

Putting the Laundry Out to Dry

By Shivonne Quintero

I must have the world's smallest load dryer, or maybe it's the world's most inefficient. I can't decide. No exaggeration, it can only handle about three to four pieces of clothing at a time. Even then I probably have to put those few items in a dry cycle twice. My laundry rhythm gets backed up waiting for the dryer to actually accomplish what it's supposed to do. Most people divide washing loads; I divide drying loads.

It's definitely the dryer. I clean the lint trap before every load. I even had a technician out to check it. He told me everything is in perfect working order. Did I mention this is a brand new dryer?

I couldn't take it. The dryer was hampering my green-living efforts. And I am committed to living greener. I was not about to let the world's most inefficient and smallest loading dryer stand in the way of reducing my eco-footprint.

I had a mini brainstorm on my deck one afternoon. Not doing laundry was clearly not an option. As I sat pondering the question, a ray of sun bathed me with its radiant, solar warmth. I sighed with contentment, and then it dawned on me. The sun! I could use the sun to dry my clothes! I felt brilliant. I couldn't wait to do my next loads of laundry. I'd show that inefficient, smallest-loading dryer who's boss.

I didn't have the money to buy a ready-made clothesline, though there are plenty for sale online. And though I told myself otherwise, I realized I'm not all that handy when it comes to building things myself. So I wasn't going to build my own clothesline, even though hardware stores and online instructions say it's pretty simple. I decided I'm even too lazy to tie some rope up between some trees behind my house to hang the clothes from. Naw, I prefer the good old-fashioned way: I'd drape my clothes over the rail on my deck.

Since that day, after each washing, my clothes get nice and dry in the sun, and it doesn't take much time. Other than feeling good that I'm not using coal-powered—and therefore non-renewable energy—to run my dryer, my favorite part is that drying my clothes in the sun is free! Not only am I doing a little more to help save the earth's precious resources, but I'm also doing more to save my own precious resources: my money! Since I'm using less power, my electric bill is lower.

Okay, so maybe deck-rail clothes-drying is not really "old-fashioned," but it works for me! Come winter-time, I'm determined to continue out-smarting that inefficient, small-load dryer. I could buy some inexpensive indoor drying racks or create some sort of string system to hang the clothes up inside. That seems like a little too much work for me, though. I think I'll just use the stair-railing and my shower curtain rod.