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A Souped-up Laundry Room Can Make a Difference for Home Sellers, Buyers

One of the most dreaded chores around the house is laundry. Maybe that's why when selling a house, the laundry room is one of the most forgotten areas to get in shape. Machines are often dusty, detergent dripping down the sides and lint and old socks on the floor. Yet it doesn't take much to clean and can make a real difference.

Make a statement by adding energy-efficient appliances. Recent statistics by the U.S. Department of Energy show that machines with the ENERGY STAR label can decrease water costs by up to 50%. There are machines that adjust water temperature and amount for each load to prevent excess and waste.

Many models are available with designer colors, pedestals and sleek designs, which make a bold statement. You will also need to choose between a front- or top-loading machine. A top-loading machine requires enough water to cover all the clothes in its drum. A front-loading model needs only a third of that because its drum is positioned horizontally. That means less water allowing for larger loads. Plus, it looks great. On the downside, front-loaders are more expensive and can develop mold because they don't empty dirty water as efficiently as a top-loader.

New sensor technology is the rage in dryers. Moisture sensors recognize when laundry is dry more quickly than traditional machines and shut down sooner. This saves energy, cash and wear-and-tear on clothing.

The use of steam washers and dryers for greater energy and water efficiency is also a growing trend. They offer enhanced clothing-care options such as short, steam-only cycles that help to reduce wrinkles and remove odors without using water and detergent.

Laundry rooms used to be relegated to the basement. Today, people are finding space in more convenient areas of the house—like the kitchen, upstairs or near bedrooms. Experts agree that a laundry nook will raise the value of a home, making it more convenient as hauling baskets of clothing up and down flights of stairs become a thing of the past.