

WELCOME

This leaflet explains how to display paper-based items that are important to you at home.



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Visit LMA online

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives

Suggested reading and websites

Institute of Conservation

www.icon.org.uk

American Institute for Conservation (AIC)

http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Category:Mounts_%26_Mountmaking

Tate Gallery

www.tate.org.uk/about-us/conservation

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)

www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preserving-private-and-family-collections/caring-for-private-and-family-collections

CARING FOR YOUR
COLLECTION AT HOME

PRINTS & DRAWINGS

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Displaying paper items

The things we display in our homes are important to us, whether they are memories, symbols or just a nice view. However, displaying paper items for a long time can result in damage and degradation, including:

- Dust and grime from pollutants in the air.
- Fading and discolouration due to light exposure, especially direct sunlight (below).
- Distortions and ripples in the paper if the temperature or humidity are constantly changing.
- Tears, scratches and creases from careless handling.
- Stains from leaks and spillages, or from decay of poor-quality mounting and framing materials.
- Foxing and mould caused by damp conditions (below).



Guidelines

Prioritise items and avoid displaying very precious ones. Substitute vulnerable items (e.g. unique family photos) with copies and keep the originals in a box where they are better protected.

Consider display location:

- Reduce dust accumulation by positioning away from vents, open windows or doors.
- Display out of direct sunlight (worst through south-facing windows). Curtains/blinds can be closed, or covers placed over items to reduce light exposure, e.g. if going away. Consider using anti-UV polyester film on windows or glazing with UV blocking properties for framing.
- Avoid damp locations like bathrooms, kitchens, basements, windowsills and external walls. Remember that pockets of damp can develop in neglected corners or behind picture frames.
- Avoid places that can get very hot such as above radiators.
- Keep away from areas prone to spillages or leaks.

Conservation mounting, framing and display methods provide the best protection:

- Mounts should be made from alkaline buffered board, unless they are for photographs, for which neutral, non-buffered board is recommended.
- Archival polyester sleeves are preferable to PVC albums and sleeves, which contain harmful plasticisers.
- If fixing originals to supports, avoid spray mount and pressure sensitive tape like 'Sellotape'. Instead use hinges made from conservation gummed white paper mounting tape or 'V' strips for photographs (right).
- Leave a gap between the object and the glazing to prevent surface damage and allow air to circulate.

- Foil can be placed between the mountboard and the frame's backboard to prevent acid migration.
- Use non-rusting fixings to hold the mount in the frame.
- Seal the gap on the back with gummed tape.

Carry out periodic assessment of the items. Look for condensation where glazing is used, monitor change in existing discolouration, perhaps by taking a photograph and comparing over time. Check for distortion or deterioration in the item and display materials.

