

BOOK CARE & REPAIR Buyer's Guide



Proper cleaning, handling, and preventive care can add years to a book's shelf life. Let's go over some basics to keep your books healthy.



Handling with Care

- ✓ Always make sure your hands are clean before touching books.
- ✓ Use a book cradle or padded supports when displaying fragile volumes.
- ✓ When using glue or other adhesive to repair a torn page, use **waxed paper** to prevent adhesive from sticking to other pages
- ✓ When shelf is not full, use book supports to keep books upright.
- ✓ If spines are yellowing or fading, remove books from all sources of sunlight; sunlight bleaches **book jackets and covers**.

Preventive Tip: Use UV-resistant book jacket covers to prevent washed-out appearance.

- ✓ No treatment can reverse the effect of aging, but **Bookkeeper Deacidification Spray** slows the aging effect on wood-pulp paper.



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Book Cleaning 101:

- **Paper and Matte Finished Dust Jackets**
For dirty matte finished dust jackets or pages, the best book treatment is a [Document Cleaning Pad](#). This is a small cloth bag filled with eraser dust. Twist the bag to loosen some dust, then gently rub the bag around on the surface of the jacket with your clean fingers, a soft brush, or the pad itself. This should remove any dust and grime that has not been ground in.
- **Cloth Bindings**
Vulcanized (Absorene) rubber sponges clean cloth bindings very well. Because they contain no chemicals, these sponges are among the safest in cleaning supplies.
- **Dust**
Dust on the top edge of pages may be removed using a vacuum cleaner's soft brush attachment. Before vacuuming, remove the book jacket cover and turn the book upside down; this will help prevent the dust from sifting between the pages.
- **Oil or Grease Stains**
To minimize oil or grease stains on pages, place absorbent paper towels between the pages, close the book, and place it under a book weight. After several days, remove the paper towel. Repeat as necessary.
- **Adhesives**
Adhesive residue can be difficult to remove. Labels should come off with a careful application of [Un-du™ Label and Tape Remover](#) and the very-cautious use of a thin, flat knife (i.e., a palette knife or thin butter knife).
- **Musty Odor**
To minimize or eliminate unpleasant musty smells, place the offending book next to a vessel containing one of the following substances, keeping the book and vessel together in a closed container or airtight bag for 12 hours to two weeks:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Unscented Kitty Litter | Coffee Grounds/Beans |
| Cloves | White Vinegar |
| Woodruff | Lysol |
| Baking Soda | Charcoal |
| Cedar Chips/Shavings | |

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FAQ:

I want to remove a label from a book, but have run out of “un-du Label Remover.” What should I do? Try using a hair dryer on a low-heat setting. This can be effective in removing labels, tape, or anything that is glued to paper. A hair dryer can also be a valuable emergency tool if your book is wet. It may even help combat mildew during the early stages.

I am a Florida bookseller, and mildew is a problem for me, although I keep the air conditioning going. Any tips for me? Mildew, also known as mold, can destroy a book, and it can spread. Webster's Dictionary defines it as “a furry growth on the surface of organic matter,” and your book is made of organic matter (from materials which were formerly alive). The [Document Cleaning Pad](#) is helpful against mold. Fungi thrive on moisture and heat, so air conditioning is a good idea.

I've heard that Vaseline can be useful for book cleaning. Is this true? Vaseline is petrolatum, (petroleum jelly), and it can be useful. A dab of it on a soft, clean cloth can often eliminate smudges on dust jackets. Wipe it on and off with a cleaning agent like a [Document Cleaning Pad](#). Bookseller folklore is filled with stories of household products being used for book care, such as nail polish remover and lighter fluid—as a rule, however, the potential pros do not outweigh the cons.

What is an “art gum eraser”? Isn't any eraser okay to use? Experienced book professionals divide erasers into plastic, art gum, and kneaded varieties. The basic tool is the [art gum eraser](#), and it is a must for any seller or lover of books. This large, soft eraser keeps books clean without causing damage to the paper. The [art gum eraser](#) should be used gently on graphite marks, dirty dust jackets, dirty book covers, and other items. This eraser crumbles easily; the crumbs should then be whisked away. Any black surfaces that appear on the eraser may be cut away, or you may get rid of them by rubbing eraser onto blank paper.

Is there any way to close (repair) a torn page, besides using tape? If you do not wish to use a thin, acid-free tape like [Filmoplast® Tape](#), you may glue the tear shut with the following method:

- Rest the torn page on a sheet of [waxed paper](#).
- Run a line of acid-free glue, such as [Brodart Bind-Art® Adhesive](#), along the tear, using a fine paintbrush, cotton swab, or toothpick.
- Wipe away any excess glue with a cloth and place a separate sheet of waxed paper on top of the tear.
- Close the book and place a book weight, or other books, on top of the repaired book until the glue is completely dry.
- The waxed paper will be easily removable when the glue is dry.

Do books generally require more care than CDs, DVDs, and other media? Generally, yes. Books are made mainly of paper, cloth, glue, and other organic materials. Because they come from live sources, like fine furniture, they require more care than products made from mostly inorganic materials.

What can be done for a book whose cover has been faded by sunlight? Unfortunately, nothing. If a book is “sunned” (faded), the damage is permanent. But just as people can forestall skin damage by applying sunscreen, you can forestall UV damage to your book covers by applying [Brodart Book Jacket Covers](#).

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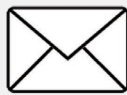
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