

Pennywise: Textile Storage

The problem: Textiles such as quilts, flags, banners, sashes, rugs, and similar objects with not enough appropriate storage.

The situation: Textiles are stored in piles, cardboard boxes, or crowded into too small of a box.



The existing storage situation for your textiles may or may not be in great shape with just the right amount of space or too crowded. What is constant is the need to improve storage methods and maximize space for future growth. Whether new to textile storage needs or facing existing issues, there are fairly simple ways to properly store textiles and efficiently utilize storage space.

Our solution: Rolled textile shelving units. A bit of a specialty item if being purchased but also easy to recreate if space is limited and it needs to fit into a specific area.

What you will need: A simple google search using “upholstery fabric display stands” or “museum rolled fabric racks” or “museum hanging textile racks” will provide some images to work from to get ideas. A visit to your local DIY store for $\frac{3}{4}$ ” plywood, closet rod holders, 1” diameter metal rods, rubber caps for the ends, and screws along with some power tools and possibly a couple of willing volunteers completes your list.

Budget impact: \$250 -\$500 or less. How many and lumber needs will determine your final cost. You can go high end and purchase Museum textile storage, but these usually have price tags to match. The most budget friendly option is a fabric store going out of business or a fabric store that is willing to donate or sell fairly cheaply their rolled upholstery fabric display stands that are being replaced. This may also be a great grant project if funding is needed (check with the granting organization) or it can be your one major project and expense for that year. If you have a good volunteer base, it would be a great opportunity to have them actively involved and see the kind of impact they can have.



Project: Make sure to wear appropriate safety gear and clothing when operating power tools. We were fortunate when we were able to obtain several upholstery fabric display stands when a local fabric store went out of business. Each unit was under \$100 and came with rods. Once at storage, we strengthened the frame and raised the bottoms so it would roll over the floors more smoothly otherwise, they were ready to go. If this is not an option, you can build to suit.

Locate the space you wish to have the rolled textile storage frame. It works best if building with a wall or shelving, or sturdy frame as support. Cut the plywood into the appropriate depth (take the largest rolled textile measurement for depth and width needed) and securely attach to its support frame. Measure out the appropriate spacing for the rod holders, mark, and screw into the plywood. Allow enough room for ease of taking on and off the rack.



If worried about off-gassing from the plywood, you can line with Tyvek. For the bolt rolls if you can get a hold of the cardboard tubes used in large upholstery rolls, pad it out with ethafoam to the appropriate diameter and tie securely with unbleached cotton twill tape. Lay out the textile and line with tissue and roll onto the prepared tube with tissue facing in. Allow enough room on the ends for handling. For dust cover, have a washed unbleached cotton sheet ready to wrap around the roll and tie at the ends like a candy wrapper. You can also attach the object number and label to the cover for ease of identification. To provide additional dust control, cover or drape the open side of the shelving with 7 millimeter plastic sheeting.



In all cases, make sure the shelving unit can support the combined weight of the stored textiles and note it on the shelf somewhere visible (ie- “no more than x lbs.”) so everyone knows the weight capacity of the shelving. Good rule of thumb: better to allow for more weight than you think you’ll need than not enough.

Next time: Repurposing cabinets and existing storage

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