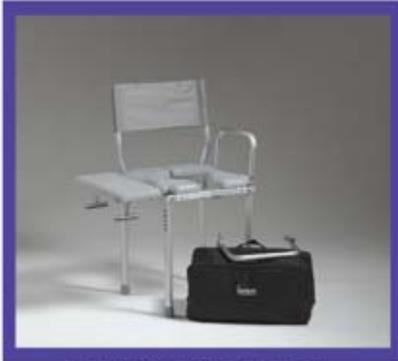


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# around the HOUSE

## Easy Laundry Day

**Doing laundry is one of those** things no one likes doing, but it has to be done. People using wheelchairs can find this chore particularly difficult, but there are ways to make things easier.

December's Around the House article explored the idea of relocating

## The Kitchen

It's easy to decide on the perfect location for a laundry room in a new house. However, it creates some new challenges when it comes to a remodel for full access.

Older homes often have the laundry room in an unsafe and poorly illuminated location such as the

HUNTSOCK



Relocating the laundry room to a centralized and easy to reach part of the house, such as the master bedroom, is an affordable and safe option for life-span living.

the laundry room near the bedroom. New laundry rooms function most efficiently for life-span living when they're centrally located where the majority of laundry is generated.

Prioritize the location of the laundry/hobby area nearest the master suite so it still functions well when the other bedrooms are not occupied.

This makes good sense for the lifestyle of the 21st century American family, as the couple or empty nester may work days and laundry may well be done in the evening.

basement. Getting down there may not be an option. This adds even more importance to relocating the laundry room.

Relocating the laundry room may be the most affordable and safest option. The kitchen can be a good place to look for a new laundry area or room.

The kitchen may already have a table for folding clothes and of course the sink will assist with pre-washing. Removing the sink base cabinet and installing a sink that moves up and

down with the switch of a button is a good option. These products are now available.

The cabinet doors can then be removed, and an attractive “Lav-Shield” should be installed over the pipes to prevent scalding the knees of seated users.

### A Closet

A closet near existing water pipes may also be an option for placing the washer and dryer.

If it's located in the closet, install a “Flood Saver” product that is similar to a shower pan, and add a floor drain if this is above another lower level. This will save much grief if the washer drips or is overloaded with too much detergent.

Oversize the doors in this case and make sure there is a 30-inches by



Extra touches such as an accessible drip-dry rod make laundry day even easier.

48-inches clear space, with an extra foot of that space extending toward the doors. If the doors protrude into that space, it will be difficult for a wheelchair user to reach deep within.

A fully equipped laundry area should at minimum include the washer/dryer, utility sink, ironing

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area, folding area, drying rack and as much storage as possible.

A shelf should be adjacent to the washer so it's not far to move the detergent to use it. Consider locking this cabinet from forgetful users and toddlers.

A sound-batt insulated wall with drywall sound attenuation clips is a good idea for a centrally located laundry room.

### The Washer/Dryer

The type of washer/dryer can be just as important as the location. It can also help make relocating the laundry room easier.

A unit that includes the washing and drying functions in one avoids the clothes transfer process and saves space. It's generally raised on a platform with a front-load side-swinging door, front controls and quiet operation.

Some manufacturers offer an adaptable unit on rolling casters that has a water hose attachable to your kitchen faucet.

A stacked washer/dryer unit may also save space, but make sure the controls are located at the center and in the front, and both doors are in front and side-swinging so they are usable by everyone.

The washer and dryer can be most effective on a raised platform, but if the controls are on top at the rear they're not usable by seated people. The doors need to swing opposite each other — such as washer left and dryer right — and swing a full 180 degrees.

A 30-inch by 48-inch space needs to be in front of all of the laundering functions, and these areas may overlap. If the doors are stuck open into that area, it'll be difficult for a seated user to reach in and retrieve clothing.

### Keep the User in Mind

Also make sure there is adequate turning space within the laundry area.

A complete five-foot wheelchair turning diameter may not be required if it's possible to roll under an open countertop or space, back up and turn

around. This option may be necessary in a laundry room remodel with limited space. During the design phase, always keep in mind the user's abilities.

A pull-down/pop-up clothing rod product above the dryer is a great touch. Throw a towel on top of the dryer, pull down the rod, hang drip-

dry shirts, etc., on the rod and let them drip dry onto the dryer top.

Unless the washer and dryer are fully concealed below the countertop, it may be difficult to reach a cabinet above the units, especially if they are on raised platforms. Use that wall space for the hanging rods.

For more info visit [universaldesignonline.com](http://universaldesignonline.com).

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A pull-down clothing rod above the dryer is a great way to make accessible space.