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Caring for Quilts

By Joyce Moseley Pierce

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For many years my mother worked in sales and lived out of a suitcase as she traveled the country, but that didn't stop her from doing some of the most beautiful needlepoint and cross-stitch work I've ever seen. When she retired, she quickly filled up the walls of her home and kept the local frame shop in business. After she had given favorites to her children and filled every white space in her home, she decided to start making quilts, but instead of just sewing the pieces of fabric together, she cross-stitched or needlepointed squares that would be sewn together by the town's quilting expert.

I was the recipient of one of these beautiful quilts but because my children were small, I didn't want to leave it out on a bed where it might get smeared with peanut butter and jelly, or even worse, colored with crayons or a permanent marker. Instead, I folded it up and put it in my closet inside a plastic zippered bag that my bedspread had come in.

Well, when Mom came to visit the next time, she went looking for that quilt. I assured her that it was packed away and that nothing could harm it. After all, it was sealed in plastic. Nothing could get to it. Boy, was I wrong!

I learned a lesson from Mom about how to store quilts:

1. Don't ever store them in plastic of any kind! It doesn't matter that your bedspread came in it. It's not the same.
2. Don't store them in humid or hot climates. If the temperature feels good to you, then it's okay for your quilt. If you live in Houston you shouldn't even own a quilt!
3. Don't store quilts in attics or garages. It makes a comfy bed for rodents and insects.

Instead, you should:

1. Store your quilt in a pillowcase or sheet, or roll it onto a muslin-covered tube.
2. Place a piece of fabric between the pillowcase or sheet and your quilt to protect it from the acids in the wood.
3. Twice a year, when the humidity is low and the air is blowing, air your quilt outside, out of direct sunlight.
4. Mark your calendar to refold your quilt every 3–4 months so you won't make a permanent crease in it. Crumple up some acid-free tissue paper to help eliminate fold lines.

If you feel comfortable in displaying or actually using your quilts (and isn't that why we make them?), you'll want to follow these guidelines to make your quilt last longer and help retain its beauty.

1. Keep your quilts away from direct light. The sun will make them fade and will age the fabric.
2. If you notice any tears, repair them as soon as possible. Remember that "a stitch in time saves nine," and will help lengthen the life of your quilt.
3. Clean up any accidents immediately. Washable quilts

can be cleaned with cold water. My quilt, with the delicate cross-stitching fabric and thread, would need to be dry cleaned by an expert.

4. Before you wash, test the fabric to see if the colors are going to run. Use a white towel and cold water to test each color.

5. Do not put quilts in the dryer or hang them over a clothesline. They should lay flat between two sheets placed on the grass in the shade.

When I was a young, married woman I discovered a box of fabric in my grandmother's closet along with the pattern for a quilt that had been published by the

Kansas City Star in the 1920s. Grandma told me she had bought the fabric when my dad was born and had just never made the quilt. She told me if I wanted to make it, she would pay to have it quilted for me. I accepted the challenge, and without knowing anything about quilts (or anything else!), I cut and assembled all of the pieces. It was beautiful, and I remember the pride I felt in knowing that I had sewn every stitch, but even as I laid it across my daughter's twin-sized bed, I could see how thin and worn the fabric had become. I wish now I would have used the pattern and bought newer, more sturdy fabric, that would have lengthened the life of the quilt, but that was just one of life's lessons I had to learn.

Going through the process of piecing that quilt helped me to have a deep appreciation for all of the time and love that goes into each stitch. As I worked on it, I tried to imagine my grandmother as a young mother and wondered what life was like for her. Was motherhood as challenging for her as it was for me? Did she ever imagine that she would have a granddaughter who would treasure this old fabric and the bond it gave to both of them?

Buying a bedspread is fast and fairly inexpensive because they are mass produced, but you can't expect it to give you the same warm feeling as when you run your hands over the stitches of a quilt that was

made by you or someone you love. When your hands caress the fabric and stitches of the quilt you have painstakingly created, the memories of the past are guaranteed to rush into your heart. If that quilt was made by someone who loved you, you will feel a connection that seems oblivious to time.

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Joyce is a freelance writer and owner of Emerson Publications. She is the creator of "All They'll Need to Know," a workbook to help families record personal and financial information. She is also the editor of

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Bed Quilt - An Important Player In Your Sleep

By NamSing Then

Quilt is a bed or a bed cover of three layers with the middle one being stuffed and if all three are tied at regular intervals by thread or yarn, such quilts are called as tied quilts. The two outer layers differ in fabric and pattern as one is a plain backline the other is the top.

Quilts, Use Them as You Like Quilts are most comforting beds or bed covers particularly suited for cold weathers. People would prefer quilt woolen blanket or bed sheets. Generally bedding, decorative, armory are the usual domestic uses. But looking at the patterns and further possibilities, you can say there is practically no limit on how and where you want to use them.

You may wonder to know there are quilt artists for whom quilt making is a full time profession. Quilts are also used as educational tools which students use for making images, patterns. Trekkers like to carry quilts with them instead of heavier beds for convenience.

But quilts have a serious side of the story too. There is an American religion which goes by the name Amish whose members follow the Mennonite religion. Amish people don't believe in being flashy and chauvinistic in their worldly affairs and they have carried forward this philosophy onto quilts too. Their colors are restricted by Churches and the base color is predominantly black which gives other colors a contrasting get-up.

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Well, How Do They Make Quilts There is no particular technique for making quilts nor are there rigid rules barring safety and hygiene. Still, quilts are normally made in two forms; either by using one large sheet of cloth for both top and back lining; or using smaller cut pieces, blocks, of cloth usually of different designs and colors by stitching them together. Now, the blocks are stitched together to make desired patterns by stitching them edge to edge all over. Some times strips of cloth are also used in between the blocks. This way of making quilts is known as sashing. Quilts are then given borders, usually in contrasting colors, which puts paid to making of quilts.

Some Common Quilt Patterns The blocks, small pieces of cloth and generally geometric in shape, may be again made by sewing together of further smaller cloth pieces. This style is pretty popular and is known as patchwork or piecing. Other popular styles are Appliques, Embroidery and whole cloth where there is little or no embellishment.

Well, did you know that quilt is also the name of a computer query languages developed by IBM?

NamSing Then is a regular article contributor on many topics. Be sure to visit his other websites

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and



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