



What You Didn't Know You Need to Know About Cleaning Your Microfiber Cloths

Judith Currin | May 12, 2023

If you're like me, you welcome anything that makes cleaning chores seem effortless. And I found out a long time ago that it's a breeze to simply buy a pack of microfiber cloths for cleaning, and just pick up a new one every time the one I'm using gets too dirty. They work so well at trapping dirt and dust, and they are reusable, so unlike paper towels you can go through many of them with a clear conscience knowing they are planet friendly. But what I didn't know is they lose their effectiveness every time you wash and dry them if you don't do it properly. The biggest mistake is putting them in the dryer. ARGH. Why doesn't anybody tell us these things? Well, since joining PURTEQ a few years ago I've learned a lot about cleaning, and this is one of the most practical things I've learned and I'm happy to share it with you.



Before we get into the details of how to correctly wash and dry microfiber towels, let's review how they work. They are different than cotton or nylon cloths which have large fibers. Instead, they have thousands of tiny fibers - about 200,000 fibers in only one square inch of cloth! When you use it to clean, all those teeny tiny fibers pick up and hold the dust, dirt, and moisture. And those same tiny fibers are positively charged, which makes the cloths super absorbent. That's because the dirt and the dust that sit on the surfaces you are cleaning are negatively charged, so the mess is attracted to your microfiber cloth like a magnet. The fibers will hold onto that dirt and dust until the cloth is rinsed and the dirt is released.

So that's the tricky harmony that must be preserved -- those soft tiny fibers and that positive charge can be easily damaged by things like laundry detergents with added fragrances that coat the fibers making them less effective at cleaning. Same goes for

dryer sheets or fabric softeners, they leave a residue. Not to mention that the cloth is intended to pick up lint and dirt but when you toss them in the dryer they can fill up on lint and dirt inside the dryer itself (does the word irony ring a bell?)

To make matters worse, the hot temperatures of a dryer can even melt or fuse the fibers together, which can cause the cloth to lose its absorbency and trapping ability. Alas, this all sounds rather complicated for a simple cleaning cloth, right? Have no fear, an expert is here!

Jennifer Druckamiller, director of product experience at microfiber company Norwex, says to reuse your microfiber cloths several times before putting them in the washing machine. She recommends you simply wash them by hand following the steps outlined below.

How to wash microfiber cloths by hand:

- Shake them over a trash can to dislodge any loose dirt or debris
- Hand wash or soak in warm water (if you have used them to clean you probably don't need to add any soap. If you do add soap, 1 oz. of KLENZ Concentrate is all you need. If you use detergent, make sure it's gentle and unscented.)
- Rinse each towel thoroughly under slightly warm running water, then wring out excess moisture
- Hang to dry

When they need a deeper cleaning, here's the correct way to wash them in the machine without diminishing their unique cleaning powers:

- Use 1 oz. of KLENZ Concentrate
(or slightly less of a gentle, unscented detergent, free of additives and fillers)
- Use cold or warm water. By not using hot water, you'll remove the dirt and grime from the cloths while retaining their oh so important electric charge
- Never use bleach or fabric softener
- Wash your microfiber cloths separately from other clothes and towels
- If you have the kind of washer that will let you stop it halfway through the agitation cycle do that - and let the cloths soak for 20 minutes, then resume and complete the wash cycle
- As soon as the wash cycle is finished, take the cloths out of the washer, and shake out the wrinkles

- Hang them outside to dry in the sunlight if you can. Or hang them inside where there is good air circulation
- Avoid machine drying. The dryer reduces their effectiveness faster than anything else and sadly, may prove fatal to your beloved, trusted cloths
- If you absolutely must use a dryer, then make sure to:
 - clean the lint trap thoroughly
 - use the lowest heat setting or the no-heat setting
 - never use dryer sheets or dryer balls - dry the cloths alone
 - take them out of the dryer as soon as they are dry, or even slightly before they're completely dry to ensure they don't get overly hot (which they won't if you put them on low or air dry...)
 - never iron (you got the part about the heat, right?)

If you follow these money and cloth saving tips, your microfiber cloths will last longer and remain impressively effective at cleaning everything from dusty fan blades to your 65-inch TV screen when you realize it's dusty 5 minutes before the super bowl kickoff! Hey, that's how confident I am. Shine on!

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