

## Pillow Cleaning for Healthy, Allergen Free Sleep

Do you think it is important for your family's hygiene to regularly clean blankets and sheets, towels, bed and couch covers? Of course!

Pillows also need to be cleaned regularly, at least every six months. That's because a pillow that hasn't been cleaned recently contains high amounts of sloughed skin, mold and mildew, fungus, dust mites and dust feces. Nobody wants to sleep on that! Let's see how we can effectively clean our pillows, depending on their material, and what tricks we can use to keep them clean longer.

Cotton and down pillows can be cleaned in various ways. You can hand-wash, machine-wash, or dry-clean them.

If you choose hand-wash use a mild detergent instead of soap, as soap may leave residues. Wash gently using warm water, in maximum 40c. Rinse well in cold water squeezing the pillow constantly to ensure that there is no residue left.

In machine-wash you should make sure that detergent is completely diluted in water before placing the pillows inside. You can do that by letting the machine run for a few minutes with after adding the detergent and before adding the pillows. Then stop it, squeeze the air out of the pillows and put them inside the washing machine. Set your washer on a gentle wash cycle. An extra rinse would be ideal but if your washing machine doesn't have that button, simply put the pillow through the final rinse cycle once or twice to fully rinse out any residue. Do not use softener in the rinse. Instead choose vinegar to help in the removal of the residue. Very little, two or three drops is enough. Add a tennis ball to keep the down from bunching-up into a corner during the spin cycle. Hit the spin dry feature twice to ensure that most water has been removed.

Synthetic Fiber pillows can also be hand or machine-washed the same way as before. Lower quality fiber pillows may bunch up after cleaning. If that happens, pull out the fibers and redistribute them after drying. In synthetic pillows use the spin dry feature only once, so that the fibers bunch up as little as possible.

Feather pillows can be washed by hand or dry-cleaned. Hand-Wash them exactly as you would with a down pillow but using less detergent. Also keep in mind that feather pillows are harder to get wet because feather tends to repel water. Don't forget to use a little vinegar during the rinsing.

Foam pillows can only be hand-washed very gently with mild detergent. Mix water and detergent first, then gently squeeze the soapy water into the pillow by pressing smoothly on the pillow repeatedly. Don't wring or twist them, they are very delicate. Rinse well using vinegar during rinse.

Wool pillows should be dry-cleaned because of their material, which makes it very difficult and unsafe for them to be cleaned in any other way.

It is important that before attempting to wash your pillows you should read the care instructions on the package.

Use some of these tricks to keep your pillows clean longer.

Use two pillowcases on your pillows to resist the accumulation of dust and bacteria, sweat, and other body fluids.

Use a pillow protector as an additional barrier against dirt.

Change your pillowcases often as dirt penetrates the fabric and will end up on your pillow.

Now that you know the steps, clean your pillows as often as they need to be, to prolong their life and ensure a healthy sleeping environment, free of skin irritations and allergies for you and your family.

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### About the Author

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