

CARING FOR YOUR QUILTS

Whether you have cherished quilts from a relative, or you have piles of quilts that you've made with your own two hands, it is important to care for these pieces of art so that they will stand the test of time. We've written articles on washing and hanging your quilts, but don't forget to give your quilts some TLC while they are on display, or while you're storing them.

Caring for hanging quilts:

- As your quilts hang they will accumulate dust and cobwebs (no matter how clean your house is!). Try vacuuming quilts occasionally to keep them fresh and sparkling. To do this, purchase a piece of fiberglass screening at your local hardware store. Tape the edges of the screen with electrical or masking tape to avoid putting snags in your quilt. With the screen on top of your quilt vacuum through the screen, using a clean upholstery brush. Vacuum in an up and down fashion, as opposed to "sweeping" over the quilt. Repeat until the front and back of your quilt are clean and dust free.
- Although it may seem logical, never dry clean your quilts. This will ruin the intricate fibers and can destabilize the stitching. (For washing tips refer to *Quick Quilts* January 2004 issue).
- Always mend your quilt as soon as you spot damage. Additional repairs may be necessary if you wait too long. Quilts have "stress" as they hang, and this could increase the damage (snag, tear, loose seam, etc.) over time.

Care of stored quilts:

- Prepare your quilts for clean and successful storage by purchasing acid-free tissue paper and storage boxes. Do not use plastic bags of any type for storage as these emit harmful chemicals that can damage your quilt permanently. You can also store quilts in 100% cotton pillowcases.
- Avoid storing your quilts in basements or attics, rather find space in your linen closet. In the nether-regions of your house there are too many bugs and rodents that can eat away at your quilt, or make it their home.
- Unpack your quilts every 4-6 months. Air them out and then refold them in a different fashion, to avoid permanent crease marks. Remember to always fold right-side out.

You've taken plenty of time to create a beautiful work of art, so remember to care for it gently. Doing this will ensure that your quilt can become a treasured heirloom for many years to come.

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