

Line Drying Your Clothes: Save energy, your clothes, and money

An extraordinarily easy way to help the environment, save energy, and get an extra added bonus is using a clothesline. Hanging clothes to dry outside saves energy that you would have used to run your dryer. The clothes smell clean and fresh, and you don't have to pay the extra electricity, propane, or natural gas for the dryer.

Did you know that your dryer may use 10% of your total electric bill, and over its lifetime, a single shirt could be responsible for almost 10 pounds of CO2 being released? On top of the cost to run your dryer, consider the cost to replacing worn out clothes. Clothes dryers shrink your clothes and result in wear and tear on your clothes, which means you need to replace items that are dried in a dryer more frequently. (www.greeniacs.com)

The best time to dry clothes outside is when there is a breeze to help to dry the clothes and cut down on wrinkles. You should also plan ahead on how many clothes you will be washing so that when you get to the clothesline, you can gauge how much room you will need. If you have sufficient room and multiple lines, only hang the clothes on every other line so that the air can circulate more freely, which will speed drying time.

Bed linens are especially easy to dry outside and give you a nice fresh bed to climb into at the end of a long day.

When removing clothes from the lines, I take my husband's work shirts off last, and lay these across the top of the basket; being permanent press these are ready to hang when I go into the house. This saves the time and energy (mine and electrical) required for ironing the shirts.

You can prolong your time outdoors if you fold the clothes while you remove them from the lines, or you can wait until you're inside and sitting down. Folding line-dried clothes while you're watching television can be a nice way to relax after doing the laundry.

There are a lot of different options for clotheslines, and some take up very little space if you have a smaller yard or a deck or patio for line drying. Some models even fold-up or retract when not in use. You can also use a drying rack to air dry your clothes inside.

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