

Textiles are vulnerable to damage by light exposure, pests such as moths, by mould, and by contact with acidic or alkaline substances. There are several easy measures which can be put in place at home to prevent or reduce these issues, and help your textiles last longer.

## Handling

Always support textiles when moving them: carry them flat on a board, or place a hand beneath the textiles heaviest parts if it is on a coat hanger. Check there is an appropriate, clean surface to take it to before you pick it up. Round off any sharp cardboard corners on carrying trays.

## Cleaning

Clean textiles are less attractive to insect pests, less vulnerable to mould, and less likely to experience mechanical wear (dust can actually be abrasive to delicate textiles). Most textiles can be gently cleaned by removing surface dust with careful vacuuming. See the '*Brush Vacuuming Techniques*' fact sheet for further details.

Do not immerse textiles in water or use solvents ('dry cleaning') without careful consideration of the possible effects: many historic textile dyes are not colourfast and were not made to be washed.

Check for any evidence of pest activity including insect eggs. See our fact sheet on '*Freezing to Eradicate Insects*'.

## Storage

Always ensure textiles are as clean as possible prior to long term storage.

Choose a place which has some air exchange (not in a plastic bag), low humidity (not under the bed, in the basement or attic), and can be accessed to check for condition easily.

## More information

For more information on the care of textiles, please see the following resources:

CCI Notes: <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1439925167385>

reCollections: <https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/collection-care>

Using old washed white sheets and pillowcases to wrap textiles provides many benefits: the cotton provides a pest barrier, protects from dust, provides air exchange and keeps the textile out of contact with acids such as the bottom of a wooden drawer.

Roll rather than fold where possible, or supports folds with rolled acid free tissue or washed cotton.

Support voids where possible, such as stuffing the inside of hats and shoes with shaped acid free tissue or cushions made of a 100% polyester fabric stuffed with polyester wadding (also known as Dacron or 'toy fill').

Store heavy items flat if possible, or on a hanger which is padded with polyester wadding and washed cotton/calico to support the shape. Ensure any wood or wire of the hanger is not in contact with the textile.

A loose cover of 100% polyester or washed cotton/calico can be placed over the hanging item.

## Display

Sunlight, particularly ultraviolet radiation (UV) is one of the major causes of damage to dyes and to fabric. Choose to display your textile object for a short period, perhaps three months, and then place it back into dark storage. Other options are to display flat items framed under UV screening Perspex or to choose an area of the room with no direct sunlight. Do not position bright or heat generating spotlights directly over displayed textiles.