

CUSTOMER CARE

What can you do to minimize further environmental impact as you take care of your Patagonia products?

All laundry products drain to a waterway, eventually. It might be an ocean, a river or a neighborhood creek. Most wastewater goes through a municipal wastewater treatment plant, though about a third goes through private septic systems. Municipal wastewater treatment systems are good at removing much of the laundry detergents and dirt from our wastewater but substances that are slow to biodegrade and high concentrations of certain chemicals can cause trouble.

Here are a few things that you can do to help minimize the load on our municipal wastewater treatment plants or private septic systems, and thereby help the environment. It just takes a bit of thinking to alter laundry habits.

Washing

- 1) Always choose the lowest possible water temperature you can; it takes energy to heat water. In fact, when using warm water, 90% of the energy used to clean your clothing is used to heat the water.
- 2) Choose the shortest cycle needed to get your clothes clean.
- 3) Load the machine to capacity. It is more energy efficient to do one large load than two smaller loads.

Drying

- 1) Don't overdry your garments. Overdrying will cause the fibers to become brittle and break, resulting in a "bleached" appearance and faster deterioration of the fabric. Leaving some moisture in the fabric reduces static, too.
- 2) Always choose the highest temperature that will not damage your clothes, and shortest duration drying cycle. High temperatures dry faster and more efficiently. However, be careful to not over-dry your wash.
- 3) If you have the few stragglers that are still damp, don't turn the whole load on for another 15 minutes. Hang dry those last stubborn ones.

4) Clean the dryer filter after each use. A clogged filter will restrict airflow and reduce dryer performance.

5) Or better yet, hang dry the whole load to really save on energy!

Bleaches

Only use bleach as directed on our care label. If you do need bleach use those that contain hydrogen peroxide or oxygen, instead of chlorine, as the bleaching agent.

Softeners

Don't use softeners on our products that have a moisture-wicking finish. Softeners will inhibit and potentially ruin the performance. If you avoid overdrying your clothes, you may find them soft enough without need for the commercial softener.

Appliances

If you are purchasing a new washer, look for the Energy Star ratings: you'll be able to choose a washer that uses 50% less energy than the one you're replacing. Energy Star does not rate dryers because energy usage doesn't vary much by manufacturer, but gas is preferable to electric.

Dry Cleaning or Wet Cleaning

The Environmental Protection Agency in the U.S. has done a great job on this topic so please look at this Web link: <http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/garment/ctsa/factsheet/ctsafaq.htm>.

Thanks to our friends at Seventh Generation for their help.