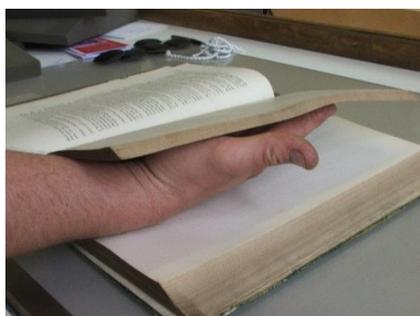




Book rests reduce wear and tear

This sheet will describe:

- common damage;
- suitable book rests;
- book handling tips.



Book rest care

If the cover or surface of a book rest is dirty, it can transfer the dirt onto a clean book. Keep clean by dusting with a cloth, or washing if detachable.

A book rest provides a platform and support for a book when open. The thicker and larger the book, the more support is needed. As a book is most frequently opened from the front (or sometimes the back), the joint where the boards or covers meet the book is constantly flexed and put under repeated strain. This wear causes damage over time and will eventually result in boards and covers coming off. Use of a book rest will reduce the angle of opening as well as support the covers. This can prolong the life of the binding.

Using a book rest whilst consulting a book ensures a better posture for the reader as the book is tilted forward slightly. It also discourages leaning, writing on top of, or putting other items on top of the book.

Types of book rest

There are two main types, foam wedge book rests and cushion style "book sofas". Foam wedges can be configured to tilt a book, support both boards or just one and can accommodate spines of different thickness. They are available in different sizes. Book "sofas" are filled with soft beads and are shaped with a central valley for the book spine. The book is supported at an angle across a range of openings and can be tilted forward a little.

Wooden lecterns can also be used, but are not flexible and may not support the spine correctly.

A book rest may be improvised with a cushion or pillow with a smooth cover. The book should nestle open at an angle but also be firmly supported. Alternatively, a box or another book can be placed under the front board to support it. The depth of the support will relate to the thickness of the book and the part of it you are looking at.

Handling a book

- Make sure your hands are clean and dry, turn pages at the corners and do not wet fingers to assist lifting the corner;
- Mark pages using archival paper slips or book marks – if left inside, acidic paper can stain a book. Use a paper marker, not your finger to follow text. Dirt, oils and acidity on the skin will transfer onto the paper and damage it in time to come;
- Pages in a book open at an angle on a book rest may not stay open. Do not crease them open by rubbing down, this will damage the spine. Use "book snake" weights, or curtain weights draped over the pages to hold open.