

“Packing Tips for Self-Storage”

It's tempting whenever you're packing items up for self-storage just to rely on boxes you already have or those you can get from your local supermarket or department store.

This really isn't a wise decision and I shall explain. Boxes, believe it or not, degrade with use and overtime, plus you can't be for sure that the boxes you already have or the ones you get from those places mentioned above, haven't been soiled by moisture, fluids and other things, additionally, they might be carrying unwanted pests.

After all, there's nothing worse than having a carefully packed box collapse on you as you try to load it for transport to your storage unit or after transporting them, the bottom fall out or the side split as your moving them from your vehicle to your storage unit.

Careful attention to your personal possessions now during the packing phase, will pay off later. . . when your treasured belongings come out of whatever source your using to move them, they will be in just as good shape as they were when they went in.

Furthermore, packing for self-storage is an 'ART' and you'll need to put some thought into it before you begin.

You should 'NEVER' use newspaper to wrap your possessions. Newspaper has an open-grain construction and the inks used in printing are not dried. That ink will rub off and stain anything you wrap in newspaper.

'Always' use clean, white paper for packing. You can usually find white wrapping paper in a verity of bulk size boxes or packages, examples of the bulk sizes are 10lbs box - 15lbs box and larger.

When you are looking for the white wrapping paper, you may think that all that stuff about the inks and staining was just an attempt to get you to purchase the white wrapping paper and that nothing will happen if you used newspaper to wrap with.

Now you're asking, why is that? Clean white wrapping paper is in fact clean white 'Newsprint' leaves with no ink residue. You see, like I said, it's the non-dried inks that stain and rub-off.

Don't pack items into sealed plastic bags, as humidity will cause mildew and mold. You might want to check out our on 'Choosing the storage unit that is right for you', to get a better understanding of how the effects of 'Humidity' can effect your stored property.

Professional packing boxes are critically important. You want boxes that are designed and made especially with one purpose in mind, to do the job and to do that job right. That job is to pamper your goods and let you move them safely, economically and conveniently. What's more, these boxes are specifically sized to make stacking and tie-ringing easier.

Similar sizes, easier to stack them securely and save you space in the unit. You want to make sure the boxes that are closest and/or on the floor are sturdy enough to take the strain of what you're stacking on top of them.

If you have taken the time to go to a storage facility or some other source where boxes and other packing supplies can be purchased and have handed over your hard earned money for a bunch of boxes, paper, various types of kits and other stuff, it would also be another wise decision to use these packing supplies to your advantage and make sure everything is packed up correctly before taking off to the storage facility to store your stuff. Right, Right!

Fill boxes to capacity whenever possible to avoid breakage or damage, but avoid making them too heavy-remember you'll have to be able to lift them. But on the other hand-boxes that are only partly filled may collapse or tip over during the stacking process.

Don't be tempted to fill large boxes with heavy items-pack some heavier items in the box first and then fill the box with lighter items.

For the most part, we all think we know how to pack-until we actually have to get around to it! It's always best to remember that you're planning on storing your own stuff in the facility and would like it to come back to you one day in the condition you packed it in.

It isn't our intent to go room by room and tell you how to pack everything, but instead to give some guidelines for such items as dishes, glassware, pictures, mirrors, bedding and appliances.

Buy your packing supplies early and start packing as soon as you can. . . so when you're ready to move your property, you'll be fully prepared, packed and ready to go. This is why they call it 'Self-storage', it's 'Do-it-yourself-storage'.

Are you ready to start packing? Well folks, let's get started.

First things first- you'll need to find yourself or selves (if you have someone helping you) a common and convenient location, the living-room, dining-room, den or kitchen are good locations to bring items into and pack them. As you pack the boxes and as they fill up, stack them off to the side against one of the walls in either or all of the common packing areas.

Let's go to the kitchen, or if you have a 'China Cabinet' in the dining-room or den and start with; Dishes-and just sort of go with the flow.

Dishes: For keeping your dishes as safe as possible, it's recommended you use some form of 'Dish-Saver Kit'. These kits are available in various sizes, that can range from 1.5 cu ft to 1.85 cu ft or larger and contain pouches for plates, salad plates or sauces and bowls and has a cell divider.

The cell divider, just like the box that comes with the kit, is corrugated for extra strength. After placing the dishes in the 'high-cling' foam pouches and then into the divided areas, the pouches will keep dishes firmly in place during transit and storage.

These kits are designed to guard against shock, vibration and rough handling. You simply need to follow the simple instructions and your dishes are ready for moving and storage.

Cups, Glasses, Ornaments & Knickknacks: Yes, there is a specially designed 'Glass-Saver Kit' that offers the finest protection. These kits also come in various sizes and contain pouches, cell divider and a box for the corresponding size of the kit.

When packing your cups and glasses, you may want to 'Nest' them. Nesting is when your first glass or cup is placed in one of the foam pouches, which is then placed into the cell divider that you have placed inside the box during assembly.

Then you place three or four glasses (one inside the other). The glasses or cups being placed inside each other do not have to be individually pouched.

Note: Stack glasses inside glasses and cups inside cups. For best results, they should be close to the same type and size as possible.

After you have filled the cell divider, use additional cushion foam, as needed, to fill in excess space around the glassware.

Wrap and pack goblets and stemware individually, **‘Do Not Nest Them’**. Place them in layers and use lots of cushion foam to separate the layers and to fill in excess space.

Try to avoid putting heavy items on top of ‘fragile’ ones, even if packed as described above, these items are still fragile and stacking heavier items on top of the box can cause breakage.

Small Kitchen and other Appliances: Small items such as blenders, mixers, coffeemakers, rice cookers, electric can openers and etc; should be packed and boxed together. Of course, it’s always nice if you have thrown away the boxes they were taken out of when you brought them home from the appliance store. If you have them, great, if you don’t, Oh well!

Wrap each appliance separately with cushion foam or bubble wrap and then pack them away into the box. Fill any empty space with ‘Brown Kraft Paper’, cushion foam, or bubble wrap, or use this space for other, smaller and lighter items, things to fill up the space and help prevent movement within the box.

You may not want to put your Vacuum Cleaner in a box, but you do want to remove the bag and throw it away before storing.

Home Electronics: Wrap small electronic items in plenty of packing material (either bubble wrap or cushion foam). These items should be placed in a box – usually an electronics box or 19” TV/ Microwave box (6.7 cu ft).

If you should have a ‘Record Player’, secure the player arm and the turntable before packing it away–this will prevent damage. Sometimes we forget and turn boxes in various directions before they are actually sit down and/or stacked in the storage unit.

Note: Do Not Use – loose – fill, foam ‘Peanut Packing Material’ with computer equipment. This type of material generates ‘Static Electricity’ that will damage circuit boards.

Of course, the TV/Microwave box is ideal for packing up and moving larger electronic items such as TV’s, Computer Monitors, and Microwaves. Use plenty of bubble wrap or brown kraft paper to cushion and take up the empty spaces.

Lamps: Use a lamp box and line the bottom with several layers of bubble wrap for extra protection. Remove the lamp shade and bulb; wrap the cord around the base of the lamp. Use packing paper or bubble wrap around the lamp base and tape it down. Place the lamp in the lined Lamp box. If you have several tall table lamps, place them in the box so that the base of one lamp is facing the top of the next lamp.

If you’re packing ‘Pole’ lamps and if they will separate into sections or if the base can be separated, wrap the section together with bubble wrap and tape it down. You can put several of these in the box together, fill empty space with brown kraft paper or bubble wrap. Cover their base(s) with bubble wrap and slide it or them into the box.

Lamp shades and artificial-flower arrangements will cushion and protect each other when packed in larger box. If you have packed several lamps, you can nest the lamp shades in a larger box.

Pictures & Mirrors: Using specially designed Mirror/Picture boxes that are available in several sizes, but in some cases, you may have to use two of these boxes together, this is called ‘Telescoping’ the boxes. Instructions for this process, is usually found on the box(s). First you should be using padded paper or several wide strips of bubble wrap that you need to lay on a flat surface, the surface should be large enough for the picture or mirror to lay flat on.

Lay your picture or mirror facedown then fold over the edges of the pad or wrap and tape them down. Slide the protected picture or mirror into the open end of the Picture/Mirror carton or box. For extra protection, fill excess space with crumpled brown kraft paper or paper pads.

Next, seal the open end with tape. When preparing to move these boxes to your transport vehicle, you should first place mattresses in the vehicle and then place the Picture/Mirror boxes between mattresses or box springs. Pictures and mirrors should never be stored laying flat.

Clothing: It's not wise to simply put your clothes in bin liners and then put them into the storage unit, as moisture can get trapped inside when they're sealed and your clothes could become ruined by mildew and mold. Don't store wet items in a self-storage facility, as this too will cause water-damage (rot), mold and mildew as well. This isn't just important for clothes but for any item that can hold moisture.

Using 'Wardrobe' boxes, if you're using the taller box, you can leave the clothing on their hangers and hang them up on the bar that comes with the box. Keeping your clothes in a hanging position, it will help them keep their shape if hung properly.

If you have hanging items such as Blouses, Sport Coats, Jackets, Shirts, Slacks and etc, you may want to use the 'Wardrobe Shorty' box, it's simply a shorter wardrobe box. These size boxes are compact and stackable. You can use the 'Lay-down Wardrobe' box for clothes, sheets, comforters, blankets and etc.

You can also use the taller wardrobe box without the bar to stack 'Dining Room Chairs' in, this helps to protect the fabric on the chair from getting snagged or torn. You can also stack chairs (without the box) to save space. You might want to cover chair legs with protective wrapping (bubble wrap) for extra protection.

Storing Leather items is something different altogether, if you are storing them, treat them with leather conditioner before they are placed into storage.

Dressers, Chest of Drawers, Desk, etc.: Pack drawers full, but make sure that breakable items are well padded. To help ensure the drawers do not open during transport, turn the drawers of the furniture towards and against mattress or box spring.

It isn't recommended using tape to keep the drawers closed, the finish on the furniture can become damaged after long periods of contact between glue and wood, or if it has a painted finish, it could be pulled away from its surface when removing the tape.

Instead try using '5" wide-Stretch Wrap' it clings to itself without adhesive. It wraps and unwraps easily without leaving residue. It can be used to bundle objects together or used to hold drawers in place on dressers, desk, chest of drawers, file cabinets and etc.

The ideal here is preparing for extended storage not causing damage during storage.

Note: You might want to spray your wood furniture with good quality furniture spay to give them some added protection. It's also a good ideal to use 'Quilted Pads' to protect your furniture. These pads can be used to cover, wrap, cushion and protect furniture, appliances, or fragile items from scratches, nicks and dents. They are all weather pad that should not mildew in the even they get wet, the quilted construction makes them ideal for a wide variety of uses. Use a 'Bungee Cord' to help keep the pad snug against the item being covered.

Do not lean furniture up against outside walls.

You can also leave clothing in the dressers, but make sure the drawers are not too heavy. If a drawer is filled and is too heavy, it may get damaged during transporting and could cause the drawer to come apart and/ or break the bottom runner of the drawer inside the cabinet of the dresser. You know, bouncing up and down, the heavy drawer on the runner, causing it to separate from the rest of the cabinet, making it difficult to pull the drawer out or push back in.

If these furniture items have long legs that they normal rest on, check to see if they are removable and if so, remove them and place them in one of the drawers so they do not get broken or misplaced. Use a 'furniture dolly' to move these types of heavy furniture.

Think hard about whether you really want to store photographs in your self-storage unit. If your not using a climate controlled unit, your photos will suffer temperature and humidity damage.

Tables: Here again, use quilted pad, lay it (the quilted pad) out flat, place table face (top surface) down on the pad. Remove legs from the table and fold the edges of the pad inside the bottom side of the table and tape them down. The table can now be loaded on it edge.

You may have some tables that the legs are not removable, cover them with pads and place them as much as possible on stacked boxes as to support the table and place another table face to face.

Depending on the size of the table and how much weight the table and legs can support, cover with pad and stand it on its legs and put smaller items under during transport.

Refrigerator & Freezer: Defrost, dry out inside, cover with quilted pad. Make sure to keep them in their normal up-right position. Prior to covering with pad, use the inside space to store bulky, lightweight goods (large stuffed toys, pillows, and etc.) Always move and store your refrigerator and freezer in the upright position. Laying them on their sides or onto their back will cause damage to the unit. Use an 'appliance dolly' to move these items.

Washing Machine: unplug power supply cord from electrical outlet and cover the electrical plug with bubble wrap and tape. Tape the power supply cord in several places to the back of the washer. Disconnect the hoses from their water supply at the wall, drain the water and remove hoses from washer, place in plastic bag and put bag inside washer's tub.

If you can not drain the hoses, put each hose-end in a plastic sandwich bag and seal the bag tightly around each hose-end with a rubber band. The bags will prevent any leftover water from leaking out and making a wet mess. You can also purchase a 'Tub Insert' or use folded cardboard (folded cardboard should only be used by those with a good working knowledge of how the machine is put together.) anyway, the whole ideal is to 'Secure the spring-mounted motor(s)' by bracing the tub of the machine to prevent it from moving about during transport and possibly damaging the motor and associated components. Turn leveling legs all the way in.

If you are moving the washing machine across tile or wooden floors, carefully slide dryer onto a sheet of cardboard, slightly larger than the washing machine, (about 3 inches exposed on all sides should be enough), before attempting to move the dryer, the cardboard will make the washing machine easier to slide and prevents damaging the floor or it's covering, it also helps with moving it across carpeted floors.

Dryer: whether operated by gas or electricity, disconnect from the power source (if your not sure how to do this, ask for help, you have to make sure the gas source is turned off before disconnecting) and cover the disconnected end with bubble wrap and tape it or use plastic bags and rubber band to cover the end.

Disconnect the dryer's exhaust vent duct work from the wall vent or hood and the dryer and put it inside a large plastic bag if its the flexible type, cover the exhaust opening on the dryer with bubble wrap and tape and place that exhaust duct work (that metal or plastic hoses that's about 4 inch in diameter) that you placed in the plastic bag inside the drum.

Tape the lint collector lid to the cabinet (the body of the dryer). Tape the top to the cabinet in several places, tape the door to the cabinet in at least three places opposite the door hinges and turn leveling legs all the way in.

If you are moving the dryer across tile or wooden floors, carefully slide dryer onto a sheet of cardboard, slightly larger than the dryer, (about 3 inches exposed on all sides should be enough), the cardboard will make the dryer easier to slide and prevents damaging the floor or it's covering, it also helps with moving it across carpeted floors.

Range: Disconnect the range's power source. Following the same instructions as with the Dryer that was mention above. Your Range may be equipped with 'Anti-tip Brackets', these are brackets that are secured to the floor to prevent the Range from tipping over. If installed, they will be located on the floor in the back so the rear leveling legs of the Range slides into brackets. You'll have to slide the Range forward a few inches before the Range is free from the brackets. Slide the Range forward until it clears any counter top or cabinets and then screw leveling legs all way in.

If you are moving the Range across tile or wooden floors, carefully slide Range onto a sheet of cardboard, slightly larger than the Range, (about 3 inches exposed on all sides should be enough), the cardboard will make the Range easier to slide and prevents damaging the floor or it's covering, it also helps with moving it across carpeted floors.

To help in provide the best protection for your appliances, consider covering these expensive items with 'Quilted Pads' as you are preparing them to be placed into storage. However, you should not stack these appliances on top of each other, the appliances could become damaged or tip over on you causing serious injury. Think, Safety First.

Beds, Frames, Mattresses and Box Springs: Cover Headboards and footboards with quilted pads, if there are no head or foot boards, then take the framing and any supports that might be used under the box springs and roll some bubble wrap around in a couple of places and tape them. Mattresses and box springs should be covered with 'Mattress Bags'.

Note: This is a 'Safety Item', always keep plastic bags out of the reach of children.

Mattress bags come in sizes to fit the size of bed the mattress is coming from, the bags are usually large enough to fit standard and padded mattresses or box springs. These bags are durable, usually clear plastic, slipcover style that protects against dirt, soiling, mildew and water damage. The plastic covers are tough polyethylene that resists tears.

Mattresses and Box springs are best stored on the long end and ideally they should be raised above the floor or placed on some type of protective sheeting/tarp/ or on some other solid item.

If you are using the mattress bags and you're storing them in a non-climate controlled storage unit, do not seal the bag completely to avoid moisture accumulation and causing mildew and mold to form on the material and sinking into the mattress or box spring padding material.

Sofas: When storing sofas, cover them with sofa covers, this will protect the upholstering material, if leather, treat with leather conditioner before placing them into the sofa cover. When storing, whenever possible, stand your sofas on end, to help conserve space and don't stack too much on top of the soft material.

After all, it's a good bet that when you purchased your mattresses, box springs, or sofas at your local furniture store, they had covers on them then and those covers were for protection during shipping and storage before selling them.

Books: Small boxes are ideal for packing books. You should pack the books flat so the spines do not get broken. Do not jam them in tightly. Never pack fragile items in with books. Remember, it doesn't take that many books to make the box very heavy.

Garden Tools & Outdoor Furniture: Wipe down the metal on your tools with a little oil before storing to avoid rust formation. Tie or tape shovels, rakes and hoes together. Drain hoses, then coil them and connect their ends and tie them up. Take apart any items that are put together with screws or bolts. Place the parts in sandwich bag and tape it to the item.

Don't store your metal items resting against items that are susceptible to damage. Remember 'Murphy's Law', if it can happen, it's more than likely it will.

Don't store a brush resting on the bristles, this will cause them to lose their shape and they will not work as affectively when removed from storage.

If you are putting your lawn mower or other gas powered equipment into storage, you will have to drain the fuel tank before placing them into storage. Fuel is one of the items you are 'Never' permitted to store in a self-storage facility. In our 'Choosing the storage unit that is right for you' section, you can find a list of items that you are not permitted to store at a self-storage facility.

Donate unneeded items, as you prepare to make your move, consider donating unwanted clothing and household items. You'll eliminate clutter and help support an important cause. Give them to Goodwill or other charity organizations or to a local church charity. You may even want to have a yard sale. Why pay storage on items you do not want or will never use again?