

Housekeeping for Historic Homes and House Museums

by Melissa Heaver

Everything gets dirty! We all know this from personal experience; dust and dirt seem to accumulate on books and furniture in our homes at a phenomenal rate. Think about how much grime can build up in your own house when you go away for a week.

Imagine what happens to a house museum that is open to the public and receives 20,000 visitors each year. Visitors can quickly wear down floors and carpeting, their hands touch furniture, walls and banisters, thus damaging collections and interior finishes. Historic house museums were not designed for the amount of pedestrian traffic that occurs after a building is opened to visitors.

The typical historic house, whether museum or private residence, is subjected to stresses far beyond those of a modern residence. Historic structures are not sealed like modern buildings. Floor boards are worn and have shifted, doors and windows no longer hang properly in their openings, and modern ventilation systems often bring in even more dirt and dust. Even the most thorough housekeeping regime cannot prevent these pollutants from creeping into the house.

In addition, historic houses are often furnished with objects that require long-term preservation. These heirlooms, whether a marble topped table or a century-old family quilt, are often extremely fragile, and cannot be cared for with modern cleaning methods. The elbow grease and strong chemicals used to maintain most modern homes cannot be used to clean historic artifacts. They must be carefully handled and extra precautions should be taken when cleaning them.

This manual is designed to assist those responsible for the care and maintenance of an older or historic home, whether private residence or house museum. Individuals who own antiques or family heirlooms will find helpful advice about cleaning methods and supplies. This guide also explains what not to do, and when not to do anything at all. Suppliers for many of the products mentioned in this guide are listed in the resource section at the end of the book.

This housekeeping manual is by no means the definitive answer to all questions. New techniques and new materials are constantly emerging; keeping abreast of new developments is the best way to augment the information provided here.

Although many of these guidelines were originally written for the National Trust's collection of historic house museums, they have been adapted here for homeowners and other historic site overseers, as well. More than 6,000 historic sites in this country are open to the public. Many of them have original or historic furnishings, all of which need proper care and cleaning.

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Housekeeping Plans for House Museums

Housekeeping must be a primary concern of site management. Sound housekeeping practices are important for the welfare of the artifacts. Furthermore, ongoing maintenance is cheaper than undertaking major repairs or restoration after furniture or interior finishes have been damaged from incorrect cleaning methods.

It is a good idea to prepare a schedule or plan for housekeeping, so that everyone involved in the actual care of objects is aware of what needs to be done, who is responsible for carrying out specific activities, when those projects should be completed, and what materials should be used. The housekeeping plan becomes the institutional memory ensuring consistent, long-term collections preservation. Each staff member should have a copy of the plan and participate in periodic training on proper housekeeping methods.

Even after completion, the housekeeping plan will continue to evolve; be prepared to review it and revise it periodically.

Sometimes less is more. Restraint is an essential characteristic of the successful housekeeping plan and its implementation.

Whenever possible integrate housekeeping procedures and practices into the visitor experience. Guides who understand proper collections care techniques can make it part of their tours. They are able to explain to the visitor what is going on, thus allowing the housekeeping staff to not have to stop and answer so many questions. Telling the visitor what staff is doing helps to educate them about the importance of housekeeping, and the fact that objects just don't "keep clean" by themselves.

Rugbeaters and Homemade Soaps: Cleaning Methods from the Past

Luckily, today we don't have to draw water from a well and make our own soap to mop floors and wash windows. The wide variety of cleaning products found at the local supermarket and modern conveniences, such as vacuum cleaners, make housekeeping easier. Yet many cleaning methods from the past are just as appropriate (and sometimes preferable) today as they were 100 years ago. Carpeting is still beaten to remove ground-in dirt and grime, and silver is often cleaned using whiting. Beeswax and Carnauba waxes are still found in commercial furniture polish, and cloth diapers are still in demand as a polishing cloth.

The Importance of Proper Housekeeping

Although long-term deterioration cannot be halted, maintaining a clean and constant environment can slow the effects of time. Using the wrong cleaning materials can damage historic artifacts, while implementing the wrong techniques can cause irreversible damage to objects. For example, spray polishes contain silicone which permanently adheres to furniture surfaces. Should a piece need to be restored, the furniture conservator would have a difficult time removing that silicone layer. Using scouring pads to clean heavily tarnished and dirty silver can permanently scratch and damage the surface of the piece. The only possible way to remove such damage is to buff it out, which removes layers of metal that cannot be replaced.

General Handling & Moving

We cherish old buildings and artifacts because of their age. We take pleasure in an old leather family bible or proudly display a Native American headdress in the town museum. Yet after 100 years or more, buildings and bibles deserve our respect and careful handling. The following list spells out in general terms what precautions to take when moving or handling historic objects.

Handling

- Always wash your hands thoroughly before handling any object. Wash your hands again before handling a different type of object. Be sure they are thoroughly dry before handling the next object.
- Avoid using hand cream until the end of the day as it will leave a residue on objects.
- Remove all jewelry. Metals and jewels (especially diamonds) can scratch objects easily. Bracelets and watches can bang against items and cause breakage, cracks, or chips. Avoid wearing watches or bracelets, long necklaces, prominent belt buckles, metal buttons, or any other accessory that may scratch or snag when lifting and moving any object, particularly large objects such as furniture.
- Because salts and oils from the perspiration on your hands can promote corrosion on metals, clean white cotton gloves should

be worn at all times when handling metals, porous marble or unglazed ceramics, or when handling any object with a flaking or easily snagged surface. Textiles, books, and paper may be handled with clean gloves or, if necessary, with clean dry hands.

- Wear surgical gloves, or “sure-grip” cotton gloves with plastic grip dots, to handle heavy objects with smooth slick surfaces like metal, marble, or polished stone sculpture, glass, glazed or highly polished ceramics.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke near work areas or places where objects are stored. Food encourages insects and rodents, drinks can easily be spilled and cause severe damage to most types of objects, and smoke/flame can be hazardous near many cleaning materials.



Moving

- Before moving any object or piece of furniture, check your route first. Make sure it is free of obstacles and you are aware of any irregularities in the ground.
- Always know *exactly* where an object is to be placed before moving it. Be sure there is ample and appropriate space where you plan to put the object down.
- Before moving an object, prepare the new location with suitable

“It is the duty of those who are placed as caretakers in the rooms to see that the furniture is used carefully, the room kept clean and decent, and to know that good order is maintained therein; and if the inmates deviate there from it is their duty to kindly admonish them, and if they do not receive the admonition, they should make the case known to the Elders, and there leave it.”

Millennial Laws,
United Society of
Believers in Christ's
Second Appearing
(Shakers), 1825

- padding and support, and make sure that the transport path is clear. Transport heavy objects such as metal and stone in a padded cart or dolly.
- If the piece is large, schedule at least three people to assist in the move, two or more to carry the large object, and one to oversee clearance through doors, etc. If you do not feel comfortable moving the object yourself, or if it is too large or awkward to move alone, seek assistance.
 - Before lifting an object, evaluate the areas of strength and potential weakness in the structure. Examine the object for loose elements or evidence of damage such as cracks (especially “blind” or incomplete cracks), breaks, tears, and insect channeling or exit holes. Also look for signs of old repairs like glue seams, patches, and other reinforcements that indicate weakened areas. These areas will be the weakest part of the object, and must be fully supported when the object is lifted or moved.
 - Do not “test” the strength of areas that visually appear to be weak by tapping, probing, flexing, or any other manipulation that may result in irreversible damage.
 - When carrying an object, support it fully. *Never* carry an object by handles, rims, edges, etc. Support the object at its center of gravity.
 - Use both hands when moving any object.
- Never handle an artifact more than is required. Excessive handling can speed object deterioration.
 - Handle only one object or part of an object at a time. If the object consists of many small pieces, wrap them in acid-free tissue and place them in a padded basket or box to transport them all together. Mark the box with identification information on the pieces temporarily wrapped and stored inside.
 - If an object is damaged during moving or cleaning, carefully wrap the pieces in tissue and place in a basket or box. If the object is of importance because of its history or value, seek the assistance of a professional conservator to repair it. If pieces are found detached, or in the event of accidental breakage during lifting, moving, or installation, do not attempt to repair the damage. Instead, save all pieces, no matter how small and place them in a ziplock bag, box, or other container, depending on the size of the fragments. If the object is part of a museum collection, label the container with the object’s identification number.
 - Use caution when turning an object over or unwrapping it. Always handle small objects over a padded surface, such as a table, or near a floor that has been padded.
 - Be careful with potentially dangerous or lethal objects, such as firearms or medical instruments. If in doubt, do not touch them.

General Cleaning Tips

- Establish and work within a safety zone that includes padded tables and supplies. Establish wet and dry areas. Dry all materials thoroughly before returning them to the dry zone. These zones ensure that the object is safe both from contamination once it is cleaned and contamination from outside sources.
- Complete one task before beginning another. Segment cleaning into small, doable tasks.
- Be sure you have, and use, appropriate tools for cleaning. Be sure these tools have been properly cleaned themselves. If they are contaminated during the cleaning process, replace or clean them.
- Replace your cleaning tools as they get dirty. Do not attempt, for instance, to dust an entire room with one cloth.
- Do not use glue, paste, cement, or epoxy on objects.
- Do not use staples, straight pins, or wire to affix numbers or information to objects.
- Do not write directly on an object or specimen with a ballpoint pen, crayon, felt marking pen, or grease pencil.
- Do not use paint or ink on paper objects or documentary material.
- Never use pen or other ink markers around objects. Use only #2 pencil.
- Do not use inked stamps to imprint numbers or information on objects.
- Never make a mark on the front or back of an oil painting.
- Never affix an accession number to a coin.
- Do not affix an accession number to the underside of a heavy object without making sure a temporary tag is easily accessible for inventory and location purposes.
- REMEMBER: Never do anything to an antique that cannot be undone.
- Do not use pressure-sensitive tape or labels of any kind on antiques or heirlooms. This includes Scotch tape, magic tape, Dymo labels, adhesive tape, or masking tape.
- Do not use gummed labels, gummed tape, or paper on objects.

Things Not to Do

Supplies Needed:

general work tables
dust sheets
mattress pads
tables
chairs
padded baskets or boxes
gloves – latex & cotton
plastic sheeting
padded blocks
clipboard
writing paper
#2 pencils
plastic bags
Mylar

Cleaning Schedule for House Museums Daily Schedule

- Clean public areas – bathrooms, entranceways, ticketing areas.
- Sweep porches, exterior stairs, ramps, and walkways, as necessary.
- Vacuum high traffic areas, as needed, especially exterior mats, entry mats, and modern carpeting used for visitors.
- Empty trash cans.
- Check lights and replace bulbs if necessary.
- Clean exterior of exhibit cases to remove fingerprints. Use liquid plexi polish on soft cloth to clean plexiglass. Use diluted solution of water with a few drops of ammonia and alcohol to clean glass.

Weekly Schedule

- Dust furniture with soft or magnetic cloth, as necessary.
- Inspect for objects that have been moved and put them in their proper place.
- Vacuum floors.
- Dust blinds and windowsills.

Monthly Schedule

- Dust interior woodwork such as doors, doorframes, wainscoting, chair rails, baseboards, and banister posts. Dust mirrors and unglilded mirror frames.
- Vacuum accessory textiles such as tablecloths, dresser scarves, bed linens, and rugs.
- Vacuum fireplace interiors if not in use.
- Inspect for insect remains in textiles, on floor, under furniture, and in window frames.

Quarterly Schedule

- Vacuum upholstered furniture
- Vacuum under beds and moveable furniture.
- Dust book spines and tops of books, drapes, cornices, and lighting fixtures.
- If books are displayed open, inspect and then turn pages.
- Check fire extinguishers, smoke and fire detectors, and test all security systems.

Semiannually

- Vacuum drapes, walls and ceilings.
- Dust high ledges requiring a ladder to reach the area.
- Dust gilded picture and mirror frames.
- Rotate display textiles. Refold or reconfigure folded or hanging textiles, using acid-free tissue as padding, to reduce structural stress.

Annually

- Remove all objects from room.
- Roll rug and remove from floor.
- Put large case pieces that are too heavy to move, into middle of room.
- Remove small objects to prepared work area.
- Remove framed objects from the wall, always using two people.
- Remove window hangings, after taking several close-up photos or completing a sketch of each panel to aid in rehangings.
- Inspect the room envelope. Check for evidence of insects, flaking plaster on the ceiling or walls, leaks, high humidity, mold, floor damage, paint damage, etc.
- Use magnetic cloth on a pole to clean spider webs and loose dirt from ceiling, cornices, carvings, window frames and glass, doorframes and doors, kick plates, and floor.
- Wash windows, interior and exterior.
- Inspect polished brass and silver for tarnishing, and clean and wax or lacquer as needed.
- Inspect stair-carpet, and arrange for restretching if necessary by a professional carpet installer.
- Vacuum and dust interiors of case pieces such as bookcases, desks and cabinets.
- Wax clear finished wood furniture if light buffing fails to bring up a shine.
- Clean and wax iron floor grates, and vacuum air ducts below the vents.
- Dust all books and the interior of all bookcases.

Bi-Annually

- Polish metal objects.
- Inventory collections.

Floors

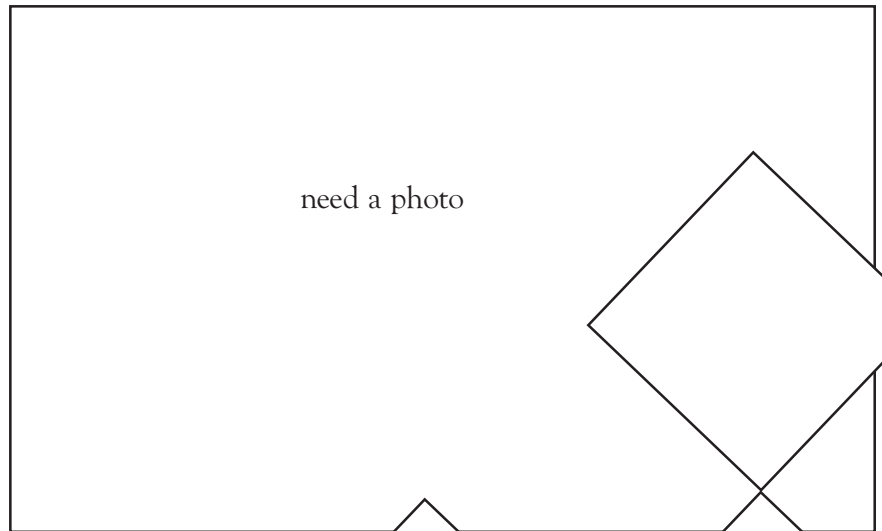
Unfinished and Painted Floors

- Vacuum cleaning is the most efficient way to pick up loose dirt and dust from any type of floor. Use as low suction as possible to complete the job.
- Dust with a mop covered with a magnetic wipe cover, rather than a traditional rag dust mop which can snag in architectural elements, and splinters. and can cause further damage or leave behind residue strings.
- Use a well wrung-out sponge mop to clean tracked in mud or other wet dirt. Test the floor in an inconspicuous place to be sure wet cleaning will not damage or cause the floor to bloom (turn cloudy or white).
- Try to limit damp mopping to a dry day, and provide good ventilation to speed drying time.
- Be sure furnishings do not come in direct contact with the damp mop or floor.
- Inspect floor for insects, rot or loose boards.
- Hire a professional to renew or redo floor finishes. This process is highly toxic and flammable.

Finished Floors

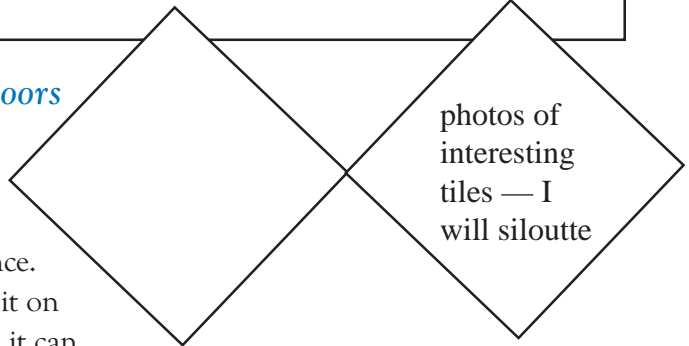
- Damp mop floor. Test inconspicuous area first to make sure finish doesn't bloom or isn't removed by water.

- Wax all floors with bowling alley wax. Use slip-resistant, low gloss wax for wooden steps.
- If the floor has been covered in polyurethane, follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.



Ceramic Tile Floors

- Dust and damp mop, but don't wax as this can change appearance. Don't let water sit on tile surface since it can cause staining or leaching.
- Consider having brick pavers sealed by a professional.
- Cleaning chemicals can etch glaze permanently, so don't use regular household cleaners.



Stone & Terrazzo Floors

- Dust and mop floors with mild mixture of soap and water. Make sure floor is dried thoroughly, as

Floors

water can cause leaching of salts from stone, which can cause more problems.

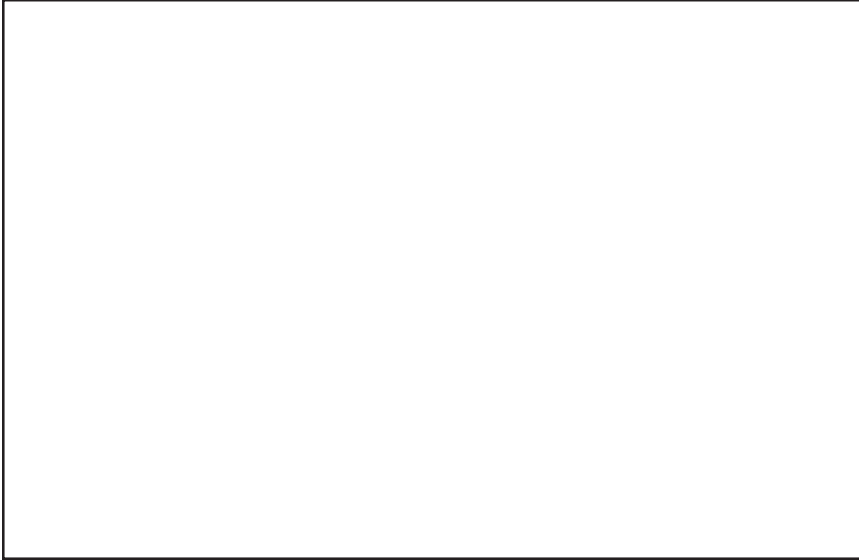
- Don't use commercial detergents which can cause permanent

bleaching or blurring of surfaces.

- Stone and terrazzo floors should be polished every few years by a professional.

Linoleum/Resilient Flooring (asphalt tile, asbestos, vinyl)

- Dust and mop with mild mixture of soap and water.
- Use plastic scouring pads and a weak ammonia and water solution to clean stains.
- Wax asphalt and vinyl floors.
- If asbestos tile shows signs of breaking or disintegrating, contact a professional in asbestos mitigation to deal with situation. This material is hazardous to your health!



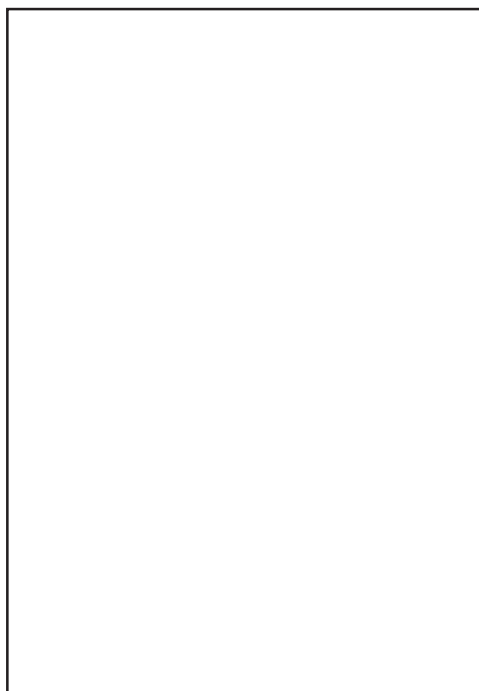
Woodwork

Unpainted Woodwork

- Vacuum woodwork using a screen-covered nozzle. Watch out for loose pieces. Bag these, mark them, and put them aside for later regluing.
- Wipe gently with a magnetic cloth, cotton cloth, or brush. For places near the ceiling, fashion a dust mop with a magnetic cloth and carefully wipe.
- Test for water solubility before any wet cleaning.
- Do not wet clean gilded surfaces. Gold-leaf or gold colored architectural elements, such as moldings or medallions, should be gently brushed.
- Remove fingerprints and scuff marks with diluted Murphy's Oil Soap, Dirtex, or TSP and rinse with a rag dipped in clean water. Remember to test an inconspicuous area first. Dry immediately with a dry cloth, as standing water leaves stains.
- Be careful of original varnish, painted or shellacked finishes that often dull and darken over time. Have a professional remove the finish.
- Modern finishes like polyurethanes, epoxies, and synthetic resins scratch easily and are hard to touch up. Use damp a cloth and wipe with dry one immediately. Test area with alcohol on a cotton swab; if the finish dissolves, shellac or spirit varnish

is present. Test area with mineral spirits on a swab; if the finish is sticky; it consists of layers of wax. If the finish presents a hard clean surface, varnish is present.

- Wax unpainted woodwork using paste wax like Butcher's Bowling Alley, which is easy to remove with mineral spirits. Apply a thin layer using circular motions, allow to dry, and then buff with a clean, dry cloth. Remember that heat and humidity will slow drying time.
- Wax can cause build-up in which case the woodwork would appear tacky or smeared.



- Waxing only needs to be done every two years or so, and if it is done properly, there will be little build up.
- Rebuff the finish periodically.

Need a Statement About Woodwork

After dusting furniture, check for wax deposits. Dip a Q-tip in warm distilled water and gently apply to a small inconspicuous area where there is finish, not bare wood. Allow to dry, and then check for bloom or discoloring.

If wood does not show signs of bloom, mix distilled water with a teaspoon of Ivory cleaner and apply gently with soft cotton cloth to areas of wax build-up. Dry immediately.

Painted Woodwork

- Vacuum or brush.
- Clean with a weak solution containing a few drops of Ivory soap, Dirtex or TSP in a gallon of cool water. Remember to spot test first and stop if you damage or remove paint.
- If dirt and grease come off, then work slowly from ceiling down with a sponge and soap solution. Make sure you change the sponge or rag regularly. Do a small area at a time, and overlap areas to keep from getting rings.
- If the surface is particularly greasy, clean with mineral spirits on a cotton ball. Test the surface in an inconspicuous place first to make sure the paint or finish is not inadvertently removed.
- Don't touch gilded areas.

Faux-painted Woodwork

- Use a damp rag to clean. Remember to test first.
- If there is evidence of flaking, don't touch at all.
- Wax with Butcher's or Renaissance wax to protect.
- Original 18th and 19th century paints had clear coat of varnish or shellac over paint. Test in hidden area with cotton swab and water before cleaning entire surface.

Heavy Dirt on Woodwork

- To removed handprints and scuff marks, wash with tepid water and either Ivory Soap, Orvus Paste, or Murphy's Oil Soap in a weak solution (e.g., 3 tablespoons soap to one gallon of tepid to warm water).
- Moisten a clean absorbent cloth in the soap solution, and gently clean the soiled area with moderate pressure in circular strokes. Do not scrub or use any elbow grease on painted or varnished surfaces. Wipe the area with a cloth and clean water, and follow immediately with a soft dry cloth.
- Stair banisters are often quite sticky from accumulated oils and dirt and should be cleaned with Murphy's Oil Soap, followed by wiping with a soft cloth and clean water, and finally, with a soft dry cloth. If the banisters remain sticky after this treatment, the accumulated residue should be cleaned by wiping the banisters with mineral spirits and then drying with a clean dry soft cloth. For weekly maintenance, use a magnetic wipe cloth to dust the banister, and clean with water and soap (Ivory, Orvus Paste or Murphy's Oil Soap) only as necessary.

Walls and Ceilings

Walls

- If the wall surface is secure, dust from top to bottom with a long-handled dust mop fitted with a clean absorbent cotton or magnetic cloth cover. Do not use any treated cloth for dusting walls.
- Sweep the walls gently from top to bottom, changing the cloth when it becomes dirty. If walls are very dusty, vacuum with the brush floor attachment to minimize redistribution of dust throughout the room.

Wallpaper

- Be careful of wallpaper that is detached or peeling from the wall. This may be due to slow drying of the plaster wall loosening the wallpaper adhesive, or to high levels of relative humidity that may have weakened the adhesive bond of the wallpaper. Care must be taken to avoid damaging loose wallpaper during dusting.
- Do nothing if the paper is historically significant.
- If wallpaper isn't historically significant and is secured to the wall, dust from top to bottom with a dust wipe or magnetic cloth. Remove surface grime with soft brush or vacuum on low suction.
- Don't touch paper with the vacuum head. Use screen .
- Don't use vacuum on delicate or flocked papers.

- Use rubber or vinyl erasers for limited cleaning. Don't use pink erasers, as they can leave a residue.
- Consult a conservator before using water or other solutions to clean wallpaper.

Ceilings

- Clean ceilings as directed for painted wall surfaces.
- Flaking and blistering paint often indicates structural or moisture problems. Check with a professional to determine the source of the problem.
- If the ceiling surface is historic and appears to be flaking or blistering, do not attempt any cleaning. Check with a professional conservator.

“To Clean Papered Walls. – The very best method is to sweep off lightly all the dust, then rub the paper with stale bread – cut the crust off very thick, and wipe straight down from the top, then begin at the top again, and so on.”

Hale, Sarah Josepha. The Good Housekeeper or, the Way to Live Well, and to Be Well While We Live. Boston: Otis, Broaders, & Company, 1841.

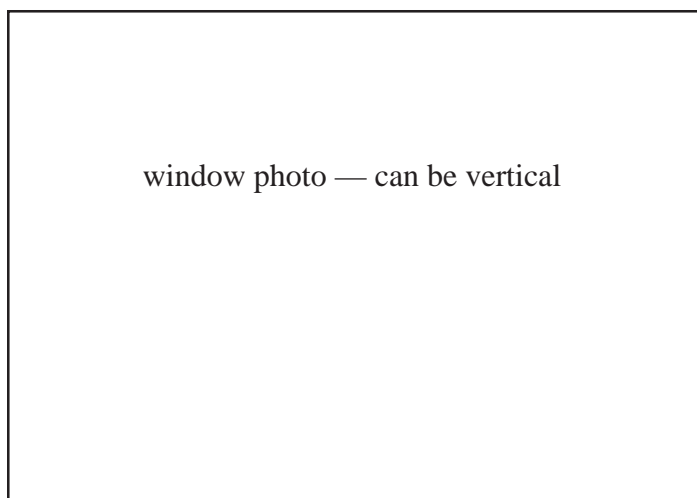
Windows

Glass Panes

- Do not use commercial window cleaners. Commercial compounds often contain silicone or detergents that leave residue films which are difficult to remove.
- Never use a spray bottle of window cleaner. Aerosol and hand-pumped sprays are also hard to confine, and may fall on surrounding surfaces that might be damaged by moisture or by chemical agents in the window cleaning solution.
- Dampen a clean white soft cloth in a solution made of equal parts of distilled water and isopropyl alcohol to which a few drops of household ammonia have been added. Wipe the windowpane with moderate pressure in circular movements, and polish the window with a dry soft lint-free cloth or chamois leather. Do not allow the cleaning solution to come in contact with any varnished or painted wood surface, as the alcohol content in the solution may harm these finishes.

Windows with Applied Ultraviolet Film

- Use only distilled water and a clean soft cotton cloth to clean any window treated with an applied UV filter film. Dry immediately.



- Do not polish the window and avoid any excessive rubbing. Follow the manufacturer's suggestions for further cleaning.

Windows with Separate Ultraviolet Roller Shades or Plexi Sheet Covers

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.
- Do not spray anything directly onto the plexi or glass as it could run onto painted surfaces and could harm the plexi.

Window Fact or Statement

After dusting furniture, check for wax deposits. Dip a Q-tip in warm distilled water and gently apply to a small inconspicuous area where there is finish, not bare wood. Allow to dry, and then check for bloom or discoloring. If wood does not show signs of bloom, mix distilled water with a teaspoon of Ivory cleaner and apply gently with soft cotton cloth to areas of wax build-up. Dry immediately.

If the surface is especially grimy, test a small area first and scrub the surface very gently with 0000 steel wool dipped in turpentine. This is especially good for cleaning the goo found under brass hardware.

Fixtures & Hardware

(Doorknobs, Locks, Grates, Grillwork, etc.)

Brass

- Check first to see if the piece has been lacquered (look for colored pooling in inner corners or at the base) If so, dust the fixture with clean soft cloth.
- For unlacquered brass, remove fixture and clean separately. Cleaners can damage painted and finished wooden surfaces. If the piece can't be removed, take extra care not to touch the painted or finished wooden surface.
- Clean with mineral spirits applied with cotton balls or swabs, followed by a wipe of alcohol.
- If the brass is spotty or marred with fingerprints, polishing may be necessary. Use a flannel jeweler's cloth that has one side impregnated with jeweler's rouge, 3M's Tarnishield or NevrDull to clean polish brass.
- After cleaning with all materials other than the Tarnishield, wax with a thin coat of hard microcrystalline wax such as Renaissance Wax or bowling alley wax.
- Buff well with a soft cloth.

Iron

- Clean with mineral spirits applied with cotton balls or swabs, followed by a wipe of alcohol.
- Wax with microcrystalline wax.
- Do not wax painted metal unless the metal feature, such as a doorknob, is regularly handled.



Ceramic and Glass Fixtures and Hardware

- Use window glass cleaning solution (see *Windows*, on page 13) applied with cotton balls or a cloth diaper.
- Use swabs for cleaning difficult to reach areas.
- Rinse thoroughly with a water-dampened cloth.

“Need a quote about fixtures. Some persons rub in linseed-oil; others mix bees-wax with a little spirits of turpentine and rosin, making it so that it can be put on with a sponge, and wiped off with a soft rag. Others keep in a bottle the following mixture: two ounces of spirits of turpentine, four table-spoonfuls of sweet-oil, and one quart of milk. This is applied with a sponge, and wiped off with a linen rag.”

Beecher, Catharine E. & Stowe, Harriet Beecher. The American Woman's Home or, Principles of Domestic Science. Hartford: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 1998 (originally printed 1869).

Light Fixtures

- Dust the fixture carefully with a soft brush.
- Remove glass globes from fixture and place in a padded dishpan. Clean with window glass cleaner (see *Windows*, on page 11?) applied with cotton swabs, balls, or a soft cotton cloth.
- Do not try to clean metal fixtures without first checking with a professional conservator. Many fixtures are made of different kinds of metals or have been painted to give a faux finish.
- Vacuum or brush lampshades carefully. Many are made of silk, which shatters over time from light damage.
- Make sure power is off before doing any work! Check lamp wires and plugs. If an outlet is loose on the wall, tighten it using a screwdriver.
- Don't run wires under rugs where people walk. Wires can fragment and start a fire.

Hearths & Mantels

Wooden Mantels

- Dust all wooden mantels as directed for painted, varnished, and clear-finished wood with magnetic or soft cloth.
- Avoid using a treated cloth on painted or lacquered surfaces.
- Interiors of many fireplaces are often quite dusty from old soot and cluttered with fallen mortar debris from chimney. Sweep out with a whiskbroom and dustpan. Dust interiors of fireplace regularly as part of the ongoing maintenance schedule.

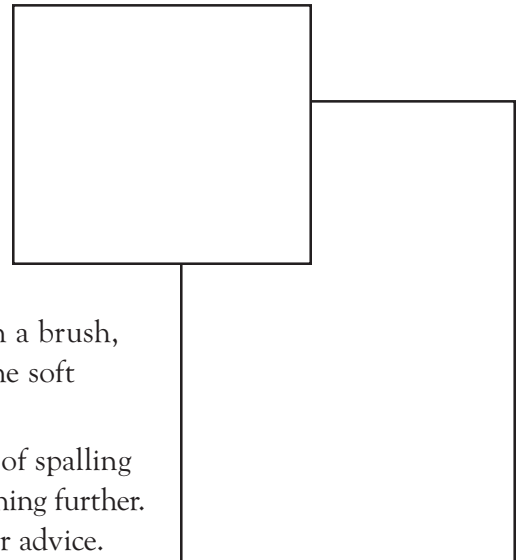
Stone and Marble Hearths and Mantel Surrounds

- Remove surface dust with a brush, cloth, or vacuum using the soft round brush attachment.

- If marble is highly polished, wipe with dampened cloth when necessary.
- Clean marble with Renaissance wax, which will also serve to protect it.

Brick Hearths and Surrounds

- Remove surface dust with a brush, cloth, or vacuum using the soft round brush attachment.
- If brickwork shows signs of spalling or flaking, do not do anything further. Consult a professional for advice.
- Test clean a small area using warm water and a few drops of soap on a cloth. Then clean brick carefully and immediately wipe with clear water and dry with a cloth.



- Do not allow water solution to sit on brickwork since it is very hard to dry.
- Apply a light coating of Renaissance wax or bowling alley wax to protect the surface.

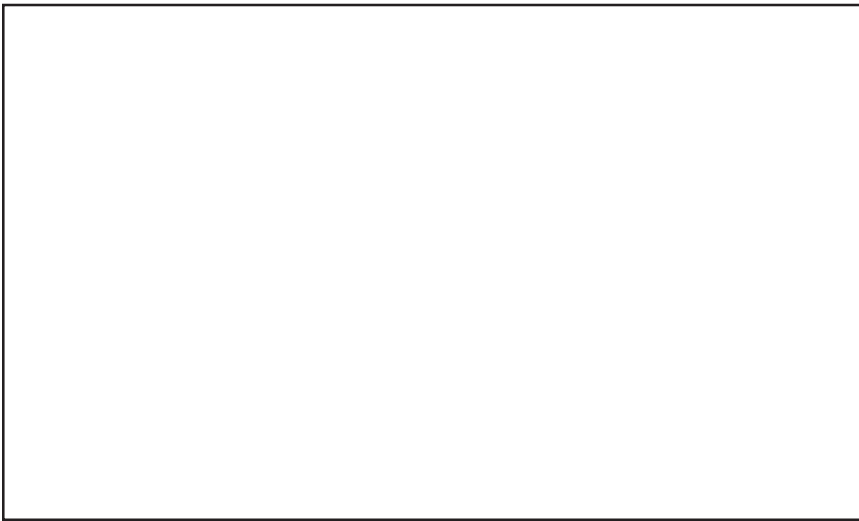
Fireplace Tiles

- Wipe with a damp cloth.
- Clean according to Ceramics, but be careful, as tile edges are unglazed. If moisture seeps in, then it can cause the glazed surface to spall (flake off) permanently.

Window Shades

.....

(wooden, plastic or metal)



- Remove general dust with a magnetic cloth.
- If nonhistoric, take down shades and clean with lukewarm water and then dry immediately.
- Do not get tapes on venetian blinds wet, as they may stain.

Books & Bookshelves

HANDLING TIPS:

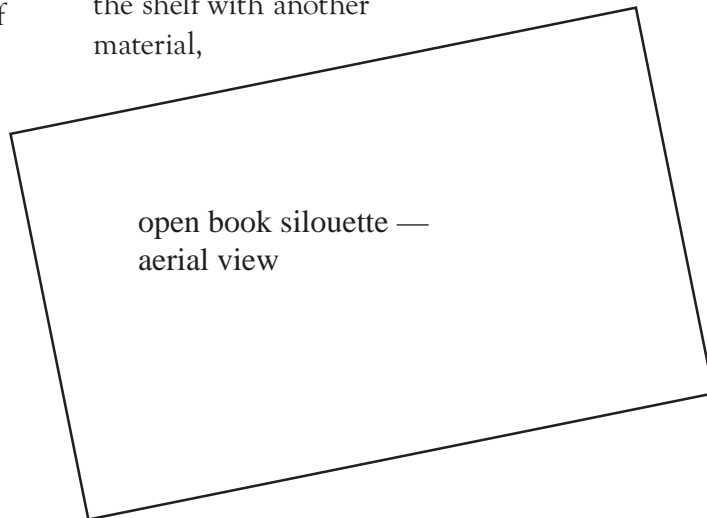
Remove a book from a shelf by either pushing the books on either side back and removing the book by holding the covers on either side of the binding, or pull the book from the rear. Never grab a book by the top or sides of the spine. These are very weak places and are likely to break. Open books very carefully. Do not crack the binding. When books are open, have padded blocks to put under the covers to take the strain off the binding. Turn the pages using upper-right corner. Do not moisten your fingers to turn pages.

- Work from the top shelf down.
- Clean the shelf with the appropriate method (See furniture section). Do not wax surfaces that may come in contact with the books.
- Clean books by holding fore edge (long edge), hold firmly closed. With a soft brush, sweep away, down the book, from your body. If there are torn or broken edges, do not brush these off. Brush spine and boards very carefully.
- Remove any material that is in the books such as pressed flowers, paper clips, or newsprint. If appropriate, place items in an envelope and store in a safe place.
- If the spine or cover is loose or detached, tie in place lightly with cotton twill tape. To protect the boards, be sure to tie in both directions.

- For a deeper cleaning, vacuum stable books carefully using a soft brush attachment and decreased suction.
- Don't use cleaners such as saddle soap or English leather dressings, as they can permanently adhere to the leather.
- Before replacing books, check the shelf for nails, ridges, or grooves. If there are ridges in the shelf, line the shelf with another material,

Supplies Needed:

acid-free tissue
brushes
mylar tape
acid-free paper for
markers



such as acid free corrugated cardboard to correct the inconsistency.

- If the shelf is sagging, determine if it can withstand the weight of the books you are planning to put on it. If it cannot, do not replace the books.
- Do not push books all the way to the back of the shelf; they need air circulation behind them.
- Do not squeeze books onto a shelf. Tight storage will crush embossing and scratch leather.

- Do not lean books at an angle; this will break the spine
- If a book is to be displayed on its side in direct contact with wood furniture, cut a piece of Mylar to

fit between the objects. The leather in the bookbinding will irreparably damage wood finishes.

Ceramics

HANDLING TIPS:

Inspect the object before moving it. Be prepared to compensate for any weaknesses when moving it. Do not wear loose clothing that may catch, knock over, or drag across objects. Cotton gloves do not provide adequate friction for handling ceramics. Wear latex (surgical) gloves for metallic lusterware, extensively gilded, or chemically unstable ceramics.

Do not pick up any ceramic by handles, knobs, or spouts, even if they are meant for that purpose. Remove all detachable parts, such as lids. Use both hands when picking up any item; use one hand to support the object and the other to cradle the object. Never stack plates more than six deep without adequate padding; rims can crack and break easily. Always carry individual objects in a padded basket or box. Groups of small objects can be carried together in a padded basket or box. Remember to keep adequate padding between them.



Porous Ceramics:

Unglazed, Low-fired Earthenwares, Soft-paste “Imitation” Porcelain

- Dust gently with a soft cotton cloth or a soft brush.
- Do not immerse in water. *Do not wet clean under any circumstances.*

Non-Porous Ceramics:

High-fired Pottery or Stonewares, Hard-paste “True” Porcelain

- First dust gently with a soft cotton cloth or soft brush.
- Check with ultraviolet light in a light tight room to see if there are any old repairs that are not visible to the eye. If there are, *do not wet clean.*

- If dirt and grime remain, the object may be wet cleaned. In a rubber dishpan make a weak solution of Ivory/Orvis and lukewarm water. Use only a small amount of soap; do not create so many bubbles that you cannot see the object in the water.

Fact or Statement About Ceramics

Dip a Q-tip in warm distilled water and gently apply to a small inconspicuous area where there is finish, not bare wood. Allow to dry, and then check for bloom or discoloring.

If the surface is especially grimy, test a small area first and scrub the surface very gently with 0000 steel wool dipped in turpentine. This is especially good for cleaning the goo found under brass hardware.

- Wear rubber gloves to improve grip.
- Immerse and wash carefully with a soft cloth, do not scrub. Rinse thoroughly in another rubber dishpan of lukewarm water and a drop of ammonia to aid in drying. Dry immediately, with a soft cloth. If there is extensive ornamentation and decoration, use a hair dryer on low cool speed.
- Do not clean antique ceramics in the dishwasher. The abrasives in the dishwasher soap can easily remove gilt work and can pit or etch the surface of the china.

Framed Objects

HANDLING TIPS:

Before touching any framed object, examine the object, the frame, and the hanging mechanism carefully. Do not proceed if any of these look fragile. Wear gloves if the frame is metal or gilded. Gilt rubs off very easily and is highly susceptible to the oils and salts on your hands. Handle a gilded frame by touching only un-gilded areas. Never touch the surface of a painting or other framed object. Never carry a painting by its stretcher, as you can damage the painting with your fingers. Always use two people to move a framed object larger than 24" x 36."

Carry only one framed object at a time. Always use two hands; support the frame with one hand at the bottom and one hand on one of the sides. When carrying a framed object, the image should face you. Before returning the object to the wall, be sure the hanging mechanism is in good condition. If there is any doubt, do not rehang.

Frames and Glass

- Dust the frame with a soft cloth or brush. Be very careful of whatever is housed in the frame when dusting the frame.
- Gilded frames should only be cleaned with a soft brush.

- Vacuum the reverse of the frame with a vacuum on low suction. Do not vacuum if there is noticeable flaking or the backing is unstable. Be extremely careful not to nick or touch the back of the frame with the vacuum.
- Clean the glass as you would a mirror, being very careful of the frame and the object in the frame. Do not allow any moisture to seep below the glass.

a piece of lovely art in a fancy frame, I will silhouette the frame.

Paintings and Needlework

- Before cleaning, determine if the object is stable. Do not attempt to clean a painting or a piece of framed needlework that is fragile or flaking.
- If a painting is stable, gently dust the surface with a soft brush. Do not use a dusting cloth, it may catch or snag on the surface.
- If a piece of needlework is stable, vacuum it very gently through a screen with a vacuum on low

Supplies Needed:

framer's tape
screw eyes
picture wire
plexiglas cleaner
glass cleaner
picture hooks
framing points/gun
foamcore

Framed Objects

power. Be extremely careful, needlework is often very fragile.

Framed Paper Objects

- If the object is determined to be stable, dust the surface lightly with a brush.

Mirrors

- Dust ornately carved wood or gesso frames lightly using a soft brush or low power air brush.
- Gilded frames should be very lightly dusted; do not allow any moisture to touch the glass or frame.

- Check the security and stability of the hanging device before any cleaning.
- Lightly dust the mirror surface.
- If deeper cleaning is necessary, use a small wad of cotton batting dampened with mineral spirits. Buff with clean dry batting.
- Avoid touching the frame with cleaning solution. Never use a spray bottle for application of cleaning materials, there is no

Furniture

HANDLING TIPS:

In general, you do not need to wear gloves when handling furniture. Wear gloves when handling metal or fabric elements on furniture. If there are any loose pieces (finials, detachable cornices, etc.), remove them to a labeled container and keep them with the object. Remove any objects that are displayed or stored on or in the piece. Avoid touching any inlay, veneer, carving, or paint on furniture.

Never trust handles, even if they are installed for moving and lifting. Never push or pull furniture. Furniture should always be lifted and carried, even when relocating the piece only a few inches. Legs of furniture are especially vulnerable to easy breakage.

Always pick up furniture at the area of major gravity, for example, under the seat rail rather than by armrests or backs of chairs. Armrests and ornamental backs are usually applied by joining with adhesives and dowelling and are most likely to have been previously repaired. Any applied and, especially, any repaired area is always structurally weakest and most likely to split, fracture or break when moved incorrectly.

Furniture made of composite pieces, such as a breakfront cabinet, secretary, or marble topped piece, was originally constructed to be lifted and

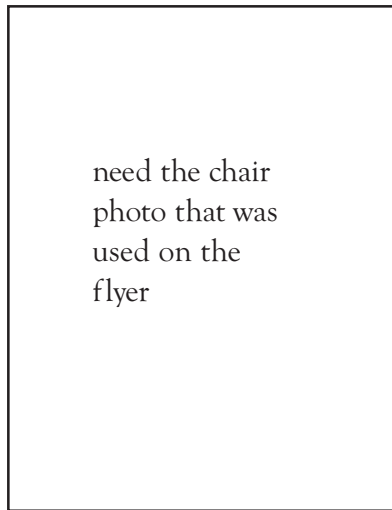
moved separately. When relocating such furniture, carry each piece separately. Secure all moveable pieces such as doors and drop lids with flat cloth twill tape. Avoid rope, twine, and all adhesive tapes.

Remove drawers using a paper tag to mark exact location. Avoid using pulls except to start drawers out of their slots. Remove the top drawer first. Pull the drawer out straight. Do not force sticky drawers. When returning drawers, be very careful of their corners. Do not bang into the body of the piece. Remove shelves since they can fall out and be damaged, fall and damage something else, and add a lot of weight.

Lift chairs at the seat rails. Do not use the crest rail, arms, or legs as handles. Remove slipcovers or cushions before handling or moving chairs. Do not lean on chairs or place anything on seats or rails.

When moving tables, secure swing legs and other moving parts. Remove leaves. Lift by the apron or skirt; never lift a table by the top. If the tabletop is made of marble and is removable, take it off and transport it vertically. If carried flat, it may break under its own weight.

Be careful when vacuuming around objects. Do not allow the vacuum, hose, cord or metal tubes to touch the object. This may cause significant damage.

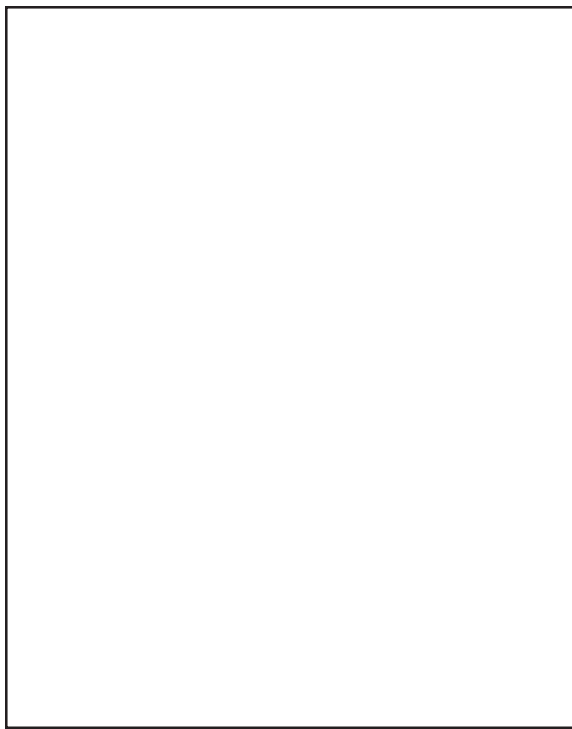


Supplies Needed:
cotton swabs
bowling alley wax
microcrystalline wax
dust cloths
hide glue
buffing cloths
mineral spirits
hake (Japanese artists') brushes
cotton gloves

Cleaning Wax Deposits from Furniture

- *After dusting furniture, check for wax deposits.*
- *Dip a Q-tip in warm distilled water and gently apply to a small inconspicuous area where there is finish, not bare wood. Allow to dry, and then check for bloom or discoloring.*
- *If wood does not show signs of bloom, mix distilled water with a teaspoon of Ivory cleaner and apply gently with soft cotton cloth to areas of wax build-up. Dry immediately.*
- *If the surface is especially grimy, test a small area first and scrub the surface very gently with 0000 steel wool dipped in turpentine. This is especially good for cleaning the goo found under brass hardware.*

- Clear-finished wood is finished either in shellac, lacquer, or varnish. Provided the finish is not cracked, lifting, or flaking, these pieces can be dusted with soft dry cotton cloth or, when the ambient relative humidity is below 40 percent, with a humidified cotton cloth or a magnetic cloth.
- Commercial products may not be needed if a humidified cotton cloth or magnetic polyethylene/nylon fiber cloth is used to break the electrostatic attachment of dust to surfaces in conditions of low relative humidity. If used routinely, commercial products may leave an accumulated residue of mineral oil that can become sticky and actually attract dust, and requires fairly aggressive solvent cleaning with mineral spirits to remove.
- Vacuuming is often the safest way to dust most furniture, particularly any object vulnerable to abrasion and scratching from inadvertent rubbing of sharp dust and dirt particles across a smoothly polished surface. If the dust accumulation appears to be heavy enough to dull the shine of a piece of furniture and if there are no surface irregularities such as flaking or lifting veneer, vacuum the piece with the soft brush attachment.
- If flaking or lifting veneer is present, remove dust by an airjet from a blow-bulb such as an ear syringe, or even by directed air from a soda fountain straw, and catch displaced dust from the air by the vacuum hose nozzle held near the area being dusted.
- When cleaning case pieces, remove drawers and all lining material. Carefully vacuum drawer interiors. Dust the exteriors. Use a vacuum on low suction and a brush for cleaning deep carving.



- Remove brass hardware. Record the accession number of the case piece it came from and tag the brass. Record the location on the case piece. Refer to the metal section for cleaning instructions.
- Remove slipcovers and any other removable textiles. Consult the textile section for cleaning instructions. Vacuum permanent upholstery with low suction through a plastic screen.

- Replace or shake out your dusting cloth often. Do not use a feather duster.
- Use a soft brush on carvings. Use *extreme* caution when dusting gilt. Clean by dusting *lightly* with a soft brush. Use a soft brush or a padded low powered vacuum to remove dust in deeply carved areas.
- To wax furniture, use a clean cloth to apply a small amount of paste wax such as Johnson's bowling alley wax or Renaissance wax. Do not use household polishes, such as Endust, Pledge, Olde English, or spray waxes with silicone. Allow to dry, then buff with lots of elbow grease.
- Wax furniture only once every year or two. More just creates a waxy build-up.
- Dust with magnetic cloth in between polishings to remove dust.

Clocks

Dust the exterior case only. Have a professional clean the clock face, the works or the reverse of the glass door panels.



Musical Instruments

HANDLING TIPS:

Do not attempt to move large case pieces, like pianos, harpsichords, or organs, without first consulting with a knowledgeable conservator or a mover. The works can be severely damaged if the instrument is moved incorrectly.

Marble Tops

Clean the case as you would regular furniture. Dust keys or delicate sections, e.g., the music rack

with soft brush. Do not attempt to clean the internal works of the instrument.

Apply Renaissance Wax with a clean cloth to polished areas only. Use the wax like a cleaner by moving it over the surface and turning your cloth often. Let dry when your cloth comes away clean. Buff.

“Varnished furniture should be rubbed only with silk, except occasionally, when a little sweet-oil should be rubbed over, and wiped off carefully. For unvarnished furniture, use bees-wax, a little softened with sweet-oil; rub it in with a hard brush, and polish with woolen and silk rags. Some persons rub in linseed-oil; others mix bees-wax with a little spirits of turpentine and rosin, making it so that it can be put on with a sponge, and wiped off with a soft rag. Others keep in a bottle the following mixture: two ounces of spirits of turpentine, four table-spoonfuls of sweet-oil, and one quart of milk. This is applied with a sponge, and wiped off with a linen rag.”

Beecher, Catharine E. & Stowe, Harriet Beecher. The American Woman's Home or, Principles of Domestic Science. Hartford: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 1998 (originally printed 1869).

Glass

HANDLING TIPS:

Inspect the object before moving it and be prepared to compensate for any weaknesses when moving it. Be especially aware of any previous breaks and repairs.

Do not wear loose clothing that may catch, knock over, or drag across objects.

Do not wear cotton gloves. They do not provide adequate friction for handling glass. Wear rubber gloves to improve your grip.

Do not pick up any glass object by handles, knobs, or spouts, even if they are meant for that purpose.

Remove all detachable parts, such as lids. Use both hands to pick up any item, with one hand under the object and the other hand cradling the piece to equalize the stress on the object.

Never stack glass; rims crack and break easily.

- Dust glass with a soft, lint-free cloth or soft brush. Change the cloth often, as a build-up of grime may scratch the surface. Do not use sprays, oils, or liquids.
- Dust applied labels, decorations, gilding, and painting with *extreme* care.
- Be careful if an object shows signs of damage or repair.
- To deep clean glass, make a solution of Ivory soap and lukewarm water in a rubber

dishpan. Use only a small amount of soap, do not create so many bubbles you cannot see the object in the water. Immerse the object and wash carefully with a soft cloth. Do not scrub. Rinse thoroughly in a separate rubber dishpan of lukewarm water with one drop of ammonia to aid in drying. Dry immediately with a



soft cloth. Use a hair dryer on cool and low speed to dry ornate decoration. Do not deep clean if glass shows signs of instability, previous repairs or damage, or if any metal element is present (avoid touching these areas).

- Do not clean glass in the dishwasher, as the abrasives in the dishwasher soap can easily pit or

Supplies Needed:

dish pan
rubber mat
sponge
cloth for washing
cloths for drying/
buffing
Ivory Liquid
Orvus soap
rubber/latex gloves
hair dryer

etch the surface of the glassware, and the heat from the water can break delicate pieces.

Chandeliers

- Turn off the power first.
- If chandelier can be taken apart, take a photograph (or several) of the chandelier before disassembling it. Photos provide a useful guide when reassembling a chandelier to ensure glass parts are returned to their proper location.
- Clean in the same manner as other glass objects. Dust with a clean, lint-free cloth or soft brush.
- If the chandelier can't be taken apart, use a commercial "chandelier cleaner," which is sprayed on the glass surfaces, allowed to drip onto a plastic mat and absorbent towel, and then wiped off and dried.

Mirrors

To handle and clean mirrors, see Framed Objects on page 27.

Note that silvered portion of a mirror can separate from the glass and discolor from age, moisture, etc. Nothing can be done to fix this, other than to put in a reflective surface in the loss areas or, as a last resort, replace the mirror. This should only be undertaken if the mirror is NOT original to frame.

Metals

HANDLING TIPS:

Always wear cotton gloves when handling metals. The salts and oils in your hands are extremely corrosive to metals. Remove any detachable parts, such as lids, and carry them separately. Use both hands when picking up any object. Place one hand under the object and use the other to support the piece. Never pick up a metal object by handles, knobs, or spouts, even if they are made for that purpose.

Never allow metal objects to come in contact with one another. Even detachable parts should be padded.

Groups of small objects may be carried together in a padded box or basket. They must be protected from each other.

Pewter and Lead

- Dust lightly with a soft cotton cloth or soft brush.
- A microcrystalline wax such as Renaissance Wax may be used to coat and protect pewter or lead. Coat the entire object since uncoated areas may be susceptible to spot corrosion.
- Spots of loosely adhered white powder indicate active corrosion. Seek the advice of a metals conservator as soon as possible.
- Do not try to polish pewter or lead. Pewter does not have a shine and should age.

Silver

- Dust lightly with a soft cotton cloth or soft brush. Polish residues can be removed using mineral spirits and elbow grease (with a toothpick and cotton). Avoid scratching the metal.
- To deep clean, wash in a plastic tub with a mild detergent such as Ivory or Orvus.
- To remove tarnish, make a slurry (the consistency of thick cream) of precipitated chalk and distilled water and apply with cotton. Denatured alcohol can be added to remove tarnish more quickly, but it requires proper ventilation and can cause damage to some silver surfaces. Using a circular motion, polish gently, but make sure to change the cotton regularly to avoid abrading the metal surface.
- Wash again in Ivory or Orvus, rinse well and dry immediately with a soft cotton cloth and hair dryer if there is ornate decoration.
- Apply a thin coating of microcrystalline wax such as Renaissance Wax with a soft cloth or diaper to coat and protect the object. Turn the cloth often. Be sure to coat the entire object, as any exposure may lead to spot corrosion.
- If a large piece of silver is only for display and is not moved or touched regularly, it can be lacquered by a professional metals person to retard tarnishing. The

Supplies Needed:

running water
dish pan
rubber mat
sponge
cloth for washing
cloths for drying/
buffing
silver cleaner
brass/copper cleaner
pewter cleaner
wire brush
0000 steel wool
rubber/latex gloves
microcrystalline wax
acetone
soft toothbrush

Need a Metal Statement

If wood does not show signs of bloom, mix distilled water with a teaspoon of Ivory cleaner and apply gently with soft cotton cloth to areas of wax build-up. Dry immediately.

If the surface is especially grimy, test a small area first and scrub the surface very gently with 0000 steel wool dipped in turpentine. This is especially good for cleaning the goo found under brass hardware.

piece should be inspected regularly, as moisture can cause the lacquer to “bloom” (turn white) and to peel off.

- Keep silver away from wool or felt materials that are often used in drawer linings or for storage. These can cause the piece to tarnish quickly.
- Store silver in Pacific Cloth bags, which inhibit tarnishing.
- It is better not to use commercial polishes regularly, as they contain abrasive materials that can permanently scratch or mar the silver’s surface. Some polishes, such as 3M’s Tarnishield can be used on everyday silver, but should not be used on historic materials.

Iron

- Dust iron with a soft cotton cloth or soft brush. Be sure to remove all ashes from andirons, grates, or fireplace tools.
- Clean with mineral spirits and cotton balls/swabs for deep cleaning.
- Light surface corrosion may be reduced using 0000 steel wool and penetrating oil (CRC 3-36 or WD-40). Follow by degreasing with acetone, then coat with a microcrystalline wax.

Brass/Bronze & Copper

- Dust with a soft cotton cloth or soft brush.
- Use mineral spirits and a Q-Tip to remove polish residues. Avoid scratching the metal.
- To deep clean, polish with Nevr-Dull, using a small wad of cotton cloth. Buff excess with a lint free cloth.
- Use a microcrystalline wax to coat and protect the object. Be sure to coat the entire object, since any exposure may lead to spot corrosion.

Tinned Metal

- Dust with a soft clean cloth.
- Remove dirt with mineral spirits on cotton balls.
- Wax with microcrystalline wax to protect from moisture and handling.
- Before replacing a metal object that rests on another object (table, textile, etc.), cut a piece of felt or Mylar to fit under the metal object. This protects whatever it is resting on from corrosion.

Carpets

HANDLING TIPS:

Always use at least two people to handle a rug. Roll the rug up with pile side out and take outside to clean. Don't fold the rug.

Modern Carpeting

- Protect wooden baseboards, wallpaper, and furniture with polyethylene foam sheeting (Volara) while vacuuming. Vacuum at full suction.
- Always remove carpet from historic areas for spot or deep cleaning.
- Use a product such as Resolve to spot clean as necessary.
- Have the carpet professionally cleaned once a year.

Historic Carpeting

- Protect wooden baseboards, wallpaper, and furniture with polyethylene foam sheeting (Volara) while vacuuming.
- Use a HEPA-style vacuum to collect dirt and possible air-borne microorganisms from spreading.
- Using a fiberglass or nylon piece of screening or mesh, vacuum the rug at less than full suction.
- Never use beater bars or rotary brush attachments on historic carpeting.
- Cover all fringe areas with a piece of cardboard during vacuuming. The suction on even partial-strength vacuums can remove antique fringe from a carpet.
- If a rug is very dirty, take it outside and gently shake it to get rid of excess dirt. This should always be done by at least two people.
- Vacuum rugs on both sides. Pile rugs should be vacuumed in the direction of the pile.
- For heavy-duty cleaning, consult a textile/rug conservator about specific requirements.

“To Wash Carpets. – Shake and beat it well; lay it upon the floor, and tack it firmly; then with a clean flannel wash it over with one quart of bullock’s gall, mixed with three quarts of soft cold water, and rub it off with a clean flannel or house cloth. Any particular dirty spot should be rubbed with pure gall.”

The oftener these are taken up and shaken, the longer they will wear, as the dust and dirt underneath grind them out. Sweep carpets with a stiff hair brush, instead of an old corn broom, if you wish them to wear long or look well. At any rate, keep a good broom purposely for the carpet.”

*Hale, Sarah Josepha.
The Good Housekeeper
or, the Way to Live Well,
and to Be Well While
We Live. Boston: Otis,
Broaders, & Company,
1841.*

Textiles

HANDLING TIPS:

When moving large textiles, support them in a large basket. Avoid sharp, tight folds.

Avoid touching upholstery when moving furniture. If touching is unavoidable, wear cotton gloves only if they will provide an adequate grip on the object. If they will not, wash and dry hands thoroughly before handling the object. Take removable textiles to a table for examination and cleaning.

When cleaning window treatments and bed hangings, take several photographs or make sketches of how the textiles are hung before removing them.

Handle fabrics as little as possible and, whenever possible, support textiles on an acid-free tissue lined tray or other rigid support when moving. Carry costumes and large textiles cradled over both arms to evenly distribute the weight and avoid dragging any portion on the floor.

- Check the condition of the textile carefully. If the textile is sturdy, vacuum using either a hand-held or low-powered vacuum and a clean brush attachment (do not allow this attachment to touch the ground or any other dirty area), or vacuum through a fiberglass screen bordered with a white cotton tape.
- While vacuuming, do not drag the brush attachment across the textile;

lift and lower the brush as you move it over the material. Never allow the head of the attachment to touch the textile.

- Examine the material often to make sure you are not damaging the textile with too much suction.
- Stay away from weakened areas. Avoid vacuuming near metallic threads, braid, trim, or areas of wear.
- Vacuum upholstery through a fiberglass screen. Use care not to touch the object with the vacuum. Remember that any part of the vacuum may damage the object.
- To clean costumes, use nylon screen/mesh and an upholstery attachment on the lowest setting, and hold the nozzle above the fabric. Vacuum costumes with extreme caution, as threads can easily be pulled by the suction of the vacuum.

Need Textile Tidbit

Allow to dry, and then check for bloom or discoloring. If wood does not show signs of bloom, mix distilled water with a teaspoon of Ivory cleaner and apply gently with soft cotton cloth to areas of wax build-up. Dry immediately. If the surface is especially grimy, test a small area first and scrub the surface very gently with 0000 steel wool dipped.

Bathrooms & Kitchens

General Cleaning

- Remove iron rust stains with oxalic acid. Wear gloves and safety glasses or a face shield, and follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Scum and mineral deposits can be softened and removed using commercially made cleaners for this purpose, which can be found at grocery and hardware stores.
- Heavy mineral stains can be removed by the following method:
 - remove the fixture from the room and take it outside
 - stop up the drain and fill the bowl with a weak mixture of muriatic acid and water.
 - rinse thoroughly before re-installing the fixture (do not dump solution on plant materials, as it will kill them)
 - don't use this method on cast iron fixtures, as it will permanently damage them.

Tubs

- If the enamel surface of cast iron tub is scratched or scuffed, it can be buffed to some extent with such materials as tin oxide, which is used to polish marble. Or try car polishing compounds that are used to rub out car paint surfaces.
- While resin tub coatings make your cast iron tub look new again, they only last 15-20 years and can't be removed or renewed.

- Do not use strong acidic solutions or commercial kitchen cleaners as they contain abrasives that can dull enamel finishes.

Sinks & Commodes

- The same polishing agents mentioned above can be used on enamel tubs.

Chrome Fixtures

- Chromium is usually plated on to other base metals, especially for fixtures. In itself it does not corrode.
- Chrome can suffer from peeling and bubbling. Do not try to flatten the bubbles or repair the peeling, as you will damage the chrome and encourage corrosion of the base metal.
- Do not wash with water. Clean with commercial chrome cleaner or with methylated spirits on a piece of cotton to remove dirt.

Floors

See specific entries under *Cleaning Procedures – Floors or Ceramic Tiles*.

“Abathroom or kitchen quote. Beat your carpets with your carpet rods until perfectly clean from dust, then if there be any ink spots take it out with a lemon, and if oil spots, take out as in the foregoing receipt.”

*Roberts, Robert.
The House Servant's
Directory. Boston:
Monroe and Francis,
1827.*

APPENDIX

Sources of Technical Assistance

American Association of Museums
1225 Eye Street, NW - Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 289-1818
www.aam-us.org
W/T/P

American Association for State
& Local History
1717 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 320-3203
www.aaslh.org
E/T/P

American Institute for Conservation
of Historic & Artistic Works
1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 452-9545
palimpsest.stanford.edu/aic
R/P/T

American Library Association
50 E. Heron Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(800) 545-2433
www.ala.org
T/P

Association for Preservation
Technology International
P.O. Box 3511
Williamsburg, VA 23187
(550) 373-1621
www.apti.org
T/P

Balboa Art Conservation Center
P.O. Box 3755
San Diego, CA 92163(619) 236-9702
R

Bay Area Art Conservation Guild
P.O. Box 2272
Rancho Cordova, CA 95241
palimpsest.stanford.edu/baacg/guild.htm
R

Canadian Conservation Institute
1030 Inness Road
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M8
(613) 998-3721
www.cci-icc.gc.ca
C/W/T/P

Center for Materials Research
& Education
Museum Support Center/Smithsonian
Institution
Washington, DC 20560
(301) 238-3700
www.si.edu/scmr
T

Chicago Area Conservation Group
2600 Kerlinger Road
Geneva, IL 60134
palimpsest.stanford.edu/cacg
C

CoOL - Conservation OnLine
palimpsest.stanford.edu
T/P

Conservation Center for Art
& Historic Artifacts
264 S. 23rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 545-0613
www.ccaha.org
C/T

Conservation Center of the Institute
of Fine Arts
14 East 78th Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 772-5848
e-mail: conservationprogram@nyu.edu
T

The Foundation Center
1400 Connecticut Avenue at K Street, NW
Washington, DC 200
www.foundationcenter.org
Grant Resource

Conservation Services – SPNEA
185 Lyman Street
Waltham, MA 02154
(781) 891-1985
www.spnea.org
C

Gallery Association of New York State
P.O. Box 345
Hamilton, NY 13346
(315) 824-2510
T

Getty Conservation Institute
4503 Glencoe Avenue
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
(310) 822-2299
www.getty.edu/gci
P/R/W

Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents
Washington, DC 20402-9325
(202) 783-3238
www.access.gpo.gov
P

Guild of Book Workers
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10175
palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/gbw/
P/T

Heritage Preservation
Suite 566
1730 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 634-1427
www.heritagepreservation.org
T/P/CAP Grants/Emergency Response

Image Permanence Institute
Rochester Institute of Technology
70 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623
(716) 475-5199
www.rit.edu/ipi
P/T/Testing

Intermuseum Conservation
Association
Allen Art Building
83 N. Main Street
Oberlin, OH 44074
(440) 775-7331
www.oberlin.edu/~ica
C

Iowa Conservation & Preservation
Consortium
c/o State History Society of Iowa
402 Iowa Avenue
Iowa City, IA 52240
www.grinnell.edu/individuals/stuhrr/icpc/icpc.html
C/P

Library of Congress
Preservation Directorate
101 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20540
(202) 707-5213
www.loc.gov/preserv
P/T

Midwest Regional Conservation Guild
Cumberland Art Conservation
3343 Acklen Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212
(615) 269-3868
C

Appendix: Sources of Technical Assistance

- National Center for Film & Video Preservation
American Film Institute
2021 N. Western Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90027
(313) 856-7637
www.afionline.org
C/T
- National Center for Preservation Technology & Training
NSU, Box 5682
Natchitoches, LA 71497
(318) 357-6464
www.ncptt.nps.gov
T/P/R
- National Historic Publications & Records Commission
National Archives Building
Washington, DC 20408
(202) 501-5610
www.nara.gov
R/Grants
- National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center
Division of Conservation
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
(304) 535-6139
www.nps.gov/hfc
T/P
- National Park Service
Curatorial Services Division
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127
www.nps.gov/crm
P/T
- National Preservation Institute
Box 1702
Alexandria, VA 22313
703-765-0100
www.npi.org
T
- New England Conservation Association
Old Sturbridge Village
1 Old Sturbridge Village Road
Sturbridge, MA 01566
(508) 347-3362
C
- New York State Conservation Consultancy
c/o Textile Conservation Workshop
Main Street
South Salem, NY 10590
(914) 763-5805
C
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Bureau of Historic Sites
Peebles Island-P.O. Box 219
Waterford, NY 12188
(518) 237-8643
www.nysparks.state.ny.us
C/T/W
- New Orleans Conservation Guild
4101 Burgundy Street
New Orleans, La. 70117-5306
(504) 944-7900
(504) 944-8750 (f)
www.artrestoration.com/
C
- Northeast Document Conservation Center
100 Brickstone Square
Andover, MA 01810
(978) 470-1010
www.nedcc.org
P/T/C
- OSHA Office
U.S. Dept. of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room N3101
Washington, DC 20210
www.osha.gov
P/T
- Pacific Regional Conservation Center
P.O. Box 19000-AHonolulu, HI 96819808/847-3511
C
- Rocky Mountain Conservation Center
University of Denver
Denver, CO 80208
(303) 733-2712
(303) 733-2508 (fax)
www.du.edu/rmcc
C
- Society of American Archivists
527 S. Wells St., 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60607-3922
www.archivists.org
W/P
- SOLINET (SE Library Network)
1438 W. Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 892-0943
www.solinet.net
W/P/T
- Straus Center for Conservation
Harvard University Art Museums
32 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-9400
www.artmuseums.harvard.edu
C
- Textile Conservation Center
Museum of American Textile History
800 Massachusetts Avenue
North Andover, MA 01845
(508) 686-0191
C
- Textile Conservation Workshop
Main Street
South Salem, NY 10590
(914) 763-5805
C
- Upper Midwest Conservation Association
2400 3rd Avenue S.
S. Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 870-3120
www.preserveart.org
C
- Virginia Association of Museums
1015 E. Clay
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 648-8261
T
- Virginia Conservation Association
P.O. Box 4314
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 358-2006
C
- Washington Conservation Guild
P.O. Box 23364
Washington, DC 20026
(301) 238-3700 X178
palimpsest.stanford.edu/wcg/
T/CR
- Western Association for Art Conservation
c/o Chris Stavroudis
WAAC Secretary/Treasurer
1272 N. Flores Street
Los Angeles, CA 90069
palimpsest.stanford.edu/waac/
CR
- Williamstown Regional Art Conservation Laboratory
Clark Art Institute
225 South Street
Williamstown, MA 01267
(413) 458-5741
RC
- Winterthur Museum/
University of Delaware
Program in the Conservation of Artistic & Historic Works
303 Old College
Newark, DE 19716
(302) 451-2479
seurat.art.udel.edu/ArtConHP.html
C/T

APPENDIX

Suppliers

Archivart
Box 428/7 Caesar Place
Monachie, NJ 01074
800-804-8428

www.archivart.com
– archival papers

Bookmakers
6001 66th Avenue
Suite 101
Riverdale, MD 20737
(301) 459-3384

www.in-folio.com/bookmakers
– book conservation supplies

BrownCor International
770 South 70th Street
Box 14770

Milwaukee, WI 53214
www.BCadvantage.com
– ziplock bags
– bubble wrap

Bill Cole Enterprises
P.O. Box 60
Randolph, MA 02368
781-986-2653

www.neponset.com.bcemylar
– archival supplies

Conservation Resources
International, Inc.
8000-H Forbes Place
Springfield, VA 22151
(800) 634-6932

www.conservationresources.com
– archival supplies

Electrolux Corp.
(800) 243-9078
www.electrolux-usa.com
– vacuum cleaners

Gaylord
P.O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
(800) 634-6307

www.gaylord.com
– conservation and book supplies

Goodway Technologies Corp.
420 West Avenue
Stamford, CT 06902
203-359-4708

www.goodway.com
– vacuums

HMI Industries
3631 Perkins Avenue Cleveland, Ohio
USA 216-432-1990/800-760-4644

www.filterqueen.com
– vacuums

Hollinger Corporation
P.O. Box 8360
Fredericksburg, VA 22404
(800) 634-0491
– acid free boxes/paper

Leap Frog Technologies
P.O. Box 1826
1408 11th Avenue, Suite 2
Altoona, PA 16601
(800) 443-7647
– magnetic wipes

Light Impressions Corporation
439 Monroe Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607-3717
(800) 935-2900

www.lightimpressionsdirect.com
– conservaiton supplies
– chemicals

Miele Inc.
9 Independence Way
Princeton, NJ 08540
(800) 843-7231

www.miele.com
– vacuum cleaners

Modern Solutions
6370 Copsps Avenue
Madison, WI 53716
800-288-2023

National Bag Co., Inc.
2233 Old Mill Road
Hudson, OH 44236
(800) 247-6000

– poly zip-lock bags
– poly sheeting

New Pig Corporation
1 Pork Avenue
Tipton, PA 16584
800-468-4647

www.newpig.com
– magnetic wipes
– emergency response supplies

Nilfisk
300 Techno Drive
Malvern, PA 19355
800-645-3475

www.pa.nilfisk-advance.com
– vacuum cleaners

Process Materials Corporation
301 Veterans' Blvd.
Rutherford, NJ 07070
(201) 935-2900
– archival supplies

PureAir Systems
1325 Church Street
Clayton, IN 46118
317-539-4097
www.pureairsystems.com
– vacuum cleaners

TALAS
Division of Technical Library Service, Inc.
568 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
(212) 219-0770

www.talas-nyc.com
– conservation supplies
– chemicals

3M Products

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?
?

– vacuums

University Products
517 Main Street
P.O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041-0101
(800) 628-1912

www.universityproducts.com
– conservation supplies

White Mop Wringer Company
10702 N. 46th Court
Tampa, FL 33617
813-971-2223

www.white-pullmanholt.com
– vacuum cleaners

APPENDIX

Supplies & Where to Get Them

Material Type	Uses	Where to Buy
CHEMICALS/CLEANING MATERIALS		
Acetone	cleaning label residue off ceramics & glass	Hardware Store
Alcohol-isopropyl	helps in drying process for ceramics/glass	
Silver Polish – 3M Tarnishield – Goddard’s – precipitated chalk – jeweler’s rouge	standard silver polishing	
Copper/Brass Polish – 3M Tarnishield – Never-Dull	standard copper & brass polishing	
Glue – hide	minor repairs to furniture joints	
Pewter Cleaner/Ploish	standard pewter cleaning	
Plexiglass Cleaner	liquid used to polish plexi and remove fingerprints	
Ammonia Household (non-sudsy)	cleans window panes and picture glass	
Soap – Ivory Liquid (dish) – Dirtex (non-aerosol) – Murphy’s Oil Soap –Orvus Paste –TSP	cleans ceramics and glass cleans walls and woodwork cleans woodwork cleans more delicate woodwork removes heavy-duty dirt from woodwork/walls	Grocery/Hardware Store Hardware Store Grocery/Hardware Store Conservation Supplier
Renaissance/microcrystalline	waxcleaning, waxing and coating furniture and marble	Conservation Supplirs
bowling alley/hard paste wax	cleaning and polishing floors and furniture	Hardware Store
CLEANING SUPPLIES		
Broom	push variety for outdoor use; regular for sweeping	Hardware Store
Brushes – Artist (tape feral) – Wire – Dusting – Stippling – Hake – Toothbrush, Children’s	dusting removing rust on iron dusting woodwork for wax application has no metal parts – great for general dusting good for cleaning hard-to-reach metal areas	Art Supply Store Hardware Store Hardware Store Art Supply Store Art Supply Store Grocery Store
Buckets	general cleaning	Grocery/Hardware Store
Carpet Cleaner – Resolve	good for general cleaning of modern carpeting	Grocery/Hardware Store
Cloths – Magnetic – Diapers	for picking up dust from woodwork and on objects for general, lint-free, dusting	Leap Frog Tech./New Pig Corp. Baby Supply Store
Dish mat	place in sink or dish pan; helps prevent breakage or damage if object froped	Hardware/Grocery Store
Dish Pan	used to carry small items, wash or soak individual items during cleaning	Hardware/Grocery Store
Gloves – rubber – cotton	for cleaning glass and ceramics for holding metal objects, textiles and furniture for cleaning glass and ceramics	Grocery Store Conservation Supply Store Medical Supplier

Appendix: Supplies and Where to Get Them

Material Type	Uses	Where to Buy
CLEANING SUPPLIES <i>continued</i>		
Mops – dust – floor	for general wiping down of floor surfaces	Hardware/Grocery Store Hardware Store
0000 Steel Wool	cleaning rust from iron	Hardware Store
Sponges	for wiping pieces when being washed (ceramics, glass and metals)	Hardware/Grocery Store

FRAMING SUPPLIES

Framing points and gun	all used to help rehang framed objects	Framing Supplier
Framer's tape (acid-free)		Framing/Conservation Supplier
Eye hooks – assorted sizes		Framing Supplier
Picture hooks – assorted sizes		Framing Supplier
Picture wire – roll		Framing Supplier
2" acid-free foam core board	carrying textiles backing board for framed prints and paintings	Art Supply Store
Palette Knife	removing old glue from backs of frames separating items that are stuck together	Art Supply Store

MARKING SUPPLIES

Acid-free tags w/ string	temporary marking of object	Conservation Supply Store
Temporary changeable labels	temporary marking	Conservation Supply Store
#2 pencils	writing on tags and labels/filling out forms	Office Supply Store
Acid-free paper	special lists for records	Conservation Supply Store
India ink	used for marking objects	Art Supply Store
Red/white acrylic paints	used for marking objects	Art Supply Store

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Syringe	irrigation of elaborately carved pieces during cleaning	Drug Store
Sterile cotton balls or roll	used to wipe surfaces with different cleaning agents	Drug Store
Cotton swabs	good for getting into detail carving on woodwork and furniture	Medical Supplier
Breathing masks	used when chemicals are in use, ie. Acetone or mineral spirits	Medical/Hardware Store

MISCELLANEOUS

Hair dryer (Variable speed w/ hot/medium/cool settings)	used to dry glass and ceramics, especially pieces with elaborate, applied, decoration	
Ladder – 6' aluminum		Hardware Store
Acid-free tissue	wrap broken items/items for moving to another area/objects for storage/padding	Conservation Supply Store
Mattress pads/padding	padding of work tables	Linen Store
Screening, fiberglass/nylon	vacuuming textiles, upholstery or carpets	Hardware Store
Sponges – cellulose	cleaning ceramics and glass	Grocery/Hardware Store
Swabs, cotton	cleaning furniture carvings or ceramics detailing	Grocery/Medical Supplier
Vacuum (variable power) – canister style – portable		Electrolux/HMI Light Impressions

Appendix: Supplies and Where to Get Them

Material Type	Uses	Where to Buy
MISCELLANEOUS <i>continued</i>		
Plastic Ziplock Bags – assorted sizes	storage of broken pieces, small parts that are being cleaned separately (ie. Hardware from chest)	Bag Company
SEWING		
Needles		Sewing Store
Thread, button (cotton)		
– white		
– black		
Laundry pen	marking twill tape with accession number	
Velcro	closures for silver bags	
Pacific silvercloth	used to make storage bags for silver (inhibits tarnishing)	
Scissors		
Twill tape, cotton	used to make labels for textiles, rugs and costumes	
Muslin	used for covering furniture during cleaning, or when site is closed to public during off-season	
TOOLS		
Flashlight	to see under peices of furniture	Hardware Store
Brads	repair of frames, frame backs	
WD-40	loosening door locks, hinges	
Awl	start hole for screw eyes in frame	
Hammer		
Cordless drill		
Level	making framed objects level when rehung	
Pliers	removal of backing boards	
Nails		
Screws		
– slotted		
– Phillips		
Screw drivers		
– slotted		
– Phillips		

APPENDIX

Useful Publications

.....

American Association for State and Local History. *Housekeeping Techniques for the Historic House*. Nashville: AASLH, 1978.

American Institute for Conservation. *Technical Pamphlets: Basic Guidelines for the Care of Special Collections, Caring for Architecture, Caring for Your Paintings, Caring for Furniture, Caring for Your Photographs, Caring for Works of Art on Paper, Caring for Textiles*. Washington, D.C.: AIC, 1999.

Butcher-Youngmans, Sherry. *Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbook for Their Care, Preservation & Management*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Davis, Nancy. *Handle with Care: Preserving Your Heirlooms*. Rochester, N.Y.: Rochester Museum & Science Center, 1991.

Heritage Preservation/National Park Service. *Caring for Your Historic House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998.

Johnson, Allen F. *How to Care for Your Old House: An Owner's Manual*. New Haven, CT: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987.

Koval, Ralph and Terry. *Kovels Quick Tips: 799 Helpful Hints on How to Care for Your Collectibles*. N.Y.: Three Rivers Press, 1995.

McGrath, Lee Parr. *Housekeeping with Antiques*. New York, N.Y.: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1971.

McKean, James N. *Strings Magazine Guide to Common Sense Instrument Care*. San Anselmo, CA: Strings Magazine, 1990.

Mendelson, Cheryl. *Home Comforts: The Art & Science of Keeping House*. New York: Scribner, 1999.

National Committee to Save America's Cultural Collections. *Caring For Your Collections*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1992.

National Park Service. *Conserve O Gram Series*. Washington, D.C.: NPS, Curatorial Services Division, 1979–.

Sanwith, Hermione & Stainton, Sheila. *The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1987.

Shelley, Marjorie. *The Care & Handling of Art Objects*. New York, N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987.

Williams, Marc A. *Keeping It All Together: The Preservation & Care of Historic Furniture*. Worthington, Ohio: Ohio Antique Review Inc., 1990.

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Seven Faneuil Hall Marketplace,
4th Floor
Boston, MA 02109-1649
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(215) 848-8033
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456 King Street
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(843) 722-8552
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North Carolina, South Carolina,
Tennessee, West Virginia)

Mountains/Plains Office

910 16th Street, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202-2910
(303) 623-1504
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Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

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