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Subject: Dumb question

Posted by [Jacks](#) on Mon, 01 Nov 2010 21:01:41 GMT

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I'm an old radio show fan. I used to collect some of my favorites on cassette.

The tape in the cassettes is now breaking down. Is there any way to arrest that, or should I simply replace what I had with CD versions?

I have a LOT of cassettes to trash, otherwise, and not just of vintage radio shows.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 01 Nov 2010 21:14:21 GMT

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What's "breaking down?" Unless they're exposed to heat or magnetic fields, they should last a long, long time. I mean, I don't consider them to be impervious - they're particularly vulnerable to heat and magnetic fields, and frictional loss will wear out a tape after lots of plays. But if stored where they aren't exposed to heat and magnetism, they'll generally outlast us. I have dozens of 30 year-old cassette tapes that are in great shape, and sound just like they did in 1980. Some of them have been played probably 30 to 50 times, maybe more.

All that said, you can always play those precious tapes "one last time" to transfer them to sound files on your computer. Then put them on a CD and store the source tapes in a safe place.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Jacks](#) on Tue, 02 Nov 2010 12:58:32 GMT

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They weren't in a temperature-controlled environment, I'm afraid. Every single one that I have attempted to play, has been outright eaten by the cassette deck (and it's not a poor quality system).

I have a dual deck I have to take apart, another tape was eaten recently, and I threw my hands up in disgust. A lot of the radio show stuff I have is bootleg recordings from the station that was playing them originally; we'd take a boom box (all I remember is that the stupid thing took a LOT of "D" cells, and it weighed a ton) and those cassettes camping, and get all spooked up around the campfire after dark.

I'd guess some of those tapes have seen temps near 110F.

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Subject: Re: cassette repair

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 02 Nov 2010 15:34:53 GMT

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Heat usually distorts the cartridge, or in some cases completely melts it. What I would do, if I were you, would be to get a bunch of empty cartridges or sacrificial tapes and remove the magnetic tape spools, replacing them with the ones you want to keep. It is easiest if the cartridges are assembled with screws, because then the two halves can be easily separated and reassembled. But I find even those that are glued together can be split pretty easily with a razor blade, and then reassembled with glue. Just be careful.

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Subject: Re: cassette repair

Posted by [Jacks](#) on Wed, 03 Nov 2010 13:11:02 GMT

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I'm relieved to know it wasn't just a brand issue, I have BASF and MAXELL brands that are being "eaten" as often as the generic brands are.

I'm sure the damp and salt air of being on a boat for several years didn't help matters. I just had 2 more cassettes "eaten", and one of them was Mike Oldfields "Tubular Bells", darn it. They all rode in my cars, at some point, too, which means 130F interior temperatures on a hot day.

I've probably managed to demagnetize a fair number of them, too.

I have the means to put vinyl to CD, but not cassette to CD. If the cassettes are going to be "eaten" by the machine that's supposed to play them, I suspect I may have to outright replace them.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Scoot](#) on Fri, 12 Nov 2010 23:27:56 GMT

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Many of my tapes that are damaged are from my having a favorite song or a favorite side. Once that song, or side, played, I would rewind then play it again. Apparently, tapes don't care for that sort of treatment...

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Jacks](#) on Mon, 15 Nov 2010 13:48:27 GMT

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Bah, I'm guilty of doin' JUST that, I'm afraid, and many many times over the years.

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OK,I guess I'm best to focus on putting vinyl onto CD then, at least for the time being.

I'm so grateful my Dad didn't keep the 8-track system, too. Hahaha.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Jorel](#) on Wed, 24 Nov 2010 14:13:53 GMT

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What about molds in cassette tapes? My father have a collection of cassette tapes as he is an avid listener of country music. Last time I visited him, the cassette tapes are getting molds. The tapes are stored in the basement because he has new albums on CD's to listen to.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Billie](#) on Sat, 27 Nov 2010 13:54:24 GMT

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I have several of these tapes that have remained clear of mould, the way we have solved the possibility of a mould attack, was to visit our grocers and asked for the polystyrene boxes that they get deliveries in (they usually give them to you for free) and have all the cassettes stored in them.

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Subject: Re: Dumb question

Posted by [Jorel](#) on Wed, 01 Dec 2010 17:12:15 GMT

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Thanks for that suggestion. I will try to find a shop who can give polystyrene boxes so we can store the cassette tapes in them. I wish sometime in the future, these cassette tapes will cost a fortune by selling them to collectors.

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