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## Polymer Clay

### Do not bend or flex

Even though polymer clay is renowned for its durability and flexibility even after curing, it still needs to be treated gently. Improper treatment and storage can lead to breakage, so

always be sure to treat polymer clay jewellery pieces with the same care you would treat any other piece of jewellery.

### **Storage**

It is recommended that you store your polymer clay piece in the container box or bag that it arrived in. Proper storage typically requires a cool, dry place, but for earrings it is recommended you use an earring holder in order to keep them from getting tangled and knocked around.

### **Avoid Showering or Swimming**

Submerging your polymer clay pieces in water can damage them, so it is important to remember to take them off before getting into the shower or going for a swim. Perfumes and harsh chemicals can also damage polymer clay, so make an effort to avoid using them when you are wearing your jewellery. Hand painted pieces in particular are quite susceptible to the effects of water and chemicals, so treat them very carefully in order to prevent colour fading or other types of damage.

### **Not Suitable for Children**

Even though polymer clay is a strong material, jewellery pieces should never be given to children to wear, play with, or chew on. They will break eventually, presenting a choking hazard. This is true of all polymer clay jewellery, but especially those that have small beads.

### **Proper Care, Long Life**

Polymer clay jewellery, when treated properly, can last a very long time! Over time, as the pieces become well worn, they will develop a natural patina that only adds to their beauty. Be sure to treat them well and they will remain a favourite accessory for years to come!

### **Copper**

#### **Tips for Keeping Your Copper Jewellery Tarnish-Free**

If you take the following steps to prevent your copper jewellery from acquiring a patina, you won't have to clean it very often!

- Use a lint-free or microfiber cloth to gently wipe your copper jewellery before and after you wear it.
- Keep your copper jewellery in an airtight plastic container or plastic zip-locked bag.
- Use anti-tarnish storage bags or wrap each piece in a soft cloth.
- Store in a cool, dry place.

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- Avoid wearing copper jewellery when swimming.
- Avoid exposure to harsh chemicals like household detergents.
- Clean frequently-worn copper jewellery at least monthly or more if it begins to dull.

### **Hold On—Is Your Copper Jewellery Sealed with Protective Coating?**

Before we dive into how to clean your copper jewellery, it's important to know whether or not your piece(s) has been sealed (with wax, spray, or liquid sealant), a common practice among jewellery artists. If you've had your jewellery for some time, and it hasn't discoloured (but still looks dull), it's likely been sealed to prevent the copper from tarnishing and corroding, as well as staining skin green.

The easiest way to clean sealed copper jewellery is to wipe it down with a microfiber cloth and warm, soapy water. If you're unsure whether your copper jewellery is sealed, you might want to take it to a professional for an assessment or ask the original jeweller or artist who created it.

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery at Home**

Cleaning your copper jewellery is easy, as you can remove tarnish instantly with the help of a few common household items. Got a lemon, vinegar, baking soda, ketchup, or salt? These mild, naturally acidic ingredients are non-abrasive yet tough enough to remove dirt and grime. Surprisingly, these items are all you need to bring your copper jewellery's lustre back to life. Keep reading to see what copper jewellery cleaning methods you might like to try when the tarnish presents itself and you want it gone in a hurry:

*Note: if your copper jewellery item has gems, avoid the methods below as cleaning it with acidic items and vinegar can potentially damage the stones.*

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery with Lemon and Salt**

The natural acidity of a lemon does wonders to remove stubborn tarnish on copper jewellery. Pairing it with salt works even better.

A lemon itself can act as a sponge. Cut it in half and sprinkle some table salt on it. This creates an abrasive, sponge-like surface. Scrub the copper jewellery with the halved lemon. Rinse with warm water and pat dry with a soft cloth.

You can also use lemon juice:

- Mix one tablespoon of salt, one tablespoon of lemon juice, and water in a bowl.
- Dip your copper jewellery in this mixture and let it sit for a few minutes or up to an hour, depending on how tarnished your piece is.
- Use a toothbrush to gently scrub away dirt or sludge from the corners.
- Rinse the jewellery with warm water and pat dry with a soft cloth.

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery with Baking Soda**

Baking soda is a great way to restore shine and lustre to dull copper jewellery pieces. To clean copper jewellery, baking soda can be used on its own or paired with lemon juice or full-strength white vinegar.

*To clean with baking soda:*

- Combine three or four tablespoons of baking soda with spritzes of water to form a paste.
- Apply this paste on and around the copper jewellery by using a cloth, an old toothbrush, or your fingers.
- Rinse the jewellery thoroughly with water and dry it off with a soft cloth.

*Baking soda + lemon juice or vinegar:*

- Combine three or four tablespoons of baking soda with spritzes of water to form a paste.
- Apply this paste on and around the copper jewellery by using a cloth, an old toothbrush, or your fingers.
- Rinse the jewellery thoroughly with water and dry it off with a soft cloth.

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery with Vinegar and Salt**

Vinegar and salt are a powerful combination for removing dirt and oxidation from copper jewellery.

- Pour one cup of white vinegar and one tablespoon of salt into a small pot.
- Place copper jewellery into the pot.
- Bring the solution to a boil on medium heat for five minutes.
- Turn off the heat and let the jewellery sit in the solution overnight.
- Place the jewellery in a bowl of warm water the next day.
- Use a toothbrush to gently scrub off any dirt.
- Rinse your jewellery thoroughly with cold water, then pat dry with a soft cloth.

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery with Vinegar, Salt, and Flour**

- Mix one tablespoon of salt and one cup of white vinegar in a bowl, then gradually add flour and mix until it forms a paste.
- Apply the paste to your jewel and rub it over the tarnished areas.
- Let it sit from 15 minutes to an hour.
- Rinse off with warm water, then dry with a soft cloth.

### **How to Clean Copper Jewellery with Saltwater**

- Add some water and salt to a pan. Heat it on low until the salt dissolves.
- Dip your jewellery into this solution and leave it for a few minutes before scrubbing away any residue.
- Rinse your jewellery thoroughly with warm water and then pat dry with a soft cloth.
- Use a lint-free or microfiber cloth to buff the jewellery and bring back its shine.

### **When to Use a Commercial Copper Cleaner**

If your copper jewellery is heavily tarnished and doesn't improve with an at-home cleaning method, you may want to consider a commercial copper jewellery cleaner. Simply dip a microfiber cloth into the copper cleaning solution and rub it into the surface of your copper jewellery item. Rinse with water, then dry and buff with a clean, soft cloth.

While routine cleaning and maintenance is crucial for preventing and removing copper tarnish, it cannot completely guarantee that your copper jewellery pieces are protected. Obtaining personal jewellery insurance through Jewellers Mutual is an affordable option and covers loss, theft, damage, and mysterious disappearances.

Why does silver jewellery tarnish?

Tarnish is a form of corrosion that can happen to silver, appearing as discolouration in the form of a yellow, brown or even grey/black coating on the surface of your jewellery.

Pure silver is naturally resistant to tarnishing but, since it's considered too soft to use for most jewellery, the majority of your necklaces, rings and bracelets are likely a form of sterling silver (which is 92.5% pure silver and 7.5% composite material, such as copper).

How to Clean Silver Jewellery

Tarnishing is essentially a chemical reaction between sterling silver and chemicals like sulphur, chlorine and various acids. You might think you don't come into contact with these chemicals very often at all, but you'd be surprised. The PH levels of your skin (which, fun fact, contains acids) can cause jewellery to tarnish, as can things like swimming or even showering and washing your hands, depending on the water and products used. Perfume, moisturisers and soaps are also common causes of tarnishing

There are multiple ways to clean and remove tarnish from your silver jewellery - the right method depends on two things: how tarnished the item is and, of course, what you have available.

- **Silver polish.** In an ideal world, we'll all have a bottle of silver polish sitting under the kitchen sink, ready for this exact purpose. It goes without saying that silver polish is incredibly effective at removing tarnish (it's literally made for the job). To use, apply a small amount of the polish to a soft polishing cloth (be careful not to use a rough cloth, as this might scratch the metal). Then, rub the jewellery with the cloth in circular motions to remove the tarnish. Once the tarnish is removed, rinse with warm water, dry and buff with a soft cloth to shine.
- **Detergent and aluminium foil.** Line a bowl with aluminium foil, fill with hot water and add a small amount of laundry detergent before mixing carefully. Then, add your silver items and let them soak for a few minutes. Remove items with tongs, rinse with warm water, dry and use a soft cloth to buff.
- **Baking soda.** Mix two parts baking soda with one part water to form a paste. Then, very gently, apply the paste to the areas of jewellery in need of cleaning. Then, rinse with warm water, and dry with a soft polishing cloth.
- **Ketchup.** Yep, you read that right. Ketchup is surprisingly effective at removing tarnishing. Add a few drops onto a paper towel and apply to the surface of the jewellery. If the tarnishing is stubborn, let the ketchup sit on the area for 10-15 minutes before rubbing with a polishing cloth. Then rinse with warm water, dry and buff to polish.