

Modern Ketubah | guidelines for caring for your fine art ketubah

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Your ketubah is a work of fine art. As with any work of art, proper care of your ketubah is very important. Below are some guidelines you can follow to take the best care of your ketubah.

General guidelines

Your ketubah was created using archival-quality paper and inks, which are designed to resist aging. However, you need to do your part to protect your ketubah from the elements. Handle your ketubah as little as possible, since the oils on your skin can counteract the archival quality of the paper. When you do have to move it, make sure your hands are clean and dry, and hold the print by its edges, never directly touching the image. Always keep your ketubah out of long-term exposure to direct sunlight. Before the ceremony, keep it flat and protected. After the ceremony, get it professionally framed as soon as possible.

Before the wedding

When your ketubah arrives, carefully remove it from its shipping tube. Place your ketubah on a wide shelf or table, and cover it with a sheet of acid-free tissue (that shipped with it) and a large piece of heavy cardboard. Then place heavy books on each corner to keep the ketubah flat and help remove the curves. Store the ketubah flat like this, until the day of your wedding, out of direct sun and in a cool, dry place.

During your ceremony

To sign your ketubah, it is best to use an archival pigment-ink pen (one common brand is the Zig Millennium pen). These can be found in most art supply or framing stores. If you can't find a pigment pen (or, like me, lost it before the ceremony), a good quality ball-point pen will work as well. Never use felt-tip pen (such as a Sharpie) since it will bleed into the paper. Always test your pen first on the bottom-most edge of the paper, in a space that can be trimmed off when it is framed. Make sure the ink doesn't bleed or smudge easily.

If you plan to display your ketubah during the ceremony or reception, I recommend that you buy an inexpensive plexiglas frame to protect it (from champagne, tears, etc.). Choose a frame that is easy to open and close.

Framing the ketubah

After the ceremony, take your ketubah to a quality frame shop. Make sure they understand what this ketubah means to you, and that it is irreplaceable. Do not let them dry mount your ketubah, because this will damage it. Have them frame it like they would any work of fine art. Insist that the mat and backing board be archival, acid-free, and non-buffered. The ketubah should be attached to the mat using art corners or cloth tape. The glass or plexiglas should have the maximum UV protection available. It may cost more, but the investment is worth it.

Hanging the ketubah in your home

When hanging the ketubah in your home, keep it away from walls that get constant direct sunlight. Likewise, keep the ketubah off of from walls that have large fluctuations in humidity, such as exterior walls, or walls near fireplaces, air-conditioners, large windows, bathrooms, etc.