

# INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

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## Timely Tips: Handling Small Objects

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We're surrounded by small objects every day. Many of those objects are meant to be used until they are used up and no longer serve a functional purpose. We don't even think twice about using that antique teacup we bought at the antique store. However, if that same teacup is part of a museum collection, it goes from being a functional, everyday object to an object that represents history and helps tell the story of the communities we serve.

To learn more about how to handle small objects, check out our Timely Tips video.



[Timely Tips: Handling Small Objects](#) (Local History Services, Indiana Historical Society)

When we are handling small objects in our collections, one of the most important things we can do is protect the objects from ourselves.

- Prepare
  - Think about our clothing and jewelry and remove anything that may scratch or

catch on the object.

- Don't transfer oils, salt, and dirt from our hands to the object. Thoroughly wash our hands and don't follow up by putting on lotion or hand sanitizer.
- Handle with care
  - Look for any cracks and joins on the object. Those are inherent weak spots and picking the object up by its handle or near a crack may cause breakage.
  - Use a box with a lip to transport the object from place to place to minimize the chance that it will fall and be damaged.
- Be aware
  - Check out your surroundings and clear a path if you are moving the object from place to place.
  - Be sure that any surfaces are clear of other objects before you put an object down.

Remembering and following these basic tips will minimize the chances of damage to your collections objects and help preserve them for years to come.

## Further Resources

- [Collections Advisors](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Timely Tips](#) (Indiana Historical Society)

## Collection Trainings

[Surface Cleaning Techniques for Paper-Based Materials: A "Hands-On Webinar"](#)

**June 6** – (Northeast Document Conservation Center)

[Collections Management Policy Toolkit](#)

**June 7** – (Connecting to Collections Care)

[Collaboration Between Museums and Indigenous Partners](#)

**June 22** – (Texas Historical Commission)

[Webinars](#)

**Recorded** – (Indiana Historical Society)

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