



## HOW TO STORE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS?

### FINGERPRINTS

Do not touch the image layer with your fingers. Fingerprints contain oils and acids that can etch into the image layer and cause discolouration of the image in the shape of your fingerprint over time. Wear gloves or wash your hands before handling photographic prints.

### TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Photographic materials need to be protected from heat, moisture and air pollutants (i.e. ozone, smog). The basement, the attic, and next to a radiator are the least favourable places to store photographic materials, because this is where extreme temperatures and/or high moisture levels are located. A built-in closet in the middle of your home (not by an exterior wall) is the best place to store your photographic materials as temperature and relative humidity are most stable here.

### LIGHT

Photographs need to be protected from light. Colour photographs and 19th-century photographic materials are particularly sensitive to light. Almost everyone has seen examples of faded black-and-white photographs of their ancestors or the discoloured reddish family photos from the 1960's and 1970's. Although photographs are made to view and enjoy, it's best to keep them in a dark place. Don't store your photographs in direct sunlight, because this promotes their fading and discolouration.

Replacing framed photographs with other photographs annually also helps to prevent accelerated fading and discolouration by limiting the light exposure.

### STORAGE

Photographs are best stored in photo albums or boxes and individual sleeves of good quality paper or plastic (polyester and polyethylene) without plasticizers. Do not use polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or any plastic that has a scent to it and is not transparent. These non-archival materials will off-gas and damage your photographs. Do not use "Photograph" adhesives or pressure-sensitive adhesive tapes to adhere photographs to paper or cardboard. Instead, use photo corners made of polyester or paper or a Pritt stift (children's adhesive stick).

The following general guidelines apply to all storage materials for photographs. Sleeves need to be strong enough to protect the photograph from tearing or folding. Boxes should close completely and not have holes to minimize the chance of damage from climate changes and insect damage. Do not store your photographs in folders or sleeves that are smaller than the photograph. Do not fold or roll photographs.

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### PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHY

LARGE-SCALE PROJECT FOR CONSERVATION OF  
MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTIONS

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