

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

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Timely Tips: Handling and Storing Textiles

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[Timely Tips: Handling and Storing Textiles](#) (Indiana Historical Society)

Textiles are delicate. If we don't care for them properly, we'll lose them forever. Here are some basic tips to help us preserve them for years to come.

Handling:

- Wash your hands and don't use lotion or hand sanitizer. Anything that's on your hands can transfer to the textile and may cause immediate and/or long-term damage.
- Check for any weak spots – areas where the textile is worn, threads are frayed, or the material is starting to tear or split. Avoid pulling, stretching, or putting any pressure on the textile in those areas.
- Fully support items while they are being handled and don't tug or pull on them.

Storage:

- Knits and delicate items should be boxed. Hanging them stresses the fabric and stitching and can cause them to stretch and tear.
- Use acid-free, lignin-free boxes and tissue. The tissue paper that is used to wrap presents is not archivally stable and shouldn't be used for collections storage.
- Make loose rolls of tissue paper and place them in any folds. The tissue paper will support the textile and keep the fabric from becoming permanently creased.
- Multiple textiles can be stored in one box if necessary. Place the heaviest items on the bottom.
- Fasten closures so that buttons, hooks, and snaps don't get caught and tear fabric.
- Sturdy items can be hung on padded hangers. The padding should support the item, almost as if it is being worn.
- Don't use metal hangers. Metal hangers may rust and permanently adhere to or stain textiles.
- Wood or plastic hangers can be padded and wrapped in stockinette or unbleached cotton muslin to provide a barrier between the hanger and the textile.

Further Resources

- [Collections Advisors](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Timely Tips](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Conserv O Grams](#) (National Park Service)

Collection Trainings

[Care of Tin-Mercury Amalgam Mirrors](#)

July 19 - (Connecting to Collections Care)

[Webinars](#)

Recorded – (Indiana Historical Society)

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[Local History Services](#)

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