



## Care of Books

### 25 Reminders for Common-Sense Book Care

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1. **Don't** use scotch tape to mend torn pages, maps, and illustrations in books; **do** use archival-quality filmoplast for that purpose.
2. **Don't** let books lean or tip over when they are upright on carts or on shelves; **do** use bookends (but make sure you slide them carefully under the books).
3. **Don't** shelf and box books with either their spines or their fore-edges down; **do** shelf and box books either straight up or flat.
4. **Don't** jam books tightly onto shelves, or with books set horizontal on top of vertical ones; **do** allow room to pull books out easily and with air circulation over the book tops.
5. **Don't** place identification strips with slots over the page tops; if you buy these, either don't use that slot, or turn them upside down so people won't be tempted to attach them that way. (They tend to tear thin paper.)
6. **Don't** staple or permanently tape pamphlets into pambinders; drop them into mylar or archival paper sleeves, or pambinders that contain open-topped envelopes.
7. **Don't** place thin items like newspapers and magazines upright into boxes unless they are completely braced front and back; **do** lay them flat in archival-quality boxes of an appropriate size.
8. **Don't** throw away dust jackets; **do** leave them on, and cover with archival-quality clear covers, if desired, to keep them from tearing.
9. **Don't** reach up and pull books off shelves by the headcap at the top of their spines, or by pinching the spines with your fingernails; **do** use a stable footstool or stepladder to reach them easier. Then pull out gently with your fingers by their centers (slightly pushing back the adjoining books on each side), or tilt them forward from their backs to retrieve.
10. **Don't** stack books up high on a table while processing, especially with smaller books on the bottom or middle of the pile; **do** construct shorter piles, with the books arranged from largest on the bottom up to the smallest on top.

11. **Don't** splat books open flat to read, either face-up or face-down; **do** prop them at an angle in your hand, supported by other books, or cradled in a book rest, pillow, or rolled-up towels.
12. **Don't** let dirt and dust accumulate on books; **do** keep them in bookcases if possible, dust them with soft cloths or brushes, and keep the surrounding environment clean by vacuuming.
13. **Don't** write on top of either open or closed books; **do** use a clipboard, notebook, or table surface instead.
14. **Don't** put oil or "leather-dressing" on books; **do** just leave them alone in that respect, especially if the covers are vellum (untanned animal skin).
15. **Don't** use books as coasters for drinks; **do** get some actual coasters--but don't set them too close to the books, and keep them on a lower level, in case of spills.
16. **Don't** eat in close proximity to books; **do** eat cookies, cheese curls, potato chips, etc. well away from books, and then wipe or wash your hands before handling them.
17. **Don't** do flat photocopying on older or fragile books; **do** use a bevel-edge photocopier.
18. **Don't** use pens around books; **do** use pencils to prevent unintentional permanent damage.
19. **Don't** glue, tape up, wrap with rubber bands, or have books "rebound" that are in, or intended for, special collections; **do** have them custom boxed (either in-house or by a specialist with those skills); or, have a PROFESSIONALLY-TRAINED CONSERVATOR "rehinge," or "reback" them (depending on if the spine cover is present or not); or just wrap two or three flat white ribbons across the bodies and tie bows on the fore-edges.
20. **Don't** turn pages roughly or by licking your finger; **do** turn pages slowly and carefully without the added spit.
21. **Don't** enclose books in ordinary plastic bags (moisture and gases can build up); either don't enclose them at all, or use archival-quality materials.
22. **Don't** store books in front of a sunny window, by a heater, in a damp basement on the floor, or in a hot attic or outbuilding; **do** keep them in a stable environment where the temperature and humidity don't fluctuate greatly, and that is as cool (below 70 degrees), dry (below 60%, and preferably 50%, relative humidity), and dark as possible.
23. **Don't** forget about the effects insects, rodents, and other creatures can have on books, particularly if stored in an attic or outbuilding, or in a hot and moist climate; **do** monitor boxed and stored books for bird or mouse droppings and nests, moth eggs, silverfish, cockroaches, and bookworms.
24. **Don't** let your books get stolen; **do** watch patrons and use security mirrors and cameras.

25. **Don't** be uninformed about the larger preservation issues like disaster planning; **do** keep up with reading professional literature in the fields of archives and librarianship-- both print and online.