

Care of CD ROMs

In order for your CDs to stand the test of time, you must care for them properly. This means placing them in jewel cases whenever you're not using them, not subjecting them to direct sunlight or other extreme weather conditions, and keeping them away from the hands of small children and clumsy adults.

The storage story

If you're short of jewel cases, paper or plastic sleeves are better than nothing. However, where a jewel case suspends a disc in midair, a paper sleeve is in direct contact with the surface of a disc. Dust can accumulate inside a sleeve, turning it into sandpaper, slowly yet inexorably ruining the surface of your disc.

Downside up

If you're not 100 percent diligent about keeping your discs safely tucked away (who is?), then you should always place them *clear* side down. The labeled/printed face of a disc is actually more delicate than the bottom, clear, poly carbonate layer, and major damage to the label side will ruin the reflective and dye layers as well.

Label issues

Labels are handy for categorizing your discs, but they can also affect performance and damage your discs. A poorly attached label can cause a disc to wobble too much for high-speed reading. If you must use labels, use only those formulated for use on CDs. These have milder adhesives than general-purpose labels and shouldn't react badly with the top layer.

CD markup

Marking a disc with a pen is probably OK if you use a specially formulated CD marker. But the ink formulations in some general-purpose pens can react badly with the upper layer and leak through to harm the reflective and dye layers below. If you want to be completely safe, either mark your discs on the clear inner circle where no data is stored, or better yet, leave the disc unmarked and use the paper jewel case insert to list the disc's contents.

Follow these few simple rules, and you can expect years of service from your CD media.

[If you need assistance, contact your local Computer Troubleshooter](#)