

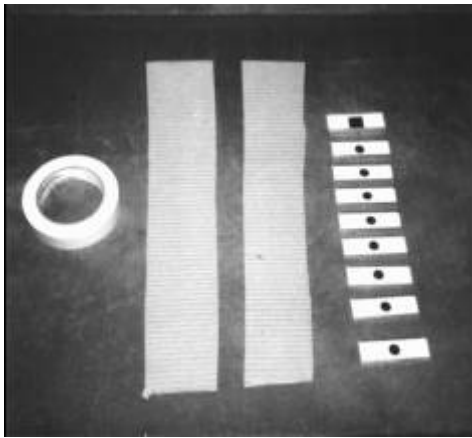
How to Pack Microfossils

By Skip Lyles

Department of Paleobiology
Smithsonian Institution
National Museum of Natural History

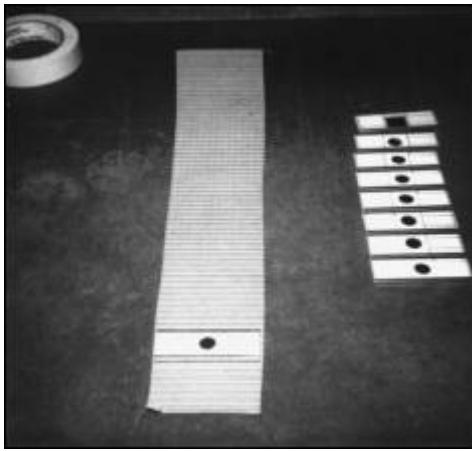
Microfossils are tiny fossilized organisms that are too small for the naked eye to see. To view them, they need to be mounted on slides and placed under a microscope. Slides take a variety of forms, some are completely made of glass, some are made of pressboard protected by a metal sleeve, and others are made of plastic called "peels." So regardless of the type, or size, of slides that hold the microfossils, there is a simple and effective way to pack them for shipping.

The only materials that you're going to need are flexible corrugated cardboard and masking tape. Here we'll show you how to pack microfossils step-by-step using only these two materials.



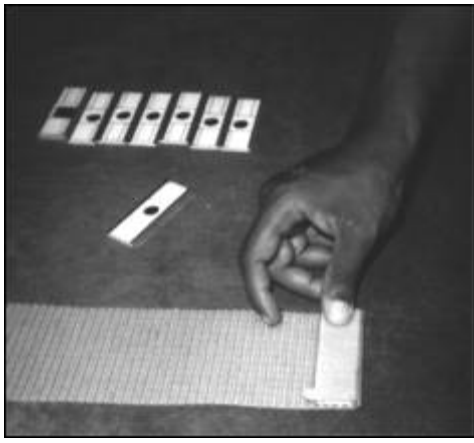
Step 1:

Here are the materials necessary in order to wrap this set of slides: flexible corrugated cardboard that has been cut in strips to the width of the slide masking tape

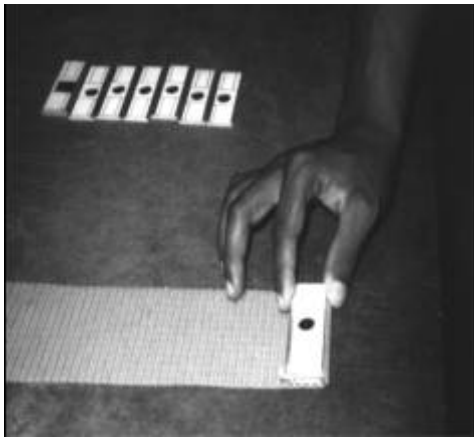


Step 2:

Take your first slide, and place it on the cardboard about an inch from the bottom as shown.



Step 3:
Fold the bottom of the cardboard over the top of the slide until it covers the top edge, and place your thumb on it.



Step 4:
Place your next slide on top of the covered slide, and remove your thumb.



Step 5:
Then with both hands, start to roll the slides and cardboard forward one turn so that the top slide is covered, then put the next slide on top and repeat until you come within two inches of the end of it, and secure it.



Step 6:
Here's what the roll should look like when you're done. Now that it is finished, hold it firmly so that you now can apply the masking tape.



Step 7:

Now with the masking tape, start to wrap it around the roll tightly about two times and tear off the tape from the end and seal it on to the roll. This is done in order to keep the slides secure and the roll from loosening.



Step 8:

This is what it should look like after you have secured the front of the roll. Now it is ready to be secured from the sides.



Step 9:

Wrap the masking tape now around the roll from the sides, starting with either side first. Wrap it around twice, tear off the end, and seal. This is done so that the slides won't fall out from the sides.



Step 10:

This is what it should look like after it has been completely wrapped. Now it is ready to be packed.



Step 11:

Here are the materials that we will be using to pack this roll of slides:
raw bedding cotton
6" x 4" empty Kodak box
masking tape



Step 12:

Start by opening the Kodak box, and take a piece of bedding cotton and place it in the bottom of the box until it is flat. This is done so that the cotton will provide a good cushion for the roll of slides when it is packed.



Step 13:

After placing the cotton in the bottom of the box, take the roll of slides and place it in the box making sure that the cotton is in between the roll and the box on all sides.



Step 14:

Place another piece of cotton securely on top of the roll of slides, making sure that the cotton is on the inside of the borders of the box.



Step 15:

This is what it should look like when you are done. Now it is ready to be sealed and wrapped.



Step 16:
Put the lid on the box so it can now be sealed with masking tape.



Step 17:
Wrap the masking tape around the ends of the box once or twice, tear off the end, and seal it.



Step 18:
Then wrap the masking tape around the sides once or twice, tear off the end, and seal it.



Step 19:

This is what it should look like when you are done. It is now ready to be wrapped, which is the final phase of this project.



Step 20:

This is the machine that we will be using in order to do the wrapping of the box; it is called an automatic wet tape dispenser.



Step 21:

Take a strip of wet gummed paper tape from the tape dispenser 15 inches long, and start to place it onto the box towards the edge. Make sure that you place it so that there's an even overlap of tape on both ends of the box.



Step 22:
Press the wet tape firmly on to the surface of the box until it is sealed.



Step 23:
Fold the overlap of tape on the left side on to the end of the box and press firmly until it is sealed. Notice when this is done, there will be another overlap of tape for the bottom of the box.



Step 24:
Then fold the remaining overlap of tape over on to the bottom of the box, and press firmly until it is sealed.



Step 25:

Now fold the overlap of tape on the right side over on to the end of the box, and press firmly until it is sealed. There will also be an overlap of tape left for the bottom of the box.



Step 26:

Take the remaining overlap of tape, fold it over on to the bottom of the box and press firmly until it is sealed.



Step 27:

Now get another 15" strip of gummed tape, and place it evenly across the other half of the box, making sure that there's an even overlap of tape on both sides. Then repeat steps 22 through 26 to seal the tape on to the box.



Step 28:

Once the other half of the box has been sealed, turn the box up on its side, get a strip of tape 9" long, and place it evenly on the side of the box, making sure there's an overlap of tape on the ends as well as the top and bottom.

Note: There should be an overlap of tape 1/8" on the top and bottom.



Step 29:

Fold the remaining overlap of tape on both sides over on to the ends of the box, and then press the top and ends firmly until it is sealed.



Step 30:

Then fold over and press the 1/8" overlap of tape on the ends of the box firmly until it is sealed.



Step 31:
Finally, fold over and press the overlap of tape on the top of the box firmly until it is sealed.



Step 32:
Repeat steps 30 and 31 to seal the other side of the box.



Step 33:
Now flip the box on the other side, get another strip of 9" tape, and repeat step 28.



Step 34:
Repeat steps 29-31 to seal the tape on to the box.



Step 35:
The finished product. This is what should look like when you're done. The only thing it needs now is a mailing label, and it's ready for shipment.