

Caring for Your Treasures at Home

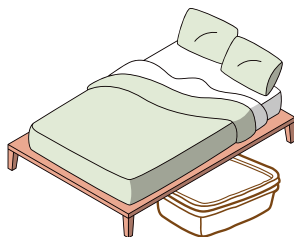
Choose a **safe storage location**.

Attics are seasonally very hot and high temperatures are especially bad for photographs.



Basements are often too humid for metals, papers, and textiles, although ceramics and glass may be fine in those areas. Appliances like hot water heaters or washing machines can leak and cause damage.

Try storing your treasures in a closet or under a bed instead, where temperature and humidity are usually more stable and better to preserve your items.



Bright light from the sun and from artificial lights will cause irreversible damage over time. Paper, textiles, and photographs are especially vulnerable.

Wood, cardboard, and newspaper emit **acids** as they age and will stain fabric and paper and speed metal oxidation. For long-term storage, line boxes and drawers with aluminum foil. Undyed cotton fabric, polyester, and printer paper can also be used as liners temporarily but will absorb acids over time.

Plastic containers marked “PE” and “PP” are generally safe for preservation. Bins will trap excess moisture, which can cause mold. Try to pack them during a time of moderate relative humidity and make sure materials are not damp at the time of packing.



Avoid tape, paper clips, staples, and rubber bands.

All will deteriorate and damage materials. Instead, fold blank printer paper around document groups or photographs.

Protect treasures from pests such as rodents and insects. Heritage-eating insects include roaches, silverfish, carpet beetles, and clothes moths.



Guard against tarnish. Pacific silver cloth is ideal for lining containers or wrapping around silver and brass to prevent tarnish.

Save your silica gel! Remember those little pouches that come with shoe boxes? Those can be used inside plastic bins to help stabilize relative humidity.

Learn more: ncmuseumofhistory.org/collections/how-care-your-artifacts