Books kept by a library have a “shelf life” and even book manufacturers these days do not make books to last. However, books can be repaired so that they remain readable for longer with just a little knowledge, skills, and practice.

**Types of Book Damage:**

* Torn dust cover – repair as paper or discard.
* Chewed cover corner – can be sanded down, or covered with tape.
* Broken Spine (inside or outside) – can be covered with cloth tape, mended inside with cloth hinge tape, or signatures re-glued to the spine.
* Torn cover joint – can be repaired with cloth hinge tape and/or the outside covered with cloth tape.
* Torn endpapers – can repair as a regular tear.
* Torn pages – can be repaired with glue or tape.
* Pages falling out – the repair is known as a “tip-in” because once the edge is covered with glue the page is tipped back into place.
* Mold – can be slowed/stopped by sealing in a bag in the freezer for several months. Very hard to stop entirely.
* Stains – can be sanded out if on the fore edge or head papers. Cover may be cleaned with book cleaner.
* Water damage – Dry books open and standing up. Some wrinkles can be flattened out in a book press.
* Smoke and other smells – Store in a sealed container with charcoal in a mesh bag.

**Repair Tools & Supplies**

These supplies can be found in a well-stocked office, from [www.demco.com](http://www.demco.com) or [www.shopbrodart.com](http://www.shopbrodart.com). This is not an exhaustive glossary – other tools and supplies can be used for more short-term repairs, and you can use tapes in place of adhesives many times.

*Absorbene Dirt Eraser* – a rubber like eraser that is very gentle and can erase stains from inside pages.

*Archival Storage Boxes* – acid-buffered cardboard boxes that will prevent future yellowing of older documents. Can also use acid-buffered tissue paper.

*Bone Folder* – an 8” long flat plastic stick used to smooth adhesive laminate and tapes.

*Book Cleaner* – a non-water cleaning paste for book covers. Wipes clean.

*Book Cloth Tape* – a long strip of adhesive cloth tape used to replace a spine.

*Book Press* – a large clamp with Masonite dividers; can be used to evenly apply several pounds of force to several books at once.

*Book Tape* – looks like heavy duty packing tape, but is Ph balanced and will not yellow with age. Scotch 845 tape is the only commercial brand approved for use on books.

*Cloth Hinge Tape* – tape that has a sewn middle seam to form an “X” shape. Often comes with pre-applied dry adhesive. Used to reattach a cover panel to the spine or spine cover.

*Corner Covers* – adhesive plastic or fabric that is pre-cut to wrap around the corner of a book’s cover

*Document Cleaning Pad* – a cloth bag filled with non-abrasive grit free cleaning powder for the most sensitive books.

*Filament Tape* – reinforced tape used to secure book jacket covers.

*Filmoplast P Tape* – very thin ph-balanced adhesive tape used for partial tears or cuts on pages.

*Good Quality Scissors* – get heavy duty paper cutting scissors in a variety of sizes

*Goo-Gone* – a highly concentrated degreaser. Used to remove stubborn adhesive left by stickers on book covers.

*H-Bands* – Giant rubber bands in the shape of an “H” that will evenly and completely wrap around a book to secure it closed.

*Jacket Covers* – creates a clear sleeve over a book’s dust jacket

*Label Peeler* – looks like a square offset spatula with a sharp edge, used to get under and lift labels off books.

*Laminate* – Used on paperback books to add a plastic cover

*Long Reach Stapler* – Usually with a 12” reach, can be used to repair children’s books with a stapled binding.

*Newspaper Rolls* – Used to keep the shape of the fore edge while a spine is being repaired. Use several pages and roll very tightly to create a firm tube. Secure with tape.

*Norbond Liquid Plastic Adhesive* – a ph-balanced liquid plastic (polyvinyl acetate) that dries clear and flexible and won’t yellow or turn brittle. Can be used like white glue.

*Paste Brush* – used to aid in applying liquid adhesive. Can use unwanted paint brushes too.

*Sandpaper* – various grits can be used to sand off a layer of the fore edge or head edge to remove stains, ink, spots, etc.

*Spine Covers* – adhesive plastic or fabric that is pre-cut to wrap around the top or bottom of a book’s spine.

*Vinyl & Plastic Erasers* – can help remove stubborn pencil, pen, and ink stains.

*Wax Paper* – used to protect books from unwanted glue traveling outside the repair area.

*Wooden Dowels* – used to apply glue to small spaces.

*X-acto or Craft Knife* – clean tears with precision.

NEVER USE: glue sticks, packing tape, rubber cement, shelf paper, wrapping paper, brown paper

**Know Your Book Vocabulary!**



**More how-to repair videos and resources can be found online:**

SULPreservation – Syracuse University Library’s book preservation channel on YouTube.

Save Your Books – a book repair expert demonstrates techniques you can use on You Tube.

Find a conservator for antiques and costly items at the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works: <http://www.conservation-us.org/membership/find-a-conservator>.

Dartmouth College has created an online manual on book repair: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/preservation/repair/index.html>