

TENDER LAUNDERING CARE FOR SWEATERS

It's important to make sure your wool, cashmere, and other natural-fiber sweaters are clean and ready for the colder months. Luckily, the best way to launder them—washing by hand—happens to be both economical (no more dry-cleaning bills!) and eco-friendly (goodbye, harsh chemicals!).

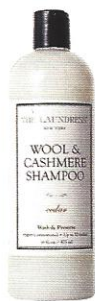
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN GARDNER



2

Squeeze

Empty and refill the sink or basin with fresh cool water. Soak the sweater repeatedly until the water runs clear. After rinsing it, gently squeeze—never wring!—the water out of it over the sink or basin. Make sure to properly support the garment when you lift it, as it will be heavy and prone to stretching. Lay the sweater flat on a clean white towel, then roll the towel and sweater together, vigorously pressing as you go to remove excess moisture. Unroll and repeat with a second dry towel. **Plush bath towel**, by Martha Stewart Collection, in White, \$20, macys.com.



1

Wash

Fill a sink or basin with cool to tepid water; add gentle soap, like baby shampoo or The Laundress's **Wool & Cashmere shampoo** (\$19, thelaundress.com), following the directions on the bottle. Swish the sweater in the sudsy water, then let it soak for up to 30 minutes.

▶ KEEP IT COOL

Hot water contributes to the felting of wool, which shrinks sweaters, explains Leslie Gonzalez, cochair of the Knitting Guild Association's Master Hand Knitting Committee.

▶ HEED THE LABEL

Unless any specifically say "dry-clean only," hand-wash all sweaters. "Agitation, even from a front loader, can easily snag a knitted stitch," says Gonzalez.



This mesh drying rack is stackable—and easily stowable! Simply fold the legs in and fold the shelf in half.

3

Dry

Leave the sweater on the second towel, periodically flipping it over as it dries—or expedite the process by placing it on a mesh rack. Whichever method you choose, the most important part of this step is shaping the sweater. Remember to note the garment's original size and shape so that you can re-form it post-wash. Even better, consider actually measuring the piece before you wash it, in four places: shoulder to shoulder, across the bottom, and along the outside of each arm. Use the measurements to reshape the sweater. **Stackable mesh drying rack**, by Oxo, \$16, amazon.com.

4

De-pill

Once the sweater is dry, it's time to deal with those tiny nubs that pop up on its surface. (Note: "Pilling is caused by wearing, not washing," says Gwen Whiting, co-owner of eco-friendly fabric-care company The Laundress.) First, lay it on a flat surface and gently run a de-pill—like a sweater comb or the **Sweater Stone**, above (\$9, sweaterstone.com)—over it. "Take care with yarns that have a halo, such as angora and mohair. Gently cut the pills by hand in those cases," says Gonzalez.

5

Store

When it comes to storing sweaters, Whiting has it down to a science: "Always clean. Never in plastic. Always in cotton. Never hanging." Why? Moths are especially attracted to soiled sweaters; plastic bags don't allow for air circulation, while cotton or canvas garment bags do; and hanging leads to stretched-out knits. For added protection, tuck a natural bug repellent inside, like cedar liners or **lavender-perfumed sachets** (\$12 each, usa.loccitane.com).

