura says.

Homeowner Catherine Rademacher wasn't exactly at that point, but clutter had taken over her laundry room cabinets. Laun helped her move gardening supplies and other things to the garage.

"Before, we were just piling everything in there," Rademacher says. "We tossed a lot of stuff."

Hanging clothes was also tricky, as an old hanging pole didn't allow the garage door to open completely. "It drove my husband crazy," she says. A collapsible hanging unit solved that problem.

Rademacher, an executive at a mutual funds company, says her organized laundry room is visually cleaner and her laundry gets done quicker. "There's no laundry folded up on top of the dryer," she says. "I have a place to hang everything out of sight."

To make the laundry room an even more pleasant space, a soothing color of paint or a nice piece of artwork hung on the walls can make all the difference, Segura says.

In a new, organized space, a family of four should get a week's worth of laundry done in two hours, Laun says.

But will it make the chore fun?

Laun laughs: "Well, I can't promise that."



(Courtesy IKEA)

Painting the laundry room a cherry color and putting everything in its place might make washing less of a chore.

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Jessie Ong **8:54 AM**

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This is a ridiculous picture. Where is the bar to hang clothes? Why is there a chair in the room? Where is the wash soap, bleach, or fabric softener? Who has a utility room this big in the first place. Who of us is going to walk all the way from the bedroom where we take off our clothes to put them in a hamper in the laundry room? Again, this is a ridiculous picture.

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