

Doing Laundry in Public Places

- With low vision, it may be difficult to see the settings on the machines. Become aware of the layout of the machines. Use a low vision device, such as a handheld magnifier or the magnifier on your cell phone, to see the settings.
- Ask staff or another laundry patron for help setting the machines. Then, memorize the position of the dial when set to your preferred setting. Counting the number of clicks when setting a dial may help, too.
- Become familiar with where the washers, dryers, restrooms, garbage containers, change machines, and ATM are located.
- Using public laundry facilities may involve planning and organizing, plus using your mobility device.
- Before going to the public laundry facility, measure out the correct amounts of laundry detergent and fabric softener. Store laundry products in smaller containers, like plastic jars and resealable zipper storage bags. This way, you won't need to carry large containers. Or put a laundry pod in one plastic resealable zipper storage bag, and fabric softener dryer sheets in another. Be careful with laundry pods, however, as they are toxic to small children and pets.

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- Use a backpack, large laundry bag, or a cart with wheels to transport laundry. You may need one hand to open doors and the other to use your mobility device.
- After you've selected your machine, load your laundry. Check out Hadley's workshops on washing and drying clothes for ideas.
- Don't use a washer or dryer door for support. Instead, use a chair.
- To identify your machine, put a refrigerator magnet on it. This will be helpful if you move away from the machine to wait for the load to finish.
- Count the number of machines in the row. For example, maybe your machine is number 5 in the row.
- Use landmarks, too. For instance, your machine may be next to a laundry table or vending machine.
- The machines may have different colored lights that indicate the progress through the wash cycle. Try using your low vision device to see these lights.
- If seeing these lights is difficult, listen to the sounds the machine makes while moving through the cycle. Visit the laundry facility when it's not busy and has less background noise.
- Use touch. Feel the machine's vibration to recognize the cycle change or know if your laundry has finished.
- Ask staff to let you know when the cycle changes, so you can add detergent or fabric softener at the right time. Call ahead to request assistance.