

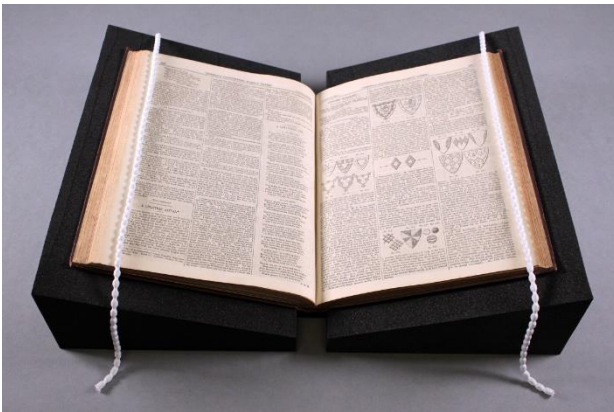
## BOOK CARE RULES

Bound books and documents are inherently subject to mechanical stress during use due to their structure. This means that their long-term conservation mainly depends on the way they are used during reading or consultation. We should therefore try to reduce this stress as much as possible. Even when books do not have any marks nor tears and are seemingly in good condition, their repeated use (opening, etc.) results in wear and tear.

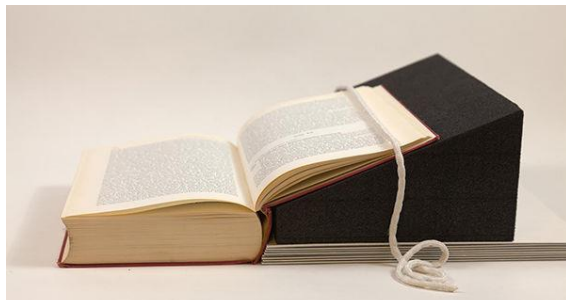
– In most cases, the maximum opening angle of a book is 120°. Only some seams and bindings may be opened to 180° without being damaged. On the other hand, books with bindings and seams that are more fragile and tight should be opened to a maximum of 90°.

– Ideally, all books should have some type of support when opened. While it is not always possible to use this setup, it is important to ensure that it is used when consulting old books from special collections or which are in a fragile condition. The cradles or supports used for this purpose can be made or bought and should be composed of a non-abrasive (soft) material or made with special pillows. This allows for the book to be opened at the correct angle without causing stress to the binding.

– Small weights can be provided to hold the pages in place and to increase book stability and comfort while reading.



**Fig. 1 and 2** – Examples of book supports and weights to hold the pages in place



**Fig. 3 and 4** – Examples of book supports and weights to hold the pages in place, highlighting the fact that they can sometimes be improvised, as shown in the image on the left

– Small weights can be provided and used to hold the pages in place.

– If it is necessary to mark pages, acid free paper can be provided to readers. It should be removed after use.

- Books should be removed from shelves one at a time and should not be pulled out by the top of the spine as this can cause irreversible damage to the binding and endpaper. If there is space between the top of the book and the shelf above, the book can be gently pushed out from its fore edge. If that is not possible, another way is to gently push the surrounding books inwards and to then remove the book while avoiding placing stress on the binding. It is important to be extra careful when books have staples, metallic parts, tape or other elements which create reliefs in the binding. The space should be closed with book holders or by adjusting the books which are placed on the shelf.

- Books that are too large and heavy, or damaged, should be stored horizontally, in order to avoid tension on their structure. Whether stored vertically or horizontally, no part of a book should jut out from the shelf as this makes it prone to collisions and abrasion. Do not place the books with the fore edge facing down, as this will cause tension and the separation of the book spine and binding.

- Shelves should be filled and with no empty spaces, however, it is important that the books are not packed so tightly as to damage one another when they are removed from the shelves. Where there are empty spaces, the use of bookends is crucial, and they should be made with a material that is resistant, inert and non abrasive. In terms of organisation, larger books should not be placed next to smaller ones without the use of support equipment.

- Do not carry too many books at once, in particular if the volumes are large, heavy or fragile. It is important to ensure that transportation is safe and to keep books from falling.