

There are many schools of thought around doing laundry on the road. Really, it comes down to your personal preference, the specific environment in which you are camping, the weather conditions, and the length of time for which you are away.

Sometimes, there's just no way around it: you need to change your camping clothes, especially if you are away for longer than a few days. Perhaps they are dirty enough to stand up on their own, or maybe you've pulled into a town and have decided to treat yourself to a meal out? Then there are just those occasions when you're booked into a day tour and feel like wearing a fresher outfit. Whatever the reason, washing laundry while camping is, for the most part, a necessary chore.

Here are just a few tips to keep up your sleeve when planning your next trip.



Sometimes, there's just no way around it: you need to change your camping clothes. Image: Scrubba



Sometimes the next caravan park is too many days away, so a bush washing line does the job.

Wash 'n Wear

There are many options for washing on the road; it doesn't matter if you are touring, base camping, driving a 4WD, car camping, or travelling by bicycle – it is inevitable that you will need to wash something on your travels (even if it's just your underwear).

First things first, allow me to debunk any notion in favour of packing extra garments in an attempt to avoid washing. You will gather an increasingly full bag of dirty laundry, and it's false to believe this is advantageous; it will only clutter your limited camp storage, even if you're using a laundry bag. If your clothes aren't obviously soiled or smelly, don't bother washing them. Surprisingly, this saves a lot of time, arguments, and precious real estate on your drying line!

If your travel plans include an overnight stay in a caravan park, this is a good time to cycle through one larger load where you can get both the clothes and bedding done. Take advantage of the extra-wide communal line and hang everything out to sun-dry. Take that time to enjoy a cuppa or a swim!



You may not want to wear the same underwear every day, but dark colours are good to pack. Image: Elemental



The communal clothesline in a caravan park is great for getting everything dry.

Avoid Packing 'Lights'

Dark colours and patterns are always a good choice for hiding marks and stains. Clothing with a longer wear-life, like denim shorts or jeans, are ideal to pack. Skirts and dresses can also prolong the number of days between washing sessions; good space-saving garments that can be perfect for dining out in the new town or days when a tour is booked.

Don't despair if bore water discolours your clothes, or turns your light clothes look a little brown. Wear it as an outback badge of honour, but remember that darker colours help to

disguise that bore water trademark.

I've also heard a tip to skip PJs; the idea is to sleep in what you intend to wear the next day. I'm not sure that's one for everyone, but it could suit you. Although there are many more ideas out there, both odd and practical, most are worth considering and maybe even experimenting with.



A simple wardrobe with small loads washed more often makes managing laundry easier.



Be you touring, base camping, driving a 4WD, car camping, or travelling by bicycle – it is inevitable that you will need to wash something on your travels. Image: Elemental

You can stretch out the days between washing through one simple strategy – wear the same thing! Generally, no one will notice if you dress in the same clothes day in, day out – and if they do, it's unlikely they'll care! If you don't believe me, look at anyone's holiday snaps and you will see that they repeat their wardrobe between locations.

Another tip for a fresh look without the need for suds and water is to take a couple of scarves. Or, simply a different t-shirt over the same shorts. Perhaps the trend towards a 'capsule wardrobe' has its roots in camping? For more info on how to maintain personal hygiene while camping, check out this blog [here](#).



Look at anyone's holiday snaps and you will see that they repeat their wardrobe between locations! Image: Scrubba



Another tip is to skip PJs, and instead sleep in what you intend to wear the next day. Image: Sea to Summit

Man Vs Machine

Washing smaller loads of clothing more frequently is a better system than putting it off until there's a monumental pile – you will save both time and water!

Washing by hand can be done with a folding bucket or even the Sea to Summit Kitchen Sink for a compact but watertight option. If you're on the go, you can also use a Scrubba Washbag or watertight bucket. Simply mix laundry detergent and water together, pop in your dirties, and it will agitate as you drive along. If possible, replace the washing water with clean water during your lunch break, lock on the lid, and your cycle will rinse as you drive. When you stop, wring them out and hang on the line.

I like to use a wool wash, as it's gentler on fabric and you needn't rinse it as thoroughly as other liquids or powders – yet it still achieves clean, fresh-smelling clothes. When buying detergent, look for biodegradable options, especially for handwashing out in the middle of the bush or by the beach when you are not disposing of the wastewater down a drain.

Biodegradable options are just what their label suggests; they are far less disruptive to the natural environment.



If you're on the go, you can use a Scrubba Washbag for laundry. Image: Scrubba



Simply mix laundry detergent and water together, pop in your dirties, and it will agitate as you travel. Image: Scrubba

Cash and Carry

If you're away for an extended time, campground laundries are a necessary evil. Use these tips to make washing less of a chore.

If you're unable to line-dry, try to gather a stash of \$1 and \$2 coins for the washing machine and dryer before leaving home. There's no guarantee what coin you'll need, so at an average of \$4 per load, I start with \$10 of each and use purse change to top up as I go.

When you arrive, ask at the office what coins are required and only take them. Staff or other campers using the machines usually know how long a load takes, which is useful information, but if you're not sure, why not save yourself a walk back and forth and get the kids to go and check instead?



Be prepared with a stash of gold coins.



Leave your basket on the machine to make it easier and more efficient for everyone.

Get to the laundrette as early as you can; a load is done in around 45 minutes, so you could have it on the line before breakfast! Otherwise, do it last thing at night and if you're lucky it will be dry after breakfast the following morning and you can fold it away before the day's activities. It's a good idea to avoid the peak time of between 3pm and 4pm, as most people are either returning from their day trips or arriving to set up camp, eager to get a load on. To avoid taking the whole box to the laundry, I use a Ziplock bag to decant a load's worth of powder and a small dash of Napisan to brighten the whites and colours. Always leave a basket or bag on your machine and check the time to be back. If your cycle finishes and you're not there, the next person can take out your load get theirs in without delay.



One laundry method is to hang washing in groups, per person.

Drying's a Breeze!

If you are going to use the tumble dryer, be the person who (*finally*) cleans out the lint! The machine won't have to work as hard to dry your clothes, making it more efficient and saving you some gold coins.

If you have space for one, travel with a folding rack, mini folding clothesline, a folding 'smalls hanger', or airer. I prefer to line dry, folding and sorting as I go. There is often limited space back at camp, so I use two methods. The first involves hanging out deliberately in per-person groups, the second is to unpeg one family member at a time.

I have heard some people use a compartmentalised bag like those for supermarket trolleys, to separate clothing, linen, and towels. It sounds a bit pedantic, but useful to get away and see the sights instead of sorting on site!

If I need a makeshift line on wash day, I carry a couple of Sea to Summit Clotheslines which are designed to use without pegs. They are easy to fix onto a couple of awning poles, or tied between two trees.



The Sea to Summit clothesline is designed to use without pegs. Image: Sea to Summit



Never leave home without the pegs!

Down a Peg or Two

I have saved the best advice till last, as it is almost impossible to survive without them. You may think these are obvious, but I have seen many washer folks at the point of collapse for failing to take them.

So, the number one tip? Don't forget to pack the pegs!



Pack essentials only, and favour dark colours or patterns. Image: Elemental

Let's recap for those who want a quick list on the go...

- Pack essentials only, and favour dark colours or patterns
- Repeat your wardrobe; you do not need to wear something different every day
- Wash small loads, more frequently
- Consider using a wool wash detergent to avoid needing to thoroughly rinse
- Use a Scrubba Washbag or sealable bucket to agitate the water and wash clothes while you drive
- Pack rope or a pegless clothesline for drying clothes
- Save your larger loads for the caravan park
- Carry a stash of gold coins for the laundromat / laundrette machines
- Use a Ziplock bag for decanting one load-worth of powder
- Leave your washing basket or bag on top of your machine to save everyone time
- Create a hanging and sorting system for yourself
- Remember to pack your pegs!

Have you got any other tips to add to this list?