

Quilt Care 2016 Leader Lesson

By: M. Vickie Clark, UT Extension Carter County



May your sorrows be patched and your joys quilted

At a Glance:

Each quilt is unique and irreplaceable. How do you properly care for your quilt to ensure you get to keep it for as long as possible?

Time Required:

Approximately 20 minutes

Objectives:

Through this interactive lesson, participants will 1) learn how to store, clean, and repair quilts, 2) have fun learning to identify quilt patterns, and 3) become more motivated to use best practices to treat quilts as family heritage.

Materials Needed:

Samples of Quilts from Your Home
Name the Quilt Block Quiz
Color Catcher Sheets or new product information sheet (optional)

Teaching the Lesson:

Read or present the program. Then do one or more of the activities at the end of the lesson.

Introduction

Quilts can be designed to be used, to be displayed, or heritage quilts to be kept secure. Decide what you want for your

Quilt Care

quilt – then learn how to care for it properly.

The Lesson:

How to Clean a Quilt

There are almost as many opinions on how to clean quilts as there are quilters. Some people claim that vacuuming a quilt is the only way while other people say to just throw the quilt in the washing machine along with the socks!

First, you need to determine what kind of quilt you have. If it's one you made to snuggle up under on the couch – then, you'll expect to have to wash and repair it.

If a quilt is more than 50 years old, it is considered an antique and should be handled with great care. Only airing and vacuuming are recommended for antique quilts. We DO NOT recommend laundering an antique!

NOTE: Dry cleaning is NOT RECOMMENDED because the dry cleaning method involves rough agitation of the quilt inside the dry cleaning machine and the dry cleaning solvents may harm some fabrics

Before Washing a Quilt...

Often a quilt just needs a good airing and/or maybe some quick spot cleaning rather than a full wash. When airing outdoors, place where direct sunlight will not hit the quilt and fade the colors.

Vacuuming

Lay the quilt on a cotton sheet. Place a piece of pantyhose over the vacuum attachment and use the lowest setting to vacuum the quilt.

Using a Washing Machine

Front loading machines do not agitate so they are best for this purpose. If you use a laundromat, be sure to run a cycle through the machine in case the person before you used bleach or harsh detergent.

- Use unscented, liquid based, color-free detergent without fabric softener or bleach.
- Fill the washing machine with warm water (never hot!)
- Add the detergent while the water is filling up, and stir to be sure it is fully dissolved before you put the quilt in the machine!
- Put the quilt in the machine and select a regular warm/cold water wash cycle.
- Run it through a second wash cycle on regular cold/cold water without detergent to make double sure it's completely rinsed.

Hand Washing a Quilt

Hand washing is also an option for particularly sensitive quilts or for fabrics that are not cotton based. It is best to use a large bath-tub to do this, making sure that the detergent is fully dissolved first and then stirring the quilt gently with your hands. The wet quilt will be VERY heavy – so you may need to recruit help in handling it.

Drying

Machine-drying is hard on quilts. Putting a wet quilt in a dryer puts a strain on the quilting stitches (especially hand quilting), and may result in popped threads.

The best way to dry a quilt is to lay it out flat on a cotton sheet on the ground outdoors on a dry, breezy day. No direct sunlight! Use fans to speed the drying time if needed. Fluff in the dryer.

Quilt Care

Don't hang a wet quilt. The weight will weaken the fabrics and tear the stitches. Never wring out a quilt as this places unnecessary strain on the fabric

How to Repair a Damaged Quilt

Traditionally, quilts were made to be used as part of day-to-day family life. As with anything that is used regularly, even the most ruggedly built quilt will eventually show signs of wear; seams may have frayed, colors may have stained or faded, the fabric may have worn thin or even worn all the way through to reveal the batting inside!

The best time to consider repairing a quilt is as soon as the first signs of wear are visible. To keep using a quilt while it is in a damaged state will make its condition worse, and you run the risk of ruining the quilt entirely and leaving it beyond repair!

Take the quilt with you to fabric stores to match colors and threads. Carefully hand sew seams and patches that have pulled loose.

When repairing an older quilt you need to be extremely careful. As fabric manufacture methods and fashions change it can be extremely hard to find modern fabrics that match the original textiles.

A bad repair or restoration effort may not only look awful, but can seriously affect the value of the quilt!

Storing Your Quilt

The best place to store a quilt is....you guessed it! ... On a BED. If you have a spare room, you can lay several quilts on top of each other on the bed and cover with a bedspread or cotton sheet to protect from light and dust.

Heirloom quilts should be stored in acid free boxes, like those you would store a wedding dress in.

Tip #1 – Keep your quilt dry and avoid extremes of temperature. Attics and basements are not good places to store quilts. Damp air and moisture can attract mold and mildew to that will quickly rot the fibers in the fabric and excess heat will cause the fibers to dry out.

Tip #2 – If you must fold your quilt, crumple acid free tissue in the folds so the creases don't become permanent. Every few months you should make a point of unfolding the quilts, shaking them out to air them and re-fold them in a different way.

Tip #3 – DO NOT store in plastic. Wrapping in an old cotton sheet or pillowcase is perfect. The fabrics must be able to breathe. Sounds weird but true.

Tip #4 – Keep your quilt in the dark. Sunlight can be very damaging to a quilt. Even fluorescent lighting can be damaging to a quilt over time.

Tip #5 – Quilts can also be stored on a hanger. Be sure to pad the hanger before hanging the quilt so you don't get the rung mark on the quilt.

Tip #6 – Garages, attics and sheds are popular havens for bugs and mice and should be avoided at all costs. Cardboard boxes should also be avoided as mice will chew through the cardboard!

Tip #7 – Roll your quilts rather than folding them. The rolled quilt can then be kept inside a large cardboard tube.

Tip #8 – Keep your quilt away from wood. Unfinished wood on shelves, or inside

Quilt Care

wooden drawers or chests, often contains acids that can damage fabric. Make sure you line them carefully with acid-free paper before putting the quilt down.

Displaying Your Quilt

One of the most logical places to display your quilt is on your bed, but even there it is wise to take a few precautions. Make sure that the quilt is not in direct sunlight, is away from sources of heat and water, and will not be accessible to pets.

If you want to hang your quilt, you can sew a sleeve to the top edge of the quilt and insert a wooden dowel to hang on the wall or from the ceiling. Quilts that are hung in the open should be periodically vacuumed to keep dust from damaging the fibers.

Activities:

Choose one or more of the following activities to go with the lesson:

1. Show examples of quilts you have – maybe some needing repair
2. Use the Name the Quilt Block Quiz
3. Show the New Product Information sheet (or the actual product if you have it) for Color Catcher Sheets to use when washing quilts.
4. Do the Brain Storm Activity.

Evaluation

Ask the following questions at the end of the lesson.

1. Name at least two things you have learned today about caring for quilts.
2. Identify one or more quilt block patterns

3. Describe at least one step which you will take to increase your family's appreciation for quilts.

BRAIN STORM:

Read the following quote and then let the club members brain storm answers to the questions.

"Each quilt is unique and irreplaceable. The saddest thing is to see lovely old antique quilts in yard sales and at flea markets because the person who made the quilt is no longer alive and those that inherited it, did not appreciate the work and love that was put into making it."

How can we carry on our quilting heritage? Who will inherit your family quilts? Do you have next generation family members who will appreciate them? Will the next generation know and appreciate the stories associated with your quilts?

Source of Information:

<http://www.quilting101.com/>

<http://www.museum.msu.edu/glqc/quiltcare.html>

<http://www.allpeoplequilt.com/how-to-quilt/quilting-basics/caring-your-quilts>

American Quilter's Society, *Protecting Your Quilts: A Guide for Quilt Owners*, Paducah, KY: American Quilter's Society, 1996.

Gunn, Virginia, "The Care and Conservation of Quilts," *American Quilt Study Group Technical Guide*, American Quilt Study Group, NB, 1988.

Orlofsky, Patsy, "The Collector's Guide for the Care of Quilts in the Home." *The Quilt Digest 2*, San Francisco: Kiracofe and Kile, 1984, pp. 58-69.

Quilt Care

Puentes, Nancy O'Bryant, *First Aid for Family Quilts*, Moon Over the Mountain Publishing Co., Wheatridge, CO, 198