

## LONG-TERM QUILT STORAGE

Many quilts we have made over the years have been created with the purpose of using. We love quilts, and many of them should be snuggled under, tucked around a baby, tossed on the back of a couch, etc. Yet, there will always be quilts that we want preserved for generations. We've tried a variety of storage uses over the years. However, the scrapbooking boom has brought to our attention the importance of archival or acid-free materials, and their benefit in preserving precious memories for many, many years.

If you start a search on the Internet for "archival quality storage boxes", for example, the results number into the hundred-thousands! We'll narrow down the results a bit here, in hopes that you can find a solution that works best for you and your budget. We mention budget because some of the storage solutions can be rather costly if you have many quilts to store. (Also, please note that our research and experience relate only to 100% cotton quilts. If you are storing quilts that contain other fibers, some of this information may not be relevant).

There are two points to consider when storing your quilts: **Where** and **How**. Ideally, you want to choose a storage location in your house that is cool and dry, free from bugs/critters/moisture, and clear of possible leaks (pipes, roof, etc.). Try to find a closet that is on the interior of your house, is not adjacent to outside walls, and that is dark and dry. Many people over the years have put their quilts in cedar chests, and we don't recommend this. The cedar wood gives off harmful acids over time, which will eventually deteriorate the fibers in your quilt. Additionally, we recommend that you steer clear of the basement, garage, and attic. All of these spaces put the quilt at risk for damage from mildew, bugs, extreme heat, and water damage.

Once you have determined where you will store your quilts, you have many options on **how** to store your quilt. One of our favorite storage methods is a combination of Rubbermaid®/Sterilite® boxes and acid-free tissue. The Rubbermaid® and Sterilite® products are made of plastic materials that are safe for the long-term storage of quilts. If you don't want to use acid-free tissue or plastic boxes, another option is to place your quilts in clean, white pillowcases. Make sure the pillowcases have been washed a few times in hot water, without fabric softener. Fairfield makes high-quality cotton storage bags that are nice, and work well instead of a pillowcase. As an added bonus, each storage bag has a clear pocket that contains an acid-free index card for recording pertinent information about the quilt.

There are many options out there for storing your quilts for the long term, these just happen to be some of our favorites. Let us stress two points however, that will further increase the longevity of your quilts. First, never store your quilts in plastic bags, especially dry cleaner bags. These types of plastic materials disperse harmful gasses that will ruin quilts. Secondly, make a once-a-year habit of refolding your quilts in storage, so that permanent creases don't form.

There are so many choices for your quilt storage, you just have to pick the option that works best for you and your budget. Keep in mind that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Preserve your quilts for the long term, and they will remain in good condition, so they can be cherished by generations to come.

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