



# Conserve O Gram

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## Storage Techniques For Hanging Garments: Dust Covers

### Introduction

Costume items are stored in one of two ways, depending on condition:

- hanging in a wardrobe closet
- folded in an archival textile or costume box

In general, fitted, constructed garments in good condition can be hung for storage (for example, dresses, bodices, coats, and jackets). Hanging storage is appropriate if:

- the shoulder seams are strong and intact
- the fabric in the shoulder area is free of splits, holes, or other weakness
- the waistline of a dress can support itself without causing strain at the shoulders or waist

A padded hanger is required to support a hanging garment. Instructions for making a padded hanger can be found in *Conserve O Gram* 4/5, Storage Techniques for Hanging Garments: Padded Hangers.

### Dust Covers

Dust covers are used to:

- protect garments from dust and light
- protect textiles from the oils and acids in your hands
- prevent the transfer of fugitive dyes from one object to another
- prevent metallic embroidery from catching on and tearing other garments
- prevent abrasion of adjacent objects as costume items are moved in and out of storage cabinets

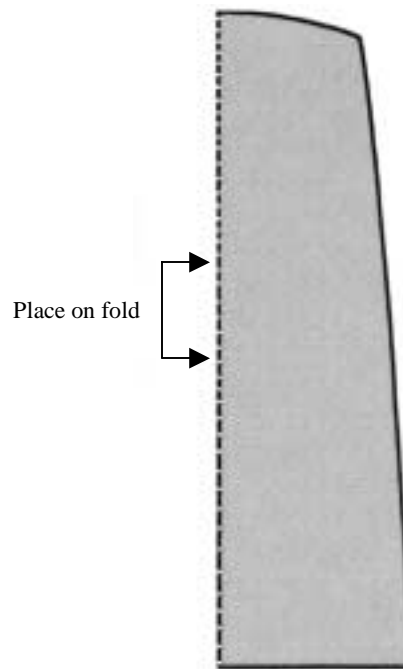
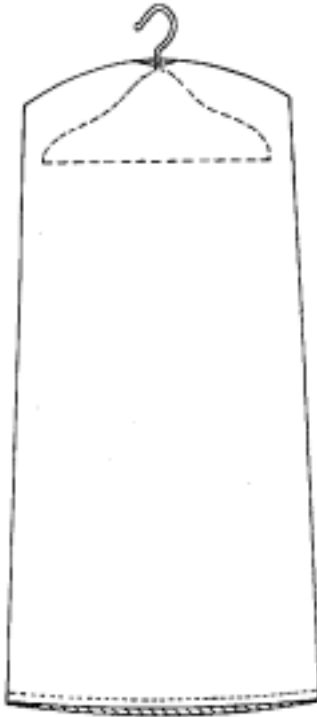


Figure 1. Pattern for dust cover

Make a paper pattern for your dust cover (see Figure 1). The dotted line will be placed on the fold of the fabric for cutting. The pattern should be large enough to accommodate the garment plus 1-2 inches of air space. Also allow for a 5/8" seam.

Machine-sew the garment bag at the sides and shoulders, leaving a 1" opening at the top of the bag for the hanger hook. Press the seams open and machine finish or trim with pinking shears. Turn the bag right side out and hem the bottom edge.



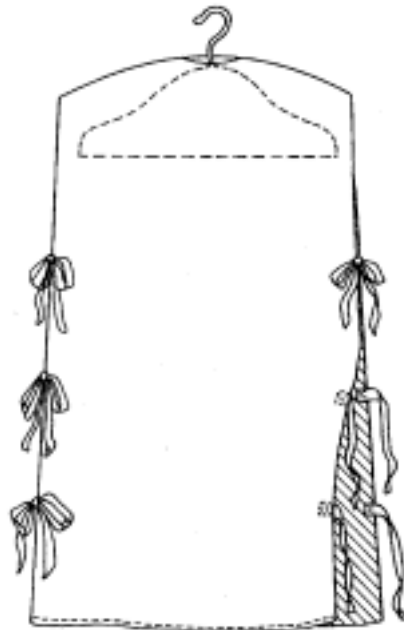
**Figure 2.** Basic dust cover for costume

### ***Specialized Dust Covers***

You can customize dust covers to improve their performance for individual garments. For example, it might be better to use a cover with side ties if frequent access is necessary or embroidery or embellishments would be abraded by pulling the cover over the garment.

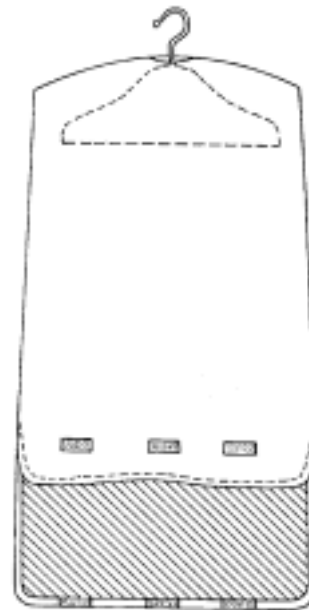
The dust cover with side ties is made with the same pattern as the basic dust cover.

- Sew across the shoulders and 8-9 inches down the sides.
- Hem the edges of the open sides and bottom of the cover.
- Cut 12" lengths of cotton twill tape and stitch them in pairs along the side openings.



**Figure 3.** Dust cover with ties

Another variation to the dust cover uses a bottom flap to protect the lower edge of a garment.



**Figure 4.** Dust cover with fold up bottom flap.

To construct this dust cover:

- cut one piece of muslin using the paper pattern
- add 18 inches to the length of the pattern and cut a second piece of muslin.
- construct this cover in the same manner as the basic cover, hemming both lower edges
- cut three pairs of hook and loop tape (VELCRO®) and machine-stitch them to the cover as shown in Figure 4.
- close the bottom edge by folding up the flap and pressing the hook and loop tapes together

**Note:** In this and any other storage systems where objects are not completely visible, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs are very important. Be sure to include “sticky traps” in storage cabinets where costume objects are stored, and spot-check objects in containers and dust covers during monthly IPM inspections.

### ***Materials and Supplies***

#### Basic dust cover

washed, 100% cotton muslin  
cotton sewing thread  
sewing machine

#### Specialized dust covers

Materials for basic dust cover  
100% cotton twill tape /or/  
1” hook and loop tapes

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This *Conserve O Gram* was adapted from “Dust Covers for Objects Stored on Hangers” In *Storage of Natural History Collections: Ideas and Practical Solutions*, Carolyn L. Rose and Amparo R. de Torres, eds. Pittsburgh, PA: Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, 1992, with the permission of the publisher.

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