

BASICS OF JEWELRY CLEANING AT HOME

Remedies for the best jewelry cleaner do not include elaborate ingredients, but rather simple household items like dish detergent that are easily accessible. When used according to instructions, homemade jewelry cleaner will not harm your beloved gold, silver or diamond jewelry.

Natural jewel cleaner works for the following products:

Gold ❖ Silver ❖ Diamonds ❖ Gemstones (excluding pearls, opals and similar gems)

You will need:

- ✓ Rectangular glass / plastic pan
- ✓ Lukewarm water
- ✓ Mild dishwashing liquid
- ✓ Fine metal mesh cloth or plastic strainer for very small pieces
- ✓ Very soft clean, dry cloth
- ✓ Soft toothbrush
- ✓ Toothpick
- ✓ Magnifying glass

GENERAL JEWELRY CARE AND CLEANING TIPS

- ❖ Avoid rough handling of gemstones and organic substances.
- ❖ Store jewelry items separately from one another to avoid scratching.
- ❖ Do not use ultrasonic cleaning devices to clean jewelry.
- ❖ Keep away from solvents (including harsher dishwashing solutions), chemicals and heat.
- ❖ When participating in sports or outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking or sunbathing, remember to remove your jewelry first.
- ❖ Lotion, hairspray and makeup may also cause discoloration of jewelry. When applying these items, wait until they have dried before donning your jewelry.

STEP 1: PREPARATION

Use a magnifying glass to check that the settings and that stones are secure. Dirt and residue can disguise loose settings. Use the toothpick to apply gentle pressure to the stone to see if it moves. Prongs should be checked as well, by making sure they are securely holding the stone in place.

STEP 2: CLEANING

Create a simple jewelry cleaner by mixing one quart of lukewarm water with one tablespoon of mild dishwashing liquid. Mix enough cleaning solution to cover your jewelry. For smaller pieces and loose stones, place the items in a strainer before putting them in the bowl. After allowing your jewelry to soak in a clean glass bowl for 15 minutes or more, use a soft toothbrush to remove residue. If needed, use a toothpick to dislodge any dirt or sediment from the crevices of your earrings, bracelets and necklaces. Rinse with fresh, cool water.

STEP 3: DRY

- Dry jewelry thoroughly with a soft, lint-free cloth.
- Place jewelry on a clean towel to fully air-dry.

ORGANIC JEWELRY CARE AND CLEANING TIPS

Just like other gemstone jewelry, most opal and undrilled pearls can be cleaned with regular water, mild soap and a soft brush. Use only a mild soap (no solution) and a soft brush.

To clean opal jewelry and undrilled pearls follow these instructions:

- ❖ Never completely immerse jewelry in a mixture of soap and water as excess moisture in drill holes might harm the pearl.
- ❖ Wipe pearls using a damp cloth and a mixture of soap and water.
- ❖ Check pearl and knot thoroughly. If you still see dirt or grime, remove them using a soft brush.
- ❖ Use a toothpick to remove stubborn grim or dirt.
- ❖ Clean the clasp too.
- ❖ Dry pearl jewelry with a soft, lint-free cloth. Check for dampness in the knots.
- ❖ Gently blow air into the knots and drill holes to remove excess moisture.
- ❖ Do not clean opal or pearl jewelry using ultrasonic cleaners, steam cleaners or boiling water.
- ❖ Do not use a dryer or any heating appliance to dry pearls.
- ❖ Always clean your pearl jewelry before storing. Pearls are highly susceptible to the acids in perspiration.

CLEANING ASSEMBLED OPAL JEWELRY (OPAL DOUBLET/OPAL TRIPLET)

Cleaning assembled opal jewelry is a bit different from cleaning of solid opal jewelry. Assembled opal requires extra care as both doublet and triplet stones comprise of multiple layers glued together.

- Never soak doublet or triplet opals in soapy water. It is possible that the glue holding the layers together might dissolve due to prolonged exposure to water.
- Wipe opal doublets and triplets with a soft, damp cloth soaked in warm and soapy water.
- Opals are sensitive to high temperature, so use lukewarm water for cleaning.
- Avoid the use of chemicals, bleach and other harmful cleaning agents.
- Never use ultrasonic cleaners as intense vibrations can crack the opal and cause water penetration.
- A foggy appearance or condensation inside the stone indicates water penetration in the opal.
- Use a soft cloth to dry assembled opals. Dry thoroughly, as presence of water can damage the gem.

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