

Removing mold spores and musty smells

First, remove silt by wiping clean as best you can. Mostly I used a new soft bristle paint brush or a damp cloth squeezed dry. It was pretty easy to clean as long as you didn't work on it too long and rub the color or print off.

I found numerous "solutions" to the musty smell problem online. Below is my personal experience in tackling this fairly common task:

1. Good ol' sunshine. I set up a folding table on my driveway in the bright sunshine. I put open books on the table and allowed the breeze to flip through the pages, sometimes all afternoon. This turned out to rarely be enough as the only step but I would repeat this process after options listed below and it proved a good last step.
2. Wrap or pack in newspaper. Again, for me, this wasn't enough by itself but it turned out to be quite useful to bide time. I had many pamphlets, notebooks to go through so I would wrap a few with newsprint and masking tape, write on it which publication it was and then set it aside until I had time to adequately address. It helped knock out some of the smell by the time I got back to it.
3. Dryer sheets. Again most helpful to me to bide time. I put dryer sheets in boxes with books.
4. Quarantine with baking soda. Put books and a cup filled with baking soda in plastic storage bin with lid. Leave it in there for at least a week.
5. Dust with baking soda and freeze. For me, this was the most effective method for books. Turns out, you need to "activate" the baking soda to have the best results. There are two ways to activate – heat or cold. I read some people would put their books in microwave or oven with baking soda but I never tried that. I was too afraid of burning them! Equally effective I read is cold. I would put 3 or so books in gallon baggie and sprinkle baking soda on them including between pages. Zip it closed and put it in freezer for no less than a week. I literally cleared out one shelf of my freezer just for baggies of books. After I took them out, I would shake off as much of the baking soda as I could, and then used a soft bristle paint brush to wipe off the excess. As final step, I would set them on the table in the sunshine and let the breeze flip the pages.
6. Spray adhesive. Of course this isn't for a book but is recommended for vintage sheets of paper that have a musty smell. I used Mod Podge spray adhesive, sprayed both sides of vintage papers and then hung up to dry. It did seem to work but it made some of the papers even more brittle. So unless you are going to immediately use it for crafting or if the paper is still rather sturdy, I don't recommend this.
7. For fabric, I found two methods most helpful. First is a product I bought off Amazon called Retro Wash. It is pretty much like laundry detergent but requires an extra long soak time. Follow the directions.
8. Second for fabric, is vodka. Yes, vodka. If clothing is too delicate to put in water, fill a spray bottle w/ vodka and spray them. When I read this, I thought yes, of course! A few years ago I had the fortune to visit backstage of the Broadway musical "Something Rotten", a spoof about Shakespeare. The costumes were bulky and made of ornate, tapestry material. The show was very physical with a lot of dancing and, consequently,

a lot of sweating. Every night after the performance, they would spray them down with vodka. Vodka kills odor-causing bacteria and dries odorless. It works!