

How to Look after your Quilt

Quilt Care Instructions

By
Tracey Pereira



*Your new quilt is an heirloom to keep for generations.
Treasure your quilt by taking the time to read these few simple care
instructions.*

Keep them safe for future reference.

Some General Notes:

- **Quilt Hangers** - If you decide to display your quilt on the wall use an appropriate sized quilt hanger to evenly support the weight of the quilt across the whole width. If you stress the quilt by not doing this you will eventually cause fibre damage and possible breakage.
- **Folding your Quilt** - If you choose to fold your quilt while on display either on a hanger or in a cupboard for example, remember to refold it every few months to avoid permanent crease-lines and stress points developing. Its also a good idea to remove any dust that may have settled too - even if they live in closed cupboards ... its amazing where dust can settle!
- **Bright Light** - Avoid placing your quilt in bright light. Bright light can fade colours very quickly.
- **Damp** - Avoid damp or humid conditions - mildew and fibre rot may result.
- **Quilts used as Wall Hangings** - Generally it is not necessary to wash wall hangings, however dust should be removed on a regular basis.

How to Removing Dust

To remove dust enlist the help of a friend if you can. Support the quilt and carefully shake the dust free. Do not brush or vacuum the quilt directly unless absolutely necessary and then only very gently. Set the vacuum at its lowest suction rating. Attach a piece of netting or tulle firmly over the vacuum tool head (an old pair of tights will work well!) to avoid it being sucked into the machine and gently vacuum through this extra layer. Vacuum small sections at a time.

How to Clean your Quilt

Most quilts can be washed if necessary. Frequent washing however is not advised. As with all textiles, spills should be cleaned as soon as possible. Use cool clear water and a clean white terry towelling cloth to remove the stain. Never use hot water, this may set the stain, and do not use a coloured cloth as the dye in it may transfer to the quilt. If water does not remove the stain try using a small quantity of a suitable stain remover. *Carbona* produce a whole range of stain removal products and are available at most supermarkets. If washing becomes necessary I advise the following steps.

How to Wash your Quilt

- Be aware that some shrinkage and/or dye transfer may occur when your quilt is washed. Shrinkage should be kept to a minimum however if the quilt is washed at a cool temperature (30°) and to help avoid dye transfer from the fabrics you can protect the colours by using a *Colour Catcher* product available from many supermarkets.
- Always use a mild detergent to wash your quilt. Orvus paste, sold as “Quilt Soap” is available in most quilt shops (alternatively you may find it in pet shops - where it is sold as horse shampoo! I've used it for years – it's economical and works well!)
- Large quilts will need to be washed in a commercial sized washing machine. Alternatively it may be washed in the bath. Instructions for both methods are included.

How to wash a quilt in a Washing Machine

- Place the quilt in the drum of the washing machine keeping it as open as possible and avoid squashing it in If you have to do this I would suggest using a commercial double capacity machine. Select a cool wash cycle e.g : Handwash at 30° or Quickwash at 30°.
- Add a small quantity of the mild detergent and the colour catcher.
- Use a delicate wash cycle to gently agitate the quilt. If it is very dirty pre-soak the quilt for 5 to 10 minutes in cold water.
- Spin the water out and rinse 2 or 3 times to remove soapy water. I do not recommend using fabric softener.
- Remove the quilt from the washer and carefully transfer it to the tumble dryer. Dry on a **low** heat setting. Again a large capacity dryer will be needed. If this is not available lay the quilt out flat on a sheet outdoors. Lay a second sheet over the top of the quilt to protect it from leaves, insects and fading. Carefully smooth out as many wrinkles as you can. **Never** hang a wet quilt on a clothes line - it will distort and stress the fibres. Flat drying may also be done indoors but remember to protect the surface under the quilt from moisture with a large sheet of plastic. Using a fan can speed up the drying process too.
- Do not iron a quilt. Generally this will flatten the decorative quilting design. Hand smooth instead. If you have a high powered steam iron then it should be ok to steam any creasing away... do not place the iron directly on the quilt surface though ... hold the steamer slightly above the surface and press the steam jet.

How to wash a quilt in the Bath

- Fill the bath with cool or lukewarm water.
- Add a small quantity of mild detergent. Dissolve and distribute the detergent by agitating the water.
- Place a large white towel and a large plastic sheet nearby.
- Add the quilt and gently agitate.
- Leave the quilt to soak for 10 -15 minutes.
- Gently agitate the quilt gently once again.
- Leaving the quilt in the bath, remove the water from the tub. Let the excess water drain from the quilt. Avoid pressing too harshly on the quilt at this stage and do not wring! This will create creases and wrinkles.
- Keeping the quilt in the bath, gently roll the quilt into the towel. Using the towel as a support lift the quilt out of the tub and place on the plastic sheet.
- Never lift the quilt unsupported. It will stress the fibres and possibly pop threads.
- Refill the bath with clear lukewarm water. Place the quilt back into the tub. Rinse and repeat following steps 6 and 8 to remove the soap and remove the quilt from the tub using the towel again.
- At this stage the quilt may be placed in a large capacity washing machine to spin out the remaining water. If your machine is not large enough take two or three large white towels and gently roll the quilt into the towels to remove the excess water.
- Dry flat or machine tumble the quilt following the previous instructions.