



How Should I Store My Lace?

First, let's talk about how **not** to store your lace:

- Do not store it in a brown cardboard box or dry cleaner bag.
- Do not store it in a drawer or cedar chest in direct contact with the wood.
- Do not store or display it in direct sunlight or with a spotlight on it.
- Do not store it in a basement, garage or an attic.

So, that's the easy part, how and where to store lace depends on what you have, why you are storing it and how often you want to have access to it.

In general, lace should be stored in acid free boxes in a well-ventilated room or closet with the average temperature around 70° F and 50% humidity. Laces should be separated by layers of acid free tissue or well-washed muslin fabric.

Wood and brown cardboard give off acid that turns cellulosic fabrics (cotton and linen) yellowish brown, and these stains are very difficult to remove. Cedar chests are good for wool blankets, but not for other textiles. If you must use a wood chest, seal the inside carefully with water-soluble poly-urethane and then make sure that there is an acid-free paper or a fabric barrier between the wood and the stored items.

Better yet, invest in acid free boxes and store your lace safely. If you have handkerchiefs or table linens with creases, try to store them flat. Old linen will break along fold lines that have been in too long. Tablecloths and runners can be rolled on tubes or hung on padded hangars. Either purchase acid-free tubes or make your own by covering cardboard tubes with aluminum foil and then washed muslin or acid-free tissue. Roll the lace or linens and cover with additional fabric, tied with twill tape ties. Large pieces can be folded and stored on shelves, using tissue padding at the folds with a fabric cover wrapped and tied around the outside, but be sure to unfold and re-fold along different lines at least 3 times per year!

Garments can be hung on padded hangers with cloth garment covers, but anything with beads or pearls, is knit, or that has small straps should be stored flat in an acid-free box. Pad sleeves, ruffles and any folds you must make to get the garment in a box with acid-free tissue. Store metal, leather, rubber and plastic items separately from the garments and lace.

Smaller pieces of lace go nicely in layers of tissue in boxes. Do not store the boxes directly on the floor – raise them up an inch or two on shelves. Keep the storage area clean – vacuum the floor in and all the corners regularly. Store in areas where the temperature and humidity remain fairly constant: 70° F and 50% humidity. Never store in an attic, basement or garage.

Remember to label your lace collection – let your heirs know what it is and why it is valuable! Take an inventory and include who made or purchased each item, where and if known why. Keep photos of the lace and the owner/wearer of the garments with your inventory.

Do display some of your lace so you can enjoy it! Try to rotate some laces from display to storage to reduce the amount of light damage to any one piece. That way you get to enjoy many of your pieces.

Some resources for storage materials:

Light Impressions – archival products www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

Metal Edge, Inc. Archival Storage Materials www.metaledgeinc.com

The Container Store www.thecontainerstore.com

University Products – The Archival Company www.universityproducts.com

Gaylord Brothers – archival and library supply www.gaylord.com

Copyright © 2017 Donna LaVallee. All Rights Reserved.

Distributed by

The Lace Museum

552 South Murphy Avenue, Sunnyvale California 94086
www.thelacemuseum.org (408)730-4695