

RV Laundry. Wrinkle-Free.

Perhaps you are fortunate enough to own or are considering buying an RV with a built-in combination washer/dryer. The combination unit is a single appliance that does both the washing cycle and drying cycle using the same drum. The ability to both wash and dry in one continuous cycle is great. The clothes go in "dry and dirty" and come out "dry and clean."

However, you will quickly realize this appliance does not work like the ones you had in your home or local laundromat. The problem: wrinkles—lots and lots of wrinkles. Can you wash and dry wrinkle-free in a combination unit? Yes, you can. If so, how do you prevent wrinkles?

Change your technique of how you do laundry—slightly. Sorry, but all that experience from years of doing laundry may not help with these combo units. This is a European machine and it does not operate like the American-made models do. It's not more difficult, just different. No one is questioning your ability to do laundry using the American-made machines but likely, no one ever showed you how to use the Splendide®. No, there are no gadgets or magic soaps that will help. You must adjust your technique.

What follows are several examples of the differences in technique between what you are most likely doing and what will work much better in the Splendide. All this is focused on doing larger loads and producing wrinkle-free results. For the complete information on how to use the Splendide, please refer to the end of this article. But for now, consider this...

Combo vs. Stacked

The most common washer/dryer brand manufactured for RVs is Splendide. They also manufacture stack units—separate washers and dryers. However, no brand of stack units will automatically solve your wrinkle problem especially when the dryer and washer drums are near the same size. Stack units may also require twice as much

electricity because there are two separate appliances. **You may not be able to wash and dry at the same time (run both appliances) if plugged into 30-amp shore power.** All RVers know that space inside a coach has about the same value as beach-front property. The stack units consume at least twice the space of a combination unit. Your lost space will not automatically result in wrinkle-free laundry.

Combination washer/dryer units are compact and operate using 115V (your home unit uses 230V). This means that your drying times will be longer but so what? You are home (in your coach) and the laundry just runs in the background while watching TV, doing dinner, or just lounging around.

Technique #1... Don't plan to do all your laundry at once, i.e., no more "laundry days."

Do a load when you have a load. As an RVer, you won't have to carry as many clothes with you since you won't run out.

This Makes Sense

You can wash more than you can dry. Sure, it will wash quite a bit but compare this combo unit to any home set where there are two appliances—one washer and one dryer, stacked or side-by-side. In the home set, the dryer drum is much larger than the washer drum. This provides more space for the dryer to toss and fluff the items and allows the hot air to better circulate through and around your clothing during the drying cycle. Your laundry dries faster and this helps prevent wrinkles. In your combo unit, while you can wash a "full load"—you cannot dry that same quantity without wrinkles. One answer: reduce the quantity washed to the point where it will dry wrinkle-free.

The Solution is Easy

Technique #2... Measure your loads—don't guess and overfill.

You must learn to correctly measure your combo washer load to ensure that it will dry wrinkle-free. Through experimentation, we found that

canvas tote bags (often given away at conferences, rallies, etc.) are the right size for measuring a correct load of laundry—ours are 13 x 18 inches when laid flat. This bag filled with dirty laundry to slightly rounded (stuffing in clothes to make it a bit over-full) is the perfect washer / dryer load that will dry wrinkle-free.

There are two other major advantages with our measuring method. First, you never have to guess when you need to wash a load—think of it as pre-measured. Second, you never have to sort dirty clothes—think of it as pre-sorted laundry.

We developed the "three-bag method" to easily accomplish this pre-sorting. We labeled each bag with "Whites, Dark Permanent Press, or Light Permanent Press." When parked with the coach slides out, the three bags can be hung using those "release-type" adhesive hooks in the bedroom. When you change, dirty clothes are put into the appropriate bag. When traveling, store the bags in the "hamper" drawer or on the bed.

More Help

Technique #3... Use lower drying temperatures.

Use the lowest (coolest) dryer setting—the one at the end of the "Delicates" cycle—for nearly everything except heavy stuff. When drying heavy jeans, towels, etc., dry to a "cool damp," hang them, and smooth by hand. Allow the heavy items to hang dry overnight. We have even hung clothes in the tow car to allow them to finish drying.

Technique #4... Fold or roll, then dry for sheets and jeans.

Set the laundry to wash only. At the end of your wash cycle, shake out the items and fold the sheets—yes, fold them like you are going to store them—and put them back into the dryer before starting a dry cycle.

Folding prevents items like sheets from tangling as they are tumbled in the dryer. The same goes for denim jeans. You've likely experienced those pant legs all twisted up. Drying is more even and wrinkles are controlled when jeans are folded and rolled in preparation for drying.

Our test for this involved washing four permanent-press king-size sheets together—two fitted and two flat sheets (we wash pillow cases with the whites or permanent press). At the end of the wash cycle, all were taken out and folded to approximately a one-foot square—about the size you would use for storing them in a cabinet—and placed back into the drum. To dry, the "Permanent Press" (middle heat) setting was used.

At the conclusion of a 90-minute dry cycle, all four sheets were removed, unfolded, and laid out on the bed to check for wrinkles. The sheets were mostly wrinkle-free—not perfect—but certainly usable without any ironing. This process works best with more, not fewer sheets.

Technique #5... Hotter wash water will cause more wrinkles. Keep it cool.

Technique #6... When the door lock releases, pull out all the polo-type shirts and tee shirts at once, quickly shake out and lay each item in a neat stack on the bed (like a stack of pancakes), then go take a break. You can begin the hanging-up or folding process but it's not necessary. The warmth and humidity in the stack will cause any wrinkles to relax. The good news with this technique is that you do not have to be in a hurry to hang them. No, you can't hang them individually and be fast enough to prevent wrinkles.

It is not always necessary to reduce the washer load. After washing a full load, hang part of the items wet or split the load to dry. Remove about half the wet load and dry the other half. Doing so will reduce the total amount of water used and decrease total wash time by half since you washed just one cycle instead of two. This is an important hint for those of you who dry camp.

It's in the Technique

Sandy Jones (author of ["*Wrinkle-Free RV Laundry*"](#)) experimented nearly two years with her Splendide combo washer/dryer and developed several techniques—like

using cooler washing and drying temperatures, measured loads of laundry, and handling the laundry differently before or after drying—to get wrinkle-free results. The built-in appliance is a great convenience, especially on extended trips and certainly for fulltime RVers, when used to its full advantage. She made it work—like it’s supposed to.

Too numerous to include here, the rest of the excellent detailed laundry techniques can be yours in *“Wrinkle-Free RV Laundry”* (see below). She recommends washing times, amounts of detergents and softeners, what not to use and why, dealing with the infamous “locked” door, hints for shirt-stacking, pictures showing how to fold jeans, how to get a crease in your jeans without ironing, and many other tips in her book entitled *“Wrinkle-Free RV Laundry.”*

“Wrinkle-Free RV Laundry – Second Edition” ISBN 156870590-3, by Sandra E. Jones, is available from aboutrving.com and clicking the book link will take you to the bookstore. This edition is new, the book is completely revised, and pictures were updated.]