

Historic Quilts: Advice on Storage in the Home

The Quilt Museum and Gallery



The Quilt Museum and Gallery has a unique collection of over 800 quilts and related artefacts from across the British Isles, dating from the early 18th century up to the present day. Our collection is stored according to museum best practise to ensure the preservation of our quilting heritage. Our changing programme of exhibitions allows us to minimise potential damage to our collection from light, temperature, humidity, dust and pest threats.

The same storage techniques we use can be applied in the home for the preservation of treasured antique textiles and family heirlooms.

Storage

Space Saver- Boxed/Folded:

- Lay the quilt/textile out flat and cover the surface with acid free tissue paper
- Roll sheets of acid free tissue paper and twist at the end. Place these rolls along every fold line to prevent sharp creases forming
- Fold the quilt into thirds (or more for the longer dimension - never in half and quarters), and thirds again, with all folds supported by tissue rolls
- Place the folded quilt in an acid free box or wrap in a white cotton sheet to protect from dust
- Store the quilt in a dark, dry place away from the deteriorating factors of light, fluctuating temperatures and humidity and pests. Garages, attics and airing cupboards are not suitable.

Useful Websites:

Conservation supplies can be purchased from internet specialists such as:

www.restore-products.co.uk/ecommerce/

www.preservationequipment.com/

More Space - Rolled:

- Take a long cardboard tube (wider diameters are better) and cover with tin foil - this acts as a buffering layer to stop acids from the cardboard affecting your textile. Cover in wadding, and then in plain calico, cotton, or acid free tissue
- Place the quilt top side down, and cover the surface with acid free tissue
- Roll the quilt around the tube - not too tight to prevent any strain on the fabrics.
- Wrap the roll in acid free tissue, and then in white cotton/calico and secure with ribbon or cotton tape. Do not tie the knots so tight that they indent into the quilt roll.

Most Space - Flat:

- To prevent any creasing, folding or rolling, the best way to store a quilt is on a bed! Make sure it is covered by a larger cotton sheet to protect it from light and dust, and keep the area well cleaned to prevent dust build up and potential pest threats.

Pests - what to look for?

The main pests that pose a threat to textiles are the larvae of the **carpet beetle** and the **clothes moth**. They eat protein fibres, meaning silk and wool fabrics are at risk. It is important to check items regularly and keep an eye out for any pest activity.

A dark and stable environment

Light contains a wide spectrum of waves, which can fade colours and weaken fibres. Temperature and humidity fluctuations cause brittle fibres and encourage mould & mildew.