

Flips offer many of the same advantages as the cardboard 2-by-2s:

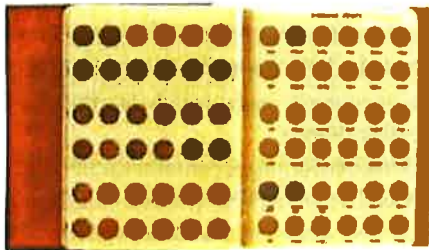
- Although they cost more, flips are still inexpensive.
- The entire coin is enclosed.
- Both sides of the coin can be viewed.
- The coin can be handled by the edges when being inserted into the holder.

Also, they don't have to be stapled shut, thus eliminating the possibility of the staples scratching the coin.

The big disadvantage to flips is their composition. They, too, originally contained polyvinylchloride. Manufacturers then started making flips containing Mylar, but the resulting product again is more brittle and not as flexible as the old PVC flips.

For long-term storage, it's best to remove coins from flips and transfer them to another type of holder.

**Albums.** Coin albums are a step up from the basic folder. They are in book form and contain a hole for each date and mintmark in the particular series covered. The



hole has a clear plastic back and a clear plastic front. The plastic front slides out, and the coin can be placed in the hole. The plastic front is then slid back over the hole.

Albums combine many of the advantages of 2-by-2s and folders:

- They are compact and convenient, and can be stored on a bookshelf.
- They are affordable.
- Both sides of the coin can be viewed
- Their labeled holes act as a road map to a series.
- The entire coin is enclosed.
- The coin can be handled by the edges when being inserted.

The disadvantage to albums is that sliding the plastic front can damage a coin in the holder if the plastic rubs against the coin. Thus, albums are not recommended for expensive uncirculated coins.

**Hard-plastic holders.** Hard-plastic holders are the top of the line in coin shortage but are still affordable. They consist of two pieces with one or more clear windows through which the coin can be viewed. The two pieces are held together with plastic screws or snap together.

To insert a coin into the holder, the two pieces are separated and the coin is placed face up into the bottom piece. The top piece is then placed over the bottom piece, and the two pieces are screwed or snapped together again.



Some of the world's great numismatic rarities are stored in hard-plastic holders. They offer all of the advantages of the less expensive storage methods but in a safe, inert environment.

**Slabs.** In 1986, a group of coin dealers got together and formed the Professional Coin Grading Service. For a fee, dealers and collectors could submit coins to the service and receive a professional opinion on their grades. After grading, a coin is encapsulated in an inert hard-plastic holder with a serial number and the service's opinion on its grade indicated on the holder.

The concept was successful, and several competing services were established in succeeding years. Today, most coins valuable enough to justify the grading fee have been graded by one of the services and encapsulated in its holder.

The grading-service holders are common at coin shows and shops, and acquired the nickname "slabs." The holders are suitable for long-term storage of high-end collectible coins.

