

Sales tips and Frequently Asked Questions



A big big thank you!

If you are reading this, it means that you are retailing Eco Femme pads either in India or Internationally and thus helping us to create more awareness around the use of sustainable menstrual products.

We know that customers sometimes have a lot of questions about our products. That's why we've made this document. We hope our tips will help you sell and explain our products!

Sales Tips

Here is a list of few sales tips to be able to sell our products better. If you have any idea to improve that list, please let us know! All the marketing team is reachable at sales@ecofemme.org

- **Use the product yourself!** Well that works only if you menstruate of course.. We find that explaining cloth pads is inspired from personal experience, so using them yourself will help you to advocate them to others. If you don't menstruate you could always propose to your wife, sister, etc, to use the pads and give their feedback to you
- If you have a brick store, **keep a sample pad on display**. Customers will be able to get a feel of the product. **We are happy to provide you a sample pad for free upon request. We can also provide a open sample pad.** This way potential customers will really understand how a pad is made and what's inside
- You can do many things to make your customers interested in buying! To encourage your customers' interest in the products, try to attract their eye, show what the product is about and what the benefits of reusable cloth pads are. You could for instance put up our posters on the wall, or keep the posters as a booklet near the products, offer our brochures at the cash counter (if you sell disposable pads, you can even ask the cashier to give the brochure each time a customer buys a disposable pad)... **We gladly provide a set of laminated posters for free as well as brochures for every order. Brochures can also be used for eshops, to send along with products**
- **We pride ourselves on the fact that Eco Femme is more than a commercial product:** we are a social business. Half of our team is dedicated to menstrual education with girls and women and our commercial sales go into these programs! When you sell our products you can inform your customers about this. You can read more about our work here: <https://ecofemme.org/about/how-we-work/>
- **Internationally, we have the Pad for Pad program** which connects customers to beneficiaries. In practice it means that for every purchase outside India, the customer is gifting the equivalent of one pad + menstrual education to an adolescent girl in India. You can read more about that program here: <https://ecofemme.org/in-action/pad-for-pad/>
- If needed, feel free to share Eco Femme's videos or have a look at them (in particular our [product demonstration video](#) as it answers most people's questions). All the videos are available on our Youtube channel and new videos will be posted there: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ecofemmeindia>

General F.A.Q

This is a list of questions that are frequently asked. Try to keep them in mind to answer your potential customers!

What is it?

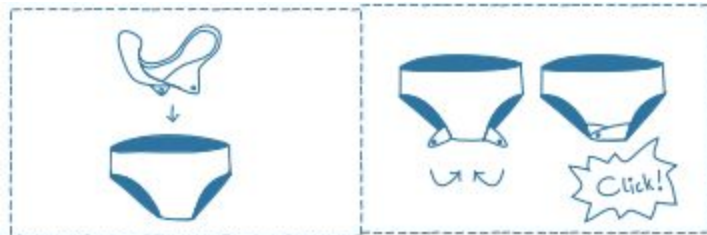
Cloth pads are just like disposables, except you wash and reuse them, therefore saving money and creating less waste.

Why would anyone want to wash and reuse a menstrual pad?

Women have been doing it for thousands of years before you. Which doesn't mean it is old fashioned or even outdated. In fact it is all the opposite, absolutely up-to-date: eco-friendly, health beneficial and cost convenient. You quickly incorporate the routine of changing, soaking, washing, drying and reusing. Many users have reported benefits of feeling emotionally more connected to themselves and their cycle.

How do I wear my pad?

The plain uni-coloured fabric is worn facing your body and the patterned leakproof side faces your underwear. The buttons are fastened around your underwear.



How do they stay in place?

Our pads have wings which fold around your underwear and are fastened with a press button below. We recommend wearing well fitting underwear whilst using our pads to ensure the pad fits snugly against your body.

How do I wash it?

Cloth pads can be washed easily by hand or in the washing machine. The secret is **first soaking the pads in cold water** for 30 minutes before washing in up to a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius. Most of the blood comes out in the soaking process. After that, it's just like washing your clothes.

You can check out the product demonstration video also available in the retailer kit!

How do I dry it?

Dry on the washing line in full sunlight for best results or tumble dry on low heat.

What is it made of?

Our pads are made of cotton. The top of the pad is made of soft flannel cotton. The inside of the pad is made of ultra-absorbent cotton flannel (the number of layers differs according to the pad model). The back of the pad is made of a breathable PUL leakproof cover.

Are they comfortable?

This is a personal matter and the answer would depend on the user, but we have very good feedback regarding the comfort of our pads. The comfort of cotton against your skin and between your thighs rather than plastic, less feeling of wetness, less skin irritation, less smell, and our customers love their softness !

Doesn't cloth leak?

The back of the pad is made of a leakproof and breathable PUL layer. Beyond that, using cloth pads is just like using disposables: Whether disposable or reusable, a pad needs to be changed in time before it leaks, according to your personal flow.

Do they feel wet?

The blood doesn't stay on the top flannel. The liquid gets absorbed into the inner cotton layers. If your body expels clots during your period, you will find these on top of your pad. If your pad starts to feel wet it means it's time to change it with a fresh one, just as with any other product. In fact many users report feeling less wetness and more comfort with cotton against their body as compared to sticky plastic pads.

How often should I change my pad?

You should change your pad about as often as you would change a disposable pad, every 4 to 6 hours, as needed, depending on your flow. You will easily learn when it's time to change.

Is there anything I have to do before I start using them?

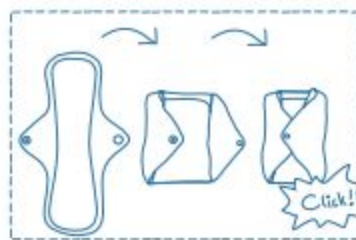
As with all new garments, especially underwear, you should wash new pads prior to using them. And there is another reason for this: New cloth pads are similar to new towels; after the first few washes cotton absorbency will increase, which is exactly their job to do! We have observed, to increase the absorbency of new pads, wash them 2-3 times with soap, soak them overnight or machine wash, and it will help so the liquid gets absorbed into the inner layers of the pad.

How many do I need?

We suggest a minimum of 4 pads to change, wash and dry. Most women have an average of 6-8 pads. A few factors influence the number of pads that you need. Factor 1 is the intensity of your personal flow. Factor 2 is the frequency you wash your pads. Factor 3 is the time needed to dry. If the climate where you live allows fast drying you need fewer pads. You need enough dry pads readily available.

How can I manage using cloth pads when I am out at work/ school all day?

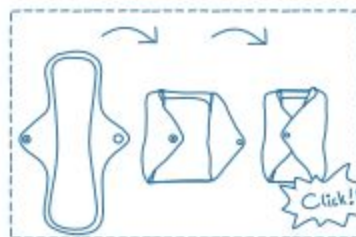
To become confident using the pads, as well as discover how often your personal flow makes you need to change, you might like to begin by using the pads at home. Before going to work / school you can put clean pads in our attractive travel pouch. You can discretely carry it to the bathroom when you need to change. Soiled pads can be stored by folding the two ends towards the middle, fastening the buttoned flaps and placing them in the carry pouch. This is a clean way to carry them home to be washed at your convenience.



You will find out your own washing routine. You can make it your habit to wash your pads one by one after every use, or collect used pads and wash them all at once when your period is over. Do whatever works best for you. Experiment and create a routine that suits you.

How can I manage while travelling?

If you are travelling comfortably, staying at a hotel room or youth hostel, you can manage using your cloth pads just as you do in your home town when you are in a regular daily routine being out at work/ school. You can use our attractive travel pouch to carry your fresh and used pads. Soiled pads can be stored by folding the two ends towards the middle and fastening them with the buttoned flaps to wash them at your convenience. And if anyone does see your drying pads in your youth hostel dorm, it might serve as a great opportunity to open an inspiring conversation about reusable menstrual products to spread the word!



If you are travelling more basic and you do not have your 'own' place or the time to wash and dry your pads we can be more pragmatic. For those who are comfortable with an internal product we recommend to use a menstrual cup. This makes travelling on your menstruation easy as you only need to rinse it and you can reuse it immediately. For those who prefer pads and feel they just really can't wash a reusable pad, we recommend an eco-friendly disposable brand of organic cotton with biodegradable leakproofing made out of for example corn starch instead of plastic, but to switch back to reusable whenever possible as even eco-friendly disposable products induce more burden to our environment and health in their production, shipping and disposing.

Does it stain?

The secret is **first soaking the pads in cold water** for 30 minutes before washing. This ensures the pads to remain stain free. This is so, because blood contains protein, which rinses easily in cold water, while warm water coagulates protein, making it set in the fabric.

How do I know the pad is completely clean?

When wet, squeeze the water out of your pad. If the water is transparent, it means that the blood has been washed out of the inner layers of your pad.

Is it hygienic?

Cloth has been used by millions of women across the world to manage menstruation for generations. The real question is not whether cloth is hygienic, but whether it is cared for hygienically. Are panties inherently unhygienic? When cloth pads are washed well, dried in direct sunlight and stored properly, they are perfectly hygienic. Traditional knowledge tells us that the UV rays from the sun is nature's best disinfectant. They should be totally dry before reuse or storage.

Learn more in our full [care instructions](#).

I thought we had to wash in very warm water to kill bacteria!

Soaking used pads in cold water prior to washing in warm water, is to ensure the pads remain stain free. Blood is washed out easily when initially rinsed in cold water. After that you can wash the pad in warm water. However, harmful bacteria can develop when the pads stay moist. It is not so much the washing but the drying of your clean pads that matters! Dry your pad in a tumble dryer or in direct sunlight (best as UV kills germs) and you'll be sure that it is safe to use!

Doesn't washing cloth pads use a lot of water? What about places where people do not have access to clean water?

We have found that washing cloth pads doesn't take much more water than washing underwear or any other cloth of the same size. Especially if you use a washing machine, after the initial cold water rinse, you can just add the pads to your regular laundry machine load.

If a women do not have access to reasonably clean water or enough water to wash their clothes, then maybe washable cloth pads are not the solution. We have found that most regions in rural India do have the resources to continue their traditional practice of using washable cloth for menstruation, and more importantly draw attention on the eco-dangerous alternative: Just consider that a disposable plastic pad will in turn again contaminate the water in the environment as it takes up to 800 years to decompose, or even when burnt the fumes will come back down with the rain.

Isn't the leakproof layer (PUL) made of plastic?

Our decision to use a layer of PUL (polyurethane laminate) is the trade off we have made in order to make our pads functional. We needed a leakproof solution for women to be confident using cloth pads. PUL is an international standard used in reusable cloth diapers and other reusable cloth pads while being the best option to minimize waste at present. The 'pantyliner pack without PUL' is our option without PUL. **One of our cloth pads is the equivalent of approximately 75 disposable pads so it is a much more eco-friendly option than disposable pads.**

Are the dyes used in the coloured fabric safe?

Our pads top layers are dyed with colours, that are in line within the organic standards used per international regulations. The inner layers are unbleached and undyed. The backing fabric is woven by small-scale weavers with conventional cotton, which will change in 2017 to also be organically certified.

Also Eco Femme is developing a fully certified organic range. This range will be unbleached and undyed, in natural cream colour.

Are Eco Femme pads organic?

The answer is 'Yes'. And here are the details:

When we started Eco Femme production in 2012, we decided there was a need to make cloth pads affordable for women with limited means of income. This informed our choice to start with conventional cotton.

Since January 2016 all the cotton flannel in our standard range is made of **organic cotton**, except the striped fabric (this fabric is made on a handloom by small-scale weavers who do not work with organic materials).

In 2017 we will be switching the striped fabric to be also of **organic cotton** and we are launching a new **organic line** of different design. These pads will have **organic certification** from **GOTS : [Global organic Textile Standard](#)**.

Eco femme is also in the process for vegan PETA certification: [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals](#).

How long do they last?

The leakproof layer of PUL (polyurethane laminate) will last for approx 75 washes. So Eco Femme washable cloth pads can last 3 to 5 years, depending on how frequently you use them and if you care for them properly. For example: Do not use a brush to wash the pads, so the quality of the fabric is well maintained, and stick to the rinse-in-cold-water-first-rule to keep them clean.

How do I recycle them when they are worn out?

When you feel your pad is no longer working well, recycle it. Simply remove the press buttons, separate the leakproof layer and the remaining cotton layers. The cotton can be recycled with other waste fabric, the PUL layer with plastic recycling, the press buttons could be reused for something else, or, if they do not function anymore, place them with metal recycling.

How do I keep my pads soft?

When you feel that repeated use in 'hard water' areas, your pads might have become a little stiff you can do the following: To help keep your pads soft, soak them in water adding a little baking soda, vinegar or a squirt of lemon juice and a drop of essential oil. Then when drying, scrunch the pad a little before it is fully dry then pull it into shape. This should help to keep your pads nice stay nice and soft. To make your own natural laundry conditioner, visit [this link](#).

On the top layer of my Eco Femme pad I see a bleached spot around the vaginal area, why?

This is possible when your vaginal secretions of blood and discharge become more acidic in pH. The natural vaginal flora is acidic in a healthy state but can become more acidic at times, for example towards the end of menstruation where there is more vaginal discharge along with the period blood. This is not necessarily a concern, but can also be a healthy sign of natural cleansing of the body! So in fact, not all women experience this discolouration of the pads.

We use eco-friendly dyes and have found that this can happen in those colors that have colour red in their spectrum: red, pink, purple - not the blue. The red colour is sensitive to acidity. We have been doing research on the dyes, while being firm to stay with eco-friendly and healthy dyes.