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Mark Nelson discusses how to prevent tarnish on jewelry designs.

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Guest:



Mark Nelson

Tarnish Prevention

Gain a basic understanding of what causes tarnish and how you can remove it from your jewelry and prevent it from forming again.

what is tarnish?

Tarnish is perceived as a visible darkening of silver alloys ranging in color from yellow to brown to blue to black. It is actually a silver sulfide caused by the chemical reaction (accelerated by humidity and light) that happens when atmospheric sulfur or chlorine comes into contact with silver.

how to eliminate tarnish

You can remove tarnish either chemically or by using an abrasion method.

Chemical methods

1. Chemical dip (try MIDAS® Silver Tarnish-Off): Simply dip the jewelry piece directly in the jar, then pull it out—the dip removes the tarnish instantly. Restore any lost luster due to dipping with a Sunshine® Cloth. **Please Note:** Do not use the chemical dip method for pieces that contain soft stones, such as turquoise or pearls; use one of the abrasion methods described below. **CAUTION:** Read and understand all warning labels on any chemical you use before handling.
2. Prepare one cup of fresh baking soda and one gallon of hot water mixed with a cup of salt. Place the dry baking soda in an aluminum pan and place the jewelry in direct contact with the aluminum to get the full effect of the electro-chemical reaction. Add the hot saltwater and then let the piece sit. The sulfur becomes attracted to the aluminum (more than to the silver) and migrates away from the piece. You may have to repeat this process a few times to completely remove the tarnish.

Abrasion methods

1. Simply hand-polish using a polishing cloth (such as a Sunshine® Cloth).
2. Use a polishing wheel mounted on a motor or lathe with a polishing compound, such as Rio Sunsheen™ red rouge.

how to prevent tarnish

Store your pieces in airtight anti-tarnish bags (such as our copper-color anti-tarnish bags) and add an anti-tarnish strip for additional protection. The bags and the strips will absorb the atmospheric sulfur, keeping it away from the piece. Newspaper and rubber bands cause tarnish. Humidity and dampness accelerate tarnish.

You can also try storing your pieces with Pacific Silvercloth®. Whether using storage bags or boxes, they should be as airtight as possible. Avoid storing silver in contact with paper, other than acid-free, anti-tarnish paper.



CAUTION! Always wear eye protection when performing these processes.



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supplies:

Order #	Description
338-544	3M Tarni-Shield™ anti-tarnish strips
401-113	Copper-color anti-tarnish bags
336-048	MIDAS® Silver Tarnish-Off
337-039	Sunshine® Cloth
331-513/2	Rio Sunsheen™ red rouge
330-707	1" muslin buff
117-534	Foredom® SR motor with 30 handpiece flex shaft
—	Aluminum pan
—	Baking soda (approx. 1 cup per gallon of water)
—	Dishwashing liquid—Dawn® or any sulfur-free soap
—	Pacific Silvercloth®
—	Salt