



SAVING YOUR Treasures

A Website about what you can do to protect and preserve the things of importance in your life



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CONSERVATION FOLDING FOR TEXTILES

1. Textiles should not be stored if they are extremely soiled. New items, such as wedding dresses and new christening clothing should be dry cleaned or laundered before being put away. Older items and antique textiles should be examined by textile conservator before long-term storage.
2. Before storage each item should be thoroughly photographed for record keeping and insurance purposes. A written description of the piece including the reason why it is important and any details about its history and importance are essential. One of the images of the object should be reserved to be attached to the outside of the storage box. This will prevent the frequent need to open the box and unpack the contents to see what is inside or to locate a specific object.
3. Before packing, a space should be prepared for packing the object. It should be large enough to lay the item out completely. A large dining table can be used or, if necessary, a large clean floor area can also be used. The surface should be covered with a large, clean, white cotton sheet prior to retrieving the object.
4. In preparation for packing, remove all jewelry, watches, belt buckles, and abrasive items. Clean, dry hands are essential for safe handling of textiles. If your hands are prone to sweating or are very rough, use clean white cotton gloves for this procedure.
5. A large acid-free, lignin-free textile storage box and a quantity of acid-free lignin-free tissue paper are needed. If the object is large, two people may be required.
6. The principle purpose in preparing textiles for storage is to fold each as few times as possible and to pad each fold of the item with sufficient tissue that the folds are gradual enough that the fibers along the fold edges will be protected from stress and breakage along the crease. Too much tissue is usually better than too little; however, the item must still fit in the box after being padded out.
7. Start by fully extending the object on the work surface. Figure out the best way to fold the object so that the number of folds is minimized and any stiff or especially fragile or deteriorated elements are not located along a fold. Take advantage of existing seams. Make sure the folded size of the item will fit in the box. Line the interior of the box with two layers of tissue at right angles. Leave a tail extended out side of the box on each side. This will be folded over the top of the stored textile before the lid is lowered.

8. Take the corners of a few sheets of tissue in each hand and crinkle the tissue up into each palm, roughly pleating the tissue and drawing it into a sausage shape. The sausage needs to be firm enough to hold the weight of the textile. More than one sheet is needed for each sausage. Place this sausage along the location of the first fold. Make enough sausages to line the entire length of the fold. Fold the textile over the sausages. Repeat this process with each successive fold until the object is entirely folded and ready to be placed in the box.
9. Garments can have extremely convoluted structures. All major areas should be padded out. For example, puffed sleeves should be filled with tissue sausages or balls. Obviously, the object still needs to fit in the box and this may limit the amount of padding possible.
10. When the item is full padded and folded, place it into the box and over lap the extending tails of tissue back over the top of the item. Lower the box top into place. If the box will be stored where there is the risk of leaks or flooding, the box can be placed in a polyethylene bag that is sealed with 2" clear polypropylene adhesive tape.

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