



## Top Tips For Line-Drying Clothes The Right Way

by Carol J. Alexander | Monday, September 23rd, 2019 | Posted In: [Home and Garden](#)



*While waiting for a technician to fix our clothes dryer, I realized we've lost the fine art of hanging laundry on the line. One evening my husband washed a load of clothes and hung them up at dusk, unsupervised. The next morning, I had to re-do the job. His T-shirts were all twisted and his underwear hung in a bunch by one pin. He folded his thick socks over the line, dashing all hope of their ever drying.*

*It's not his fault he wasn't taught to hang clothes properly. My mother taught me. She was fastidious about the job. Pondering this, I realized I never taught my younger two sons, either. So, here's my tutorial—for my sons, and for Almanac readers.*

## **Top Tips For Line-Drying Clothes The Right Way**

**Start With the Right Equipment.** Use vinyl-coated cording made especially for clotheslines. Any old rope won't do. Ropes dry rot in the sun, hold water, discolor, and shed fibers into your clothes that make you itch. If you must use a rope temporarily, so be it. But for the long haul, get true clothesline.

**Give the Line A Wipe.** Before hanging laundry on a line, wipe it with a towel. This keeps it, and your clothes, clean.

**Shake Each Item Before Hanging.** Shaking throws out the wrinkles, un-bunches hems, plackets, and sleeves, and softens the garment. After shaking, finger press hems or plackets that like to roll.

**Hang Properly.** Don't just hang things willy-nilly like my husband. Clothes and towels hung properly dry faster and with fewer wrinkles.

- **T-shirts:** Hang shirts by the hem. That way, any marks left by the pins get tucked into your pants. Also, the upside-down sleeves will dry faster.
- **Knit Shirts:** Hang a knit shirt loosely without stretching out the hem and use four to five pins to support the weight.
- **Button-Down Shirts:** Hang as though it were buttoned, with front and back together. Use one pin at each side seam and one in the middle to hold

the front pieces together. Don't actually button it closed as that'll increase drying time.

- **Bottoms:** Hang jeans by the waistband. Match the side seams of both legs of dress pants at the hem so the front and back creases form the fold. Hang from the hem but pin only the inside of the legs. The airflow into the leg will speed drying. Other bottoms to hang by the waistband include shorts, boxers/underwear, and skirts.
- **Socks:** Matching socks before hanging saves time when taking them down and folding. Hang them by the toe in pairs.
- **Towels:** Shake towels hard, too. I also like to sort them as I hang them. Then, I fold them when I take them down and they're already sorted to put away.
- **Dresses:** Hang dresses on a hanger to dry. If it's windy, make sure they're secure, or hang inside.

Large wooden pins are the best for hanging clothes.

**Buy Large Wooden Pins.** Those bitty plastic things won't hold your heavy items; and in a good wind, they'll break apart.

**Take Your Pins Inside.** Pins left on the line can weather, turn dark, and leave spots on your clothes.

## More Tips

- Unless it's a sheet or tablecloth, don't fold the item over the line. Hold the edge of the item along the line and pin in place. If you fold it, it'll leave a fold mark.
- Don't overload your washing machine. This will help when it's line-drying time. Pack the machine loosely and use plenty of water. The clothes need room to agitate freely. Rinse in cold water to minimize wrinkles.

- Don't mix. Sort your clothes by weight, as well as color. Mixing heavy work pants with dress clothes causes lighter weight garments to wrinkle.
- Don't forget to check your local weather forecast! And if you've got high humidity, your clothes will need more dry time.
- Shake garments and fold as they come off the line to reduce wrinkles.
- Be sure your line is high enough so that your clothes are not brushing the ground.

Finally, after your clothes are dry and you fold them, press them up to your nose and take a big whiff. Remember that smell fondly. The memory will encourage you to use the line occasionally even after the dryer is fixed.

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