

# The Reynolds® Handi-Vac™: First Impressions



## What it is

The Reynolds® Handi-Vac™ was designed as an inexpensive alternative to home food sealing systems.

## How it works

The item to be sealed is placed inside a zip-closure polyethylene bag, the bag is sealed, and the air is sucked out. Under optimal conditions, the seal can last months. In practice, it must be checked periodically.

## Conservation Applications

- Removal of stains and residues from leather and paper
- Packing of wet books to delay mold growth
- Controlled drying
- Stabilization of damaged books for transport or storage
- On-site work
- Substitute for traditional vacuum packer

## Advantages

- Inexpensive (~\$10)
- Portable
- Battery powered (6 AA)
- Bags can be re-used a few times
- Sealing system doesn't use heat
- Can seal items of many shapes

## Disadvantages

- Seal can fail over time, especially on re-used bags
- Bags must be bought from Reynolds®
- Large size bag can only accommodate books 9-10" high

## Tips

- For short term use (solvent treatment, flattening), bags can be re-used
- For long term storage, a new bag should be used each time
- Pieces of thin board can be sandwiched on either side of book for added protection, or between boards and textblock
- Dry blotter can be used to dry wet materials
- Blotter dampened with water or a solvent can be used for humidification or stain reduction

## Cautions

- Quality control on bags is spotty—must check seal periodically
- System is not designed to handle flowing liquid—blotters or other absorbent material must be used to contain any liquid
- The Handi-vac™ filter chamber is soluble in acetone

## For More Information

Handi-Vac™ Website: [http://www.reynoldspkg.com/reynoldskitchens/handi\\_vac/en/home.asp](http://www.reynoldspkg.com/reynoldskitchens/handi_vac/en/home.asp)

Brenna Campbell  
Samuel H. Kress Fellow in Rare Book Conservation  
Thaw Conservation Center  
The Morgan Library & Museum  
[bcampbell@themorgan.org](mailto:bcampbell@themorgan.org)

