

# 12 Steps to Mitigating Damage in Books and Paper

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Kyla Ubbink, Conservator

## 1) Organize

- Arrange books and paper by size
- Do not over pack or over stack shelves or drawers
- Use acid free tissue separators to protect transfer of dyes and media
- Leave air space behind books
- Use bookends to keep books squarely upright

## 2) Remove Foreign Materials

- Carefully remove staples, pins, paper clips, flowers/leaves, bookmarks, clippings, letters, notes and any other foreign materials

## 3) Remove from Direct Light, keep lights off when possible

## 4) Remove from Basements, Attics, Kitchens, and Outside Walls

- Find a dry, cool, stable environment (15-18°C, Relative Humidity of 45-55%)
- Do not seal paper objects
- Do not keep bookcases or framed works near food preparation or storage areas

## 5) Frequent Dusting or Vacuuming with soft, clean brush

- Observe for evidence of pests and mould
- Cover vacuum nozzle with Nylon or screen, and vacuum cautiously

## 6) Cautious Handling Techniques for removing and placing books on shelves

- To remove a book, push back the ones on either side and grasp the spine with fingertips, avoid pulling at caps
- Be cautious of corners and edges when sliding books on and off shelves

## 7) Read with Care

- Support the book's covers; do not stress the spine or joints by over-opening. A pillow or towel provides sufficient support for larger volumes
- Wash hands well, clean work area, remove all food and drink
- Only use pencils to take notes

## 8) View Unframed Works with Care

- Fully support flat paper objects with acid free card at all times
- Unfolding and unrolling may require humidification by a conservator
- Wash hands well and clean working area, remove all food and drink
- Only use pencils to take notes

## 9) Provide Full Support for Objects while in Storage

- Shelves, drawers, and boxes must be of adequate size to fully support the paper or books
- Large books may be laid flat providing the entire surface is supported

## 10) Use Acid Free Storage Units

- Use low-acid woods like balsa, poplar, birch, mahogany, walnut, and basswood or metal for storage units and frames
- Prevent acid or rust migration by sealing them with Varathane® or acrylic enamel paint and letting it off gas for 30 days

## 11) Use Custom Enclosures

- Use custom made acid-free enclosures, mats and mounting techniques (shown below) to protect paper and books from dust, dirt, pests, sunlight, handling, acid and environmental fluctuations. Commercial enclosures do not provide full support and eventually cause abrasion and distortion

## 12) SEE A CONSERVATOR FOR REPAIRS, PRESERVATION, AND IN THE ADVENT OF A DISASTER OR PEST AND MOULD INFESTATION