

Using Front-Loading Washer For Washing Out Hand-Dyed Fabric

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Using a front-loading washing machine will use water more efficiently and will not tangle fabric as much as top loaders. Use a model that can--

Be started on rinse/ drain, or just drain/spin

Be cancelled at any point

Heat the water above 140° F.

General approach:

1. Remove some dye, soda and other auxiliaries in cool/warm water before moving to hot water. Several very short cycles with Synthrapol may be required.
2. Moving to hot water too soon will stain the whites. Final hot wash must be 140°F.
3. To avoid transferring of colors on the fabric, use short cycles and never leave the partly washed fabric in warm or hot bundled up together. Line dry unless final washing at 140°F has been done.
4. When working with small amounts it saves energy to wash through the hot/cold cycle and line dry, then wait to have more fabric for a full load to minimize energy and time. FOR A CLASS, it may work well to have each student rinse (with Synthrapol) most of the dye etc out of a piece of fabric before first washing in machine. Then wash to remove most of the dye (through the warm/cold cycle), then line dry and let them finish washing at home.

Details:

1. For a messy load of fabric covered with dye and soda and maybe thickener. Put it all in the washer with a 1/2 teaspoon to 1 Tablespoon of Synthrapol depending on the number of yards of fabric. DO NOT USE TOO MUCH AS IT WILL FOAM AND THE MACHINE WILL STOP AUTOMATICALLY. READ THE DIRECTIONS ON THE SYNTHRAPOL IF NOT FAMILIAR WITH HOW CONCENTRATED IT IS. Start on the rinse/drain cycle, cold water/and high spin. If it is really dark colors and lots of white, do another cold rinse and spin. (You can cancel the cycle before it finishes spinning, as most of the water is out before the time is up.)
Be sure to untangle threads wrapping around the fabrics.
2. Then run a rinse/drain cycle, warm* water rinse/and high spin. Do it again if it is a lot of fabric and mixed colors and values. Each time with a small amount of Synthrapol.
Be sure to untangle threads wrapping around the fabrics.
3. Then do a short quick wash on warm/cold full cycle then I do it again on warm /cold if needed. Then do a short hot cold cycle. Only move to hot/cold if not worried about staining whites or transferring reds. If you I see a lot of color in the water, cancel and rinse and drain. (Each time use a small amount of Synthrapol.)
Be sure to untangle threads wrapping around the fabrics.
4. Then I run it all on the sanitary cycle—long and HOT with Synthrapol. The machine heats the water to 150° F, so it gets the last bit of color out that might not have been released.