

Proper care and feeding of your DVDs, CDs and BluRays.



When compact discs first came out they were proclaimed to be almost indestructible. I still remember watching the Today Show and being amazed as the new media storage for music was demonstrated. Part of the demonstration was taking a small hammer and hitting the CD disc with it. A wonder of wonders; the disc still played. Looking back on this event today I wonder if the disc would have played all the way through. The Idea that digital disc storage was indestructible has been more than a little overblown. Digital discs need the same care and sometimes greater care than the old vinyl recordings. I would like to share with you some guidelines for caring for your digital discs. "

1. Handle the discs by the edges only. Don't put your fingers on the surface of the disc. Oil from your fingerprints will often give a disc player more trouble than scratches.
2. Keep your discs in the case when they are not in use. It keeps them cleaner and protects them from scratches as long as you follow notes a and b below.
 1. Never force a disc from a case. The disc will come out easily if you follow instructions for the type of case used. There is an area near the center of a disc that tells a player where the information is located on the disc. If you try to force the disc to come out of the case there is a chance you could crack the disc destroying this area.
 2. Don't spin the disc in the case. If you want the label in a specific position, take the disc out and put it back in the case in that position. When you put your finger on the disc to spin it in the case you are pushing the disc down onto any dirt, seen or unseen that might be there. This will also cause scraping of the disc resulting in circular scratches on it. Straight scratches will often play and read fine but circular scratches will often ruin a disc.
3. Before you declare a disc damaged and unplayable try cleaning it first. A badly scratched disc may still play fine once the dirt is removed.
4. Be sure to clean discs with a soft lint-free cloth and a non-alcohol or ammonia free cleaner. Rub the disc in a straight line from the outside edge in or the inside edge out, but never in a circle.
 1. Eyeglass cleaner and micro-fiber cloths work great.
 2. Cleaning in circular direction runs the risk of putting a circular scratch on the disc.

If you keep these guidelines in mind when you handle your digital storage discs, they shouldn't give you very much trouble.

I would like to add a comment about using Library DVDs and CDs. The library's CD and DVD circulation is staggering in terms of numbers. Because of the number of items that circulate every day we are unable to check the condition of every item that circulates. If you find that you have a problem playing a CD or DVD that you checked out of the library, try cleaning the disc. If the problem is still there please either let the clerk at the circulation desk know or insert a note into the sleeve of the disc cover. The more information you can give in terms of the location of the problem(s), the better. We really don't want our patrons to have problems with our discs and we also don't want to take them out of circulation unless we really need to replace them.

Posted by Keith C. on September 10, 2012

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