

## Purpose of Cleaning



- Cleaning books and shelves reduces dust levels, making for a healthier, more pleasant library environment.
- Cleaning reduces dust and debris on outer surfaces of collections materials which can scratch and stain the surfaces of collections materials, both externally and internally, causing further damage.
- A clean collection and environment is less likely to attract mold, insects, and rodents and promotes preservation of library materials.

## Supplies Needed:

- Microfiber dust cloths
- Dusting or soft bristle Hake brushes
- Book ends and a book cart
- Gloves and a dust mask (for dust sensitivity)
- A HEPA filter vacuum
- Small square of window screen or mesh



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## Procedure



It is more efficient to work in teams of two when dusting books and cleaning shelves. One person will be in charge of shelves and one in charge of dusting books.

1. One person will remove books from the shelf, in order; books should be placed on a book cart and supported with book

ends. Do not try to remove too many books at one time; 3 -6 books is a good number to easily handle.

2. Attach the window screen to the end of the hose. Turn the vacuum to a low setting. Clean the shelf thoroughly with the vacuum and then a dust cloth.
3. The other person will clean books one by one using a dusting brush and vacuum.
4. With the books securely supported on the book cart, hold the vacuum nozzle in one hand and a dusting brush in the other.
5. Gently dust the top edge first, moving from the spine towards the fore-edge with the vacuum nozzle positioned a few inches away from the book to catch dust.
6. Next, dust the fore-edge of the book. Once dust is sufficiently removed, move in order to the next book.
7. If you see any parts of the book breaking off, stop brushing and set the book aside. Take note of the title and call number and let a librarian or conservator know.
8. As books are dusted, the first person can place them back on the shelf, being sure to retain shelving order. Use book ends to ensure books remain upright during reshelving.



## Helpful Tips

- It is not necessary to unwrap or remove any collections items from paper wrappings or boxes. Dust the wrapping or box as you would dust a book normally.
- Always start dusting from the top shelf and work your way down.
- Wash the brushes and microfiber cloths with a mild detergent.
- Tilting books will damage the text block and spine. Books must be stored upright and be securely supported with book ends when placed back on the shelf.



## Preservation Concerns

- If you find books with detached covers, loose pages, and/or other serious condition issues, please notify a librarian or conservator of the damages.
- If you encounter a book that produces red, orange, or brown dust, stop dusting immediately. This is a condition known as “red rot”, and the dust you see is actually the leather case disintegrating.



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## Additional Resources

### Cleaning Books

The British Library. *Cleaning Books and Documents*<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/cleaning\\_books\\_and\\_documents.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/cleaning_books_and_documents.pdf)

Northeast Document Conservation Center. *Cleaning Books and Shelves*<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/4.-storage-and-handling/4.3-cleaning-books-and-shelves>

### Caring for Books

American Institute for Conservation. *Caring For Your Treasures*<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.conservation-us.org/docs/default-source/public-relations/books.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Library of Congress. *Care<sup>8</sup> Handling<sup>8</sup> and Storage of Books*. Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/books.html>

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## Conservation Suppliers

### Conservation Resources International

5532 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, VA 22151  
Toll free: (800) 634-6932

[www.conservationresources.com](http://www.conservationresources.com)

*Archival housing/storage supplies, photographic supplies, general*

### Gaylord Archival

P. O. Box 4901  
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901  
Toll Free: (800) 448-6160

[www.gaylord.com](http://www.gaylord.com)

*General conservation supplies, housing supplies*

### Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc.

6340 Bandini Blvd  
Commerce, CA 90040  
Toll Free: (800)-862-2228

[www.hollingermetaledge.com](http://www.hollingermetaledge.com)

*Archival housing/storage supplies*

### Light Impressions

100 Carlson Road  
Rochester, NY 14610  
Toll Free: (800) 975-6429

[www.lightimpressionsdirect.com](http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com)

*Photographic supplies, housing, matting and framing supplies*

### University Products

517 Main Street  
P. O. Box 101  
Holyoke, MA 01041  
Toll Free: (800) 628-1912

[www.universityproducts.com](http://www.universityproducts.com)

*General conservation supplies, housing and matting supplies*

### Talas

330 Morgan Ave  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
Telephone: (212) 219-0770

[www.talasonline.com](http://www.talasonline.com)

*Conservation supplies, photographic supplies, general*



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