Moving house, staging your property for sale, heading overseas temporarily or simply running out of space are all valid reasons to store a television set; yet oftentimes when they retrieve it out they find that something has gone amiss; perhaps a cracked screen, dead backlight or simply won't power on.

What separates TVs that make it through storage unscathed from those that don't often comes down to how they're packed, positioned and left sitting there in their storage environment – whether packed tightly enough, left alone too long in there or whether placed somewhere with inappropriate temperature conditions. All these factors determine whether your television returns working order or you end up purchasing another.

This guide covers everything you need to know to store a TV correctly, from same-day packing and long-term facility storage.

What Happens to a TV in Storage That Goes Wrong?

Before embarking on the "how," it is worth understanding why televisions in storage become damaged. Understanding what actually causes damage will make any protective steps taken easier to implement consistently and follow through on.

Physical impact and vibration: LCD, OLED, and QLED television screens are among the most delicate components in any household. Even minor impacts without sufficient padding may crack internal panels without leaving visible marks; any cracks will only become apparent upon powering on or when an dark area or dead zone appears onscreen. Vibration during transporting could loosen internal connections leading to intermittent faults later.

Moisture and condensation: Electronics do not play well together with moisture. Condensation forms when cold objects enter warm, humid rooms, settling on surfaces like screens or internal components. Powering on damp electronics before moisture evaporates causes short circuits and permanent internal damage.

Temperature extremes: Manufacturers specify safe temperature ranges for flat-screen televisions, typically warning against storage below -20°C or above 60°C. Extreme temperatures can freeze liquid crystal fluid, degrade adhesive layers, or warp plastic housings, causing irreparable damage.

Improper positioning: Manufacturers create flat-screen televisions for upright storage and transport, so laying it flat may put unnecessary stress on its screen panel and lead to internal layers separating or cracking over time.

Understanding these four failure modes makes the following storage recommendations feel less like random rules and more like direct responses to real risks.

How to Store a TV Without a Box

Original manufacturer boxes provide ideal storage packaging because they match the specific dimensions of each television set. Molded foam inserts secure corners and edges to protect surfaces without applying excessive pressure to the screen. If you still have one available to you, do not hesitate to use it without hesitation!

Most people no longer keep the original box for storage of their television sets. Here’s how you can pack one for long-term storage without it.

Step 1: Clean the Screen and Body

Prior to packing, wipe the screen gently with a soft microfiber cloth. Do not use glass cleaner or any product containing ammonia or alcohol as these could damage anti-reflective coatings on flat panel screens. A dry or very lightly dampened microfiber cloth removes dust and fingerprints without risk.

Clean both sides and back of your TV as well. Dust and debris that has collected during packaging could scratch its finish upon unwrapping, leaving permanent marks.

Step 2: Remove All Cables and Accessories

Disconnect each cable from the television, coil them loosely and secure with cable ties, then store cables, remote controls, wall-mounting hardware and any other accessories in an easily identifiable bag or box – doing this ensures nothing gets misplaced and all parts needed for reinstallation are available when it’s time for you to reassemble it when the time comes!

Step 3: Wrap the Screen

Place a piece of cardboard larger than your screen face against its face, using painter’s tape instead of regular tape that could pull at or leave adhesive residue on it. This layer protects it from direct contact with packing materials while spreading pressure evenly across its face rather than concentrated at one spot.

On top of the cardboard base, wrap the entire television in moving blankets, furniture pads or several layers of bubble wrap for optimal padding around every surface, particularly those areas most vulnerable to impacts such as corners. Aim for at least two-three inches of protection around all areas where impact could occur – especially corners.

Do not press a newspaper directly against your screen or body as newsprint ink can migrate over time and affect surfaces such as screens and bodies.

Step 4: Secure the Wrapping

Use packing tape to secure the outer layer of wrapping, without touching directly the TV itself. Make sure it fits snug enough not to shift during handling while not applying undue compressive force on its screen panel.

Step 5: Create or Source a Box

Wrapping isn’t sufficient for long-term storage of televisions – you need a rigid outer box to protect its padding from being compressed by other items and give it a stable, stackable form.

Television boxes can be found from appliance and electronics retailers who may have extra boxes from newly arrived stock, moving companies selling new TV boxes in standard size ranges, appliance stores giving away boxes from new televisions when asked, and custom-sized cardboard boxes from packaging suppliers are another possibility for oddly shaped sets.

Fill any void spaces inside the box with packing paper, crumpled newspaper or additional bubble wrap to ensure that the TV remains secure during handling or transport.

How to Store a TV in a Storage Unit

Packing the TV correctly is half of the job; how you position and store it within its container determines its effectiveness in performing its duty.

Always Store a TV Upright

This rule should serve as the cornerstone of TV storage: ensure the television remains upright in its usual orientation rather than lying flat on either the back or front of its cabinet.

Modern flat panel screens were not built to bear their own weight when placed horizontally, and when stored for extended periods they may develop internal panel damage from being stored flat on their back or face – even with padding or cover provided – which may not become evident until powering up. This puts modern television sets at an increased risk for panel damage that might not become evident until powering on.

Storing your television upright requires placing its base either on the floor or a secure raised platform, and using shelves designed specifically to meet its weight without toppling forward.

Do Not Stack Anything on Top

No matter how securely it’s packed, nothing should ever be placed atop of a television when in storage. Even small objects create pressure that could ultimately damage its screen beneath. Mark the box clearly with its upright orientation and an “do not stack” instruction for maximum safety.

Position It Away From the Unit Door

Storage unit doors, particularly roll-up garage-style ones, allow more air movement, moisture, and temperature fluctuations into the unit than inside it. To maximize stability, place the television toward the back or center of the storage space where conditions are more stable rather than nearing its door where conditions could change rapidly.

Choose the Right Storage Environment

Storage environments play a pivotal role when it comes to electronics. A climate-controlled unit will maintain temperatures and humidity within acceptable limits for flat screen televisions year-round; an open non-climate controlled storage unit exposes stored items to full exposure to outdoor temperature fluctuations, including summer temperatures that exceed safe storage limits for electronics as well as winter conditions that near those limits.

TV in Non-Climate-Controlled Storage: The Risks

Can You Store a TV Without Climate Control? Yes, and many people do so successfully in moderate climates for shorter periods. But it is wise to be aware of potential risks before making this choice.

Summer heat: On a scorching summer day, an unventilated storage unit can quickly heat up significantly above outdoor air temperatures – sometimes reaching 140degF in direct sunlight! At these extreme temperatures, liquid crystal fluid in LCD panels may permanently degrade, adhesive layers within screen assemblies may fail and plastic housing components could warp.

Winter cold: Can You Store a TV in Cold Storage Unit during Winter? -The answer depends on how cold. Most flat screen televisions can tolerate brief exposure to low temperatures during transport without incurring permanent display damage; however, extended storage at temperatures below -4degF (-20degC) risks freezing liquid crystal fluid within their panels, potentially leading to permanent display damage.

Humidity: Uncontrolled humidity levels in non-climate controlled storage environments can lead to moisture condensing within electronics when temperatures fluctuate, creating moisture damage in even moderate climates. This is the main way that non-climate controlled storage damages electronics.

Climate-controlled storage units offer long-term savings compared to replacing an expensive flat screen television, making a climate controlled unit an important consideration in climates that experience hot summers or freezing winters.

TV in Storage Unit Cold Weather: Returning It to Use

Uncommon among people retrieving TVs from cold storage, one of the most frequent mistakes people make is turning it on immediately upon unpacking it – this step often causes condensation damage.

When a cold TV enters a warm room, moisture in the warm air condenses onto its cold surfaces – including its internal components – just as condensation forms on cold drink glasses in warm environments. If powered on while this condensation remains on internal circuit boards and components or connections is present, short circuits may occur and cause serious electrical damage to occur.

Before unwrapping and powering on, allow the TV to acclimatize to room temperatures by leaving it packed, wrapped, in its place of use for at least 24 hours before unwrapping it; after unwrapping allow two to four more hours for any condensation to fully dissipate before adding electricity. This period allows time for any potential issues related to moisture condensation to clear completely before electricity is introduced into its circuits.

This step costs nothing and prevents one of the primary causes of television failure during storage in cold conditions: overheating.

How Long Can a TV Stay in Storage?

A television stored properly in a climate-controlled environment may remain functionally intact for years without experiencing functional degradation. Modern flat screen TV electronics do not degrade simply from being switched off and stored; rather, environmental conditions and physical handling pose greater threats than time itself in these circumstances.

In non-climate-controlled storage, the practical safe duration is shorter and depends heavily on the climate. In a moderate climate with relatively stable temperatures year-round, a non-climate-controlled unit may be acceptable for storage periods of a few months. And in climates with hot summers, cold winters, or high humidity, limiting non-climate-controlled storage to a few weeks is the more conservative and safer approach.

Non-climate controlled storage duration varies considerably based on climate. In a moderate environment with relatively stable year-round temperatures and humidity levels, non-climate controlled units may be suitable for several months of storage use; for hot summers or low humidity regions however, restricting these spaces to only weeks may be appropriate and safer.

Is It Worth Keeping a 15-Year-Old TV?

This question comes up in the context of storage decisions, and the honest answer involves weighing several factors.

A 15-year-old flat screen television is likely an early LCD or plasma technology set. Plasma televisions from this era have finite panel lives, and many are at or approaching the end of their practical display lifespan regardless of storage. Early LCD televisions are significantly less efficient and lower resolution than current models.

Practical considerations when disposing of old televisions include their functionality and any planned uses in the future. If it works well and a specific use for it can be identified after storage, keeping it for an agreed upon period is appropriate; otherwise, storage costs, effort, and space requirements could easily outstrip its worth; in many instances donating a working television to charity or community groups is a more practical alternative than keeping it for evermore.

For more guidance on home organization, storage projects, and improvement decisions that make your living space work better, the home improvement section at Home Narratives covers practical advice across every aspect of managing and improving your home.

The Extra Space Storage TV storing guide provides additional practical guidance from a professional storage perspective on packing, positioning, and choosing the right storage environment for flat screen televisions.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best way to store a TV?

For optimal storage conditions, place your TV upright in its original manufacturer’s

box in a climate-controlled storage environment. If this option is unavailable to you, wrap its screen with cardboard for protection, wrap its entire contents with moving blankets or bubble wrap to a depth of two-three inches and place in an appropriately sized box with void fill so as to avoid shifting, then vertically store away from doors in climate control unit away from any doorways. Do not store flat screen TVs lying flat; never stack anything on top of them and allow at least 24 hours for proper acclimatization prior to powering them back on after retrieval from cold storage!

Should I saran wrap a TV for storage?

Movers often employ plastic wrap as an outer layer to secure padding and block dust during short-term transport, serving only as secondary protection and should never touch the screen surface directly. Cardboard should always be placed against the screen prior to padding and plastic wrap being added on as desired. Long-term storage requires additional measures due to temperature, humidity, and physical risks a TV may face; plastic wrap alone simply cannot provide sufficient security against these threats.

Is it worth keeping a 15-year-old TV?

Dependent upon its condition and specific plans for it, an old 15-year-old LCD or early flat panel television may still serve its intended purpose in secondary spaces such as guest bedrooms or workshops. Plasmas from this period have limited remaining panel life due to higher energy usage compared to modern equivalents; hence starting the sentence off by suggesting alternative actions (donating or recycling), provides clear guidance.

Will a TV be okay in storage?

Correct storage will keep a television working perfectly for long-term storage, including providing adequate padding, upright vertical positioning, stable environmental conditions, and an acclimatization period prior to power up. Incorrect handling such as flat positioning or extreme temperatures could risk permanent internal damage or screen failure; careful preparation and handling steps play a vital role in whether long-term storage succeeds or ends in catastrophic failure.

Safely storing a television may seem straightforward, but doing so correctly requires taking several specific steps rather than just blanketing and throwing in the

back of a unit. Upright positioning, ample padding, the correct environment, and providing for an acclimation period when retrieving cover most risks associated with storage – by following those steps your television should emerge as good as new and ready to be set up and used like it never left your living room!

Do you plan to store or move in the near future, and still possess its original box? These questions will determine the most suitable approach to take.

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