

Laundering for Persistent Odors in Laminated Pads

The vast majority of pad users will not need to make any special adjustments in their laundering process to enjoy clean smelling, long lasting use of their laminated pads. However, a few users may have a very keen sense of smell. They might detect a urine or otherwise undesirable odor depending on usage, animal diet, and laundering procedures. These notes (applied in sequence) may help alleviate this problem.

What is my Goal?

Consider that if you are using your laminated pads as pee pads (likely) then you may not *want* to completely remove the urine smell—particularly if you are in the process of training. Your pet will naturally be attracted to your target pee area because of the remnant scent. But if the smell is excessive or obnoxious, or if you are using the pads for bedding and other non-urine purposes, then clearly you will want to completely remove the odor from any “accidents.”

Washing Machine Instructions

Perhaps the most obvious but often overlooked remedy is to be sure your washing environment is set up properly. Be sure you are getting properly heated water (inlet hoses reversed?), your load sizes are proper, and your settings are correct when washing.

Pad Orientation during Wash

Items in your washing machine must move easily through the wash water. Do not overload. This is particularly important with your laminated pads. Since the pads are waterproof on one side it is very important that the wash water have good access to the absorbent (top) side of the pad. When placing the pad into the machine, position it such that the waterproof side faces inward while the top side faces outward. This will maximize exposure to the top side.

White Vinegar

White vinegar is an excellent odor remover. Add ¼ to 1 cup of vinegar to your rinse cycle. Vinegar is also known to whiten and soften fabrics.

Baking Soda

Baking soda can help eliminate acid based odors such as urine. Sprinkle wet soiled pads with baking soda before laundering, or try adding ½ cup of baking soda to your wash when you add your detergent. You can also add baking soda to the rinse water.

Temperature

In general, the use of higher water temperatures in your washing machine will be more effective in laundering. The laminated pad product care label suggests an upper limit of 176 deg F for washing. Most homes' water heaters will be set lower, perhaps much lower, than this. Factory default settings for your hot water heater may be as low as 120 deg F. Furthermore, as much as 10 degrees may be lost from the hot water heater to your washing machine. So consider raising your water temperature, **but only do so if you are fully aware of potential safety hazards (scald injury).**

Bleach

You may wonder about the use of bleach. The laminated pad product care label prohibits the use of bleach. But there are different types of bleach. The care label is referring to **chlorine bleach**. This sodium hypochlorite solution is known by such household names as Clorox and Purex Bleach (*not* Purex laundry detergent). This common type of bleach will harm the waterproofing function of the pads and should be avoided.

Ideally you would avoid all bleaches. But as a last resort you could try less aggressive bleaches known as oxygen bleaches (bleach alternatives). Powdered oxygen bleaches typically contain either hydrogen peroxide or a hydrogen peroxide releasing compound (e.g. sodium perborate, sodium percarbonate, sodium persulfate, etc.). Hydrogen peroxide, also an oxygen bleach, is a liquid. Laundry products would usually be marketed as “bleach alternatives” such as “Tide with Bleach Alternative” or “Oxiclean.”