The most important part of a preservation effort is taking the first step. Don’t let the pursuit of perfection be an obstacle to getting started. A simple first step like moving photos out of the attic or basement to a bedroom closet will have a significant impact.

**Basic Factors**

Factors to consider are temperature, relative humidity, light, pests, mold, water leaks and risk of flooding, and handling.

**Temperature and Humidity**

- Get your keepsakes out of the attic or the basement.
- Keep them in a climate-controlled part of your home.
- Avoid extremes in temperature and relative humidity.

**Handling**

- Minimize handling and handle with care.
- Fully support items.
- Make sure hands are clean.

**Protection**

- Protect items from dust, light, and handling with acid-free boxes, folders, or polyester sleeves.
- Make copies—digital or photocopies.
- Distribute copies geographically (among family members, for example).
- Store the original safely and use the copy for display.
- Avoid plastic containers and sleeves that smell like a new shower curtain (PVC); types of safe and inert plastics includes polyethylene and polypropylene.

**Label, Label, Label**

- One of the greatest risks to photographs and audio and video recordings is poor or missing labels.
- Items are unidentifiable without a descriptive label.
- Use pencil when writing on the back of photos.
- Identify people, places, and dates in detail (instead of “Mom,” write Mom’s full name).

If you’re not sure… ask someone

- Library of Congress’ Ask a Librarian: [www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/)
- Regional Alliance for Preservation: [www.rap-arcc.org](http://www.rap-arcc.org)
- Attend a preservation workshop at your local library or regional preservation center.
- Go to the Preservation @ your library website: [www.atyourlibrary.org/passiton](http://www.atyourlibrary.org/passiton)

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**Quick Preservation Tips**

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**pass it on. . .**

**Preservation Week**

[www.ala.org/preservationweek](http://www.ala.org/preservationweek)

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**Preservation @ your library**

[www.atyourlibrary.org/passiton](http://www.atyourlibrary.org/passiton)