

## Wedding Gown Tips

For many women, a wedding gown is the most important clothing purchase of their lifetime. It is an investment that should be preserved with the best cleaning and storing methods available. No one wants to take chances with something as precious as a wedding gown. These are our expert tips on how to care for your gown so that it stays in perfect condition for years to come.

### Cleaning

Check garment care labels or any instructions that came with your gown and follow the instructions for best results. Most will recommend dry cleaning or professional wet-cleaning. Unlike traditional dry cleaning, which uses perchloroethylene, GreenEarth solvent will not damage the intricate beadwork, sequins, lace and embroidery commonly found on wedding gowns, and won't dissolve glue that attaches embellishments to gowns. It won't shrink your gown or leave it with a funky odor.

Cleaning with GreenEarth is like giving your gown a mineral

bath—it will come out softer and brighter, with all special trims and details intact. Always have your gown cleaned before putting it in storage. Check your gown for any visible stains, including graying of the hem where it touched the ground, and point them out to your dry cleaner. Stains from seemingly clear substances like body oils, perspiration, white wine and sugary substances may not appear for some time. Once these have a chance to oxidize, they may show up as light brown or yellow splotches that are difficult to remove. Have your gown cleaned soon after your wedding to prevent these kinds of surprises.

### Storing

After your gown is cleaned, it is important to store in a manner that will preserve it safely. First decide if you want store your gown hanging or folded. If your gown is strapless, has very thin straps, or is very heavy, folding may be a better choice because hanging will put a lot of stress on the fabric holding it up. However, if your dress is very thin or of especially delicate material (such as antique lace or silk), you should hang it to eliminate the risk of permanent creasing from folding.

It is best to have your gown stored and preserved by professionals, such as Prestige Preservation. If you choose to take care of your gown yourself, here are some tips on how to store it safely.

### Hanging Storage

- Plastic garment bags are a definite “don't”—they give off undetectable fumes that can severely weaken and damage the garment fibers.

- It is essential that the gown be allowed to breathe, so that mold and mildew don't have a chance to grow.

- Purchase a special preservation bag, available at many specialty

shops, or use a plain white cotton sheet that has been thoroughly washed. Cut a hole in the sheet so there is a place for the hanger to go through.

- Use a very wide padded hanger to help the gown keep its shape. If you don't have a padded hanger, make your own by wrapping a white cotton sheet around a sturdy hanger.
- Hang your gown in a dry, dark place in the main living area of your home, not the attic, basement, or garage. Textiles are very sensitive to changes in heat and humidity.
- Take your gown out every 2 years or so to let it air out and inspect it to be sure nothing has happened to it in storage.

### Box Storage

- Use only an acid-free box with acid-free tissue paper. Regular cardboard and tissue break down over time, damaging fabrics.
- Select a box that is large enough. Cramming your gown into a too-small box or folding it too many times can cause permanent creasing and weaken the fabric.
- Wrap your gown entirely in acid-free tissue before folding. Ensure that none of the fabric touches itself.
- Line box with tissue before placing the gown inside.
- Do not seal the box—many wedding preservation services permanently seal boxes for storage in order to keep air and dust out. But if you want to prevent permanent creases, or if you just want to take your gown out and admire it occasionally, make sure the box lid is removable.
- Store your boxed gown in a dry, dark place in the main living area of your home, not the attic, basement, or garage. Textiles are very sensitive to changes in heat and humidity. Condensation can also develop in sealed boxes, creating mildew and mold growth. Make sure your gown has room to breathe.
- Take your gown out of storage every 2 years or so and air it out.
- Re-fold your gown differently than it was folded before so that permanent creases do not develop.