



**DOERR DALLAS
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HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR JEWELLERY

When discussing cleaning and caring for one's jewellery, we often forget that metals need TLC and can also be damaged by everyday products and may result in discolouration. Gold, silver and platinum can all be affected by chemicals such as perfumes, hair spray and cosmetics. The discolouration results in the alloy (other metals mixed with gold, silver or platinum) being affected by the chemicals, the gold itself remains intact.

Why has my bracelet turned green?

This is due to the copper used as an alloy with the gold, it does not mean your jewellery is fake gold simply that it has been exposed to chemicals and perhaps even sweat.

Other very sensitive components of jewellery affected by chemicals are pearls. Pearls are porous and will absorb whatever they are in contact with.

Cosmetics will damage your pearls permanently. Over time they can also lose their moisture and result in cracking and discolouration. One can place a wet cotton next to pearls to help with moisture and should always avoid swimming in a chlorinated pool with pearls. Other porous gems include turquoise and opal which also need to be treated with extra attention.

Discolouration does not always happen as a result from exposure to chemicals. Just as old paintings are shunned from sunlight and kept at a cool temperature, certain gemstones should also be kept in the dark and in a controlled temperature environment to avoid fading. These gems include amethyst, topaz, shell cameos and kunzite.



Tiffany pearl necklace



Discoloured shell cameo

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So how should I clean my jewellery?

The use of ultrasonic cleaners can be an answer. However, this should only be used when advised to do so by an industry professional.



Ultrasonic cleaner

Ultrasonic cleaners generate tiny vibrations which loosens dirt on and around gems. In some cases these vibrations can damage gemstones, for example those with surface reaching fractures and which have been filled with oils, resin or substance filler. Pearls and other organic gems such as amber, coral and ivory should not be placed in the ultrasonic.

The ultrasonic is a great way to clean diamonds, which attracts the most dirt and grease out of all the gems (please seek professional advice before using this equipment), and after a few minutes in the machine, it is like getting a brand new piece of jewellery.

If I can't use the ultrasonic, what are the safest ways to clean jewellery?

The oldest tricks can sometimes really be the best ones. Two simple ingredients are needed to clean most gems: washing up liquid (no detergent) and warm water. Dipping your jewellery in this mixture and letting it sit for a while will soften the accumulated dirt and allow it to fall off. One can also use a soft bristle toothbrush to remove the remaining dirt. Make sure you then rinse the soap off the jewellery.



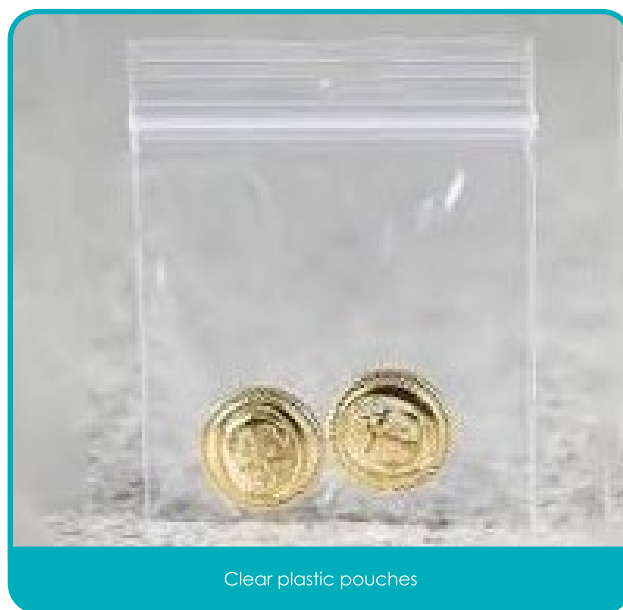
Diamond ring cleaned with soapy warm water and a soft toothbrush

The toothbrush should not be used on pearls as this can scratch the delicate surface (the nacre) of the pearl. Instead one can use a make up brush and use the same ingredients of soapy warm water to clean any dirt. Simply air dry your strand of pearl on a clean soft piece of fabric, whilst avoiding touching the string and dirtying it. If you notice your string is dirty and brittle, make sure to have it restrung regularly to avoid any disaster.

How should one store their jewellery?

As we mentioned, pearls, opals, coral, turquoise and shell should not be kept in a dry or hot environment. Silver should be placed in anti-tarnish pouches and should never be in contact with rubber bands.

I always recommend separating gem-set jewellery from each other as they can scratch each other's surfaces. This also applies when travelling. Throwing all of one's jewellery in the same pouch is asking for trouble! Small individual plastic zip pouches are ideal and jewellery boxes are perfect to make sure your jewellery is kept out of harm's way.



Clear plastic pouches

It can get overwhelming when trying to remember how to care for everything in one's possession. In simple words I would advise to wear and enjoy your jewellery as much as possible and it should bring you more joy than fear of damaging it! So, if worry takes over enjoyment, it might be time to get your jewellery appraised and perhaps even sell for someone else to cherish.

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