

## Chapter 6. Do this. Don't do that.

### Do

1. If you have a manufacturer's user handbook, read it.
2. If you don't have a handbook, refer to *Part 4*. Alternatively, make enquiries and find out where you can get one (see Chapter 7 *Resources*). Then get one.
3. Clean the film path after every screening and the rest of the projector regularly.
4. Make sure all your equipment is maintained regularly.
5. Always have electrical repairs made by qualified technicians.
6. If you must use an extension lead, make sure it is in good condition and that it is no longer than necessary. Have several leads of different lengths.
7. Keep all power and sound leads off the floor. If this is not possible, gaffer tape them down or cover them with carpet.
8. Wind extension leads in loose but tidy coils. Coils that are too tight can kink wire cores, increasing resistance and creating hot spots.
9. Thread manually. Auto threading can be handy, but when it doesn't work, which is often, it invariably takes longer than doing the job manually in the first place.
10. Take your time, and get it right, even if it takes a bit more time. It's not worth compromising safety, film or the quality of the presentation by trying to cut corners. Audiences understand that when you are operating old equipment things don't always run according to plan.
11. When everything is set up ready for a show, check it all. Then check it again. A checklist is useful for this purpose.
12. After you have checked everything, use the inching wheel to make sure everything is working properly.
13. When the projector is operating, monitor it frequently, especially the take up reel, to ensure everything is running as it should.
14. During a screening, regularly monitor focus, frame and volume. With old film, these can change constantly.
15. During really hot weather, if you are uncomfortable, the projector may be feeling the same way, especially in the lamphouse, where the internal fan may be struggling to shift enough air to keep the heat level down. If you are not operating in an air conditioned environment an external fan directed at the projector can help disperse heat.
16. Comfort is important for you, too. You have to be on your feet for some of the time, but when you are sitting down you might as well be comfortable. A chair is better than a stool, provided you can get out of it quickly if needed. Before you start the show have a drink at hand, so that when you get thirsty during the screening you won't have to leave the projector.
17. Always unplug a projector that is no longer needed. Hold the plug, not the cord, when unplugging.
18. After a screening, allow 20 minutes for the lamp to cool down before moving the projector.
19. Before doing any work on a projector, always disconnect the power and check all controls are in 'off' position. This is a good habit, even if you are only changing an arm belt.
20. Always have a few spare lamps, exciter lamps and belts on hand. Make sure they are the right ones for your projector. If they're not you don't want to find out in the middle of a screening.
21. Always stay close to an operating projector so you can intervene quickly if something goes wrong.
22. Use the right equipment. It does a better job and saves time.
23. If a projector is operating near children, make sure they can't get close enough to the machine to be injured. This can be a challenge, because children, especially young boys, seem to be fascinated by projectors. (Some people would say this doesn't change with boys, regardless of their age.)

## **Don't**

1. Never reverse a projector while there is film in the film path. This is so important it warrants repeating.
2. Never, ever reverse a projector while there is film in the film path. Never.
3. Don't scratch special marks, cue dots or anything else in the film emulsion.
4. Don't try to clean the emulsion side of the film unless you have the proper equipment.
5. Don't immerse film in water – the gelatin is soluble.
6. Don't clean lenses unless they need cleaning. A puffer and soft lens brush are best, most of the time.
7. Never leave an operating projector unattended for more than a few seconds.
8. Don't operate a projector if the attached electrical cord or plug is damaged in any way.
9. Never use damaged extension leads.
10. Don't unplug an electrical cord by pulling the cord. Always hold the plug to disconnect.
11. Never let your skin touch any part of a replacement lamp. It will shorten the lamp's life dramatically.
12. Never use a metal object to remove baked-on grime from the film path. Use a plastic scraper, a match, toothpick or ice cream stick. It will take longer, but it won't leave scratches that could destroy film.
13. Don't run out of essential items such as lubricant and cleaning equipment.
14. Don't use too much grease and oil when lubricating your projector. Use a little often.
15. If operating outdoors, never let the projector or electrical connections get wet.
16. Never buy second hand extension leads.
17. Never allow a reel of film to remain on the projector after a screening. Always unload it immediately, tape down the tail and replace it in its can.
18. Don't pull the end of a film to tighten it. 'Cinching' as it is called, scratches film.
19. Don't put reels of film on top of hot surfaces, or leave them in vehicles in the sun. Permanent and irreversible damage can be caused in a very short time.
20. Don't cut out frames unnecessarily when splicing.
21. Don't use ordinary sticky tape to make splices.

Neither of these lists is exhaustive. Feel free to add more as they occur to you, and send them in to be added to future editions.