



Preservation Tips

Mending with Heat-set Tissue

While most document mending techniques require the expertise of a professional conservator, mending with heat-set tissue is a quick and easy way to mend document tears that can be utilized by any archivist or museum professional.

Benefits of mending with heat-set tissue:

- Mends small tears without introducing liquid
- Increases usability of archival collections
- Does not require a trained conservation professional
- Tissue is removable with small amounts of water

Tools needed:

- Tacking iron
- Heat-set tissue
- Scissors
- Parchment paper or silicone release paper

Preparation:

Plug in your tacking iron and set to a warm setting. You may want to test the process with different heat levels before attempting to mend historic documents, as an iron set too hot may scorch the paper.

Cut a piece of heat set tissue slightly longer than the length of the tear and twice as wide. For long complex tears the mend might require several smaller pieces of tissue.

Mending:

All mends should be as unintrusive as possible, in most cases the best way to do this is to mend on the back of the document.

1. Place a piece of silicone release or parchment paper underneath the tear in the document.
2. Examine the tear and determine the correct alignment of the paper.
3. Once the tear has been properly aligned remove the backing from the heat-set tissue and place, shiny side down, on the tear.
4. Place another piece of silicone release or parchment paper over the heat-set tissue.
5. Gently move the warm tacking iron over the area for 10-15 seconds. Be sure to keep the iron moving to avoid scorching the paper.
6. After 10-15 seconds remove the heat and the top layer of release paper. Check the stability of the mend. If the mend does not hold, start over with fresh heat set tissue and apply heat for longer.
7. Once mend is complete, trim any excess tissue from edges of document.