

Cleaning

Regular dusting, particularly of the top edge, or 'head' of the book, will assist in keeping your books in good condition.

When cleaning your volumes, hold the book firmly closed in your hand and clean the top edge with a soft brush or cloth.

Handling

- Use clean, dry hands when handling volumes and turning pages.
- Books, especially diaries, are often weak along the spine and the joints (where the covers join the spine). Do not open or flatten books beyond their point of resistance otherwise the spine and joints may crack or split.
- When removing a book from a shelf, do not pull it out by the top lip of the spine. This will eventually result in the upper spine tearing. Instead, carefully push the adjacent books back or to the side, so you can grasp the book by the covers at the middle of the spine.
- Use acid-free paper strips as bookmarks. Markers often get left inside books and may stain the pages
- If a book is particularly large or fragile rest the book on a pillow or cushion to support the spine when opening.

Storage

- Store books away from food, moisture and direct sunlight and preferably where air can circulate freely.

More information

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

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

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

- Keep the shelves of your bookcase free of dust to minimise pest and mould activity. Avoid storing books near windows or using shelving against external walls which can lead to condensation and dramatic temperature changes.
- When putting books on a shelf, do not wedge them too tightly. Bookends can be utilised to stop books from slumping or falling over on the shelf.
- Place similarly sized volumes together on shelves to ensure uniform support and prevent warping.
- Some books are best stored flat on shelves. These include large books with limp covers, very wide books, books with loose covers or those where the binding is falling apart.
- Books that are coming apart should be wrapped in archival tissue and put in an archival storage box to prevent further damage.

Notes About Leather Covers

- Do not use leather dressings on leather book bindings as they can cause the leather to dry out and may stain the leather and pages over time. Dressings can also leave the surface sticky, attracting dust and insects and potentially lead to mould.
- Polyester film dust jackets can be used to prevent dry rotted leather offsetting onto adjacent material. Consolidants can be applied by a professional conservator to bind dry rotted leather.
- For concerns about leather splitting or degrading, seek professional advice from a conservator.