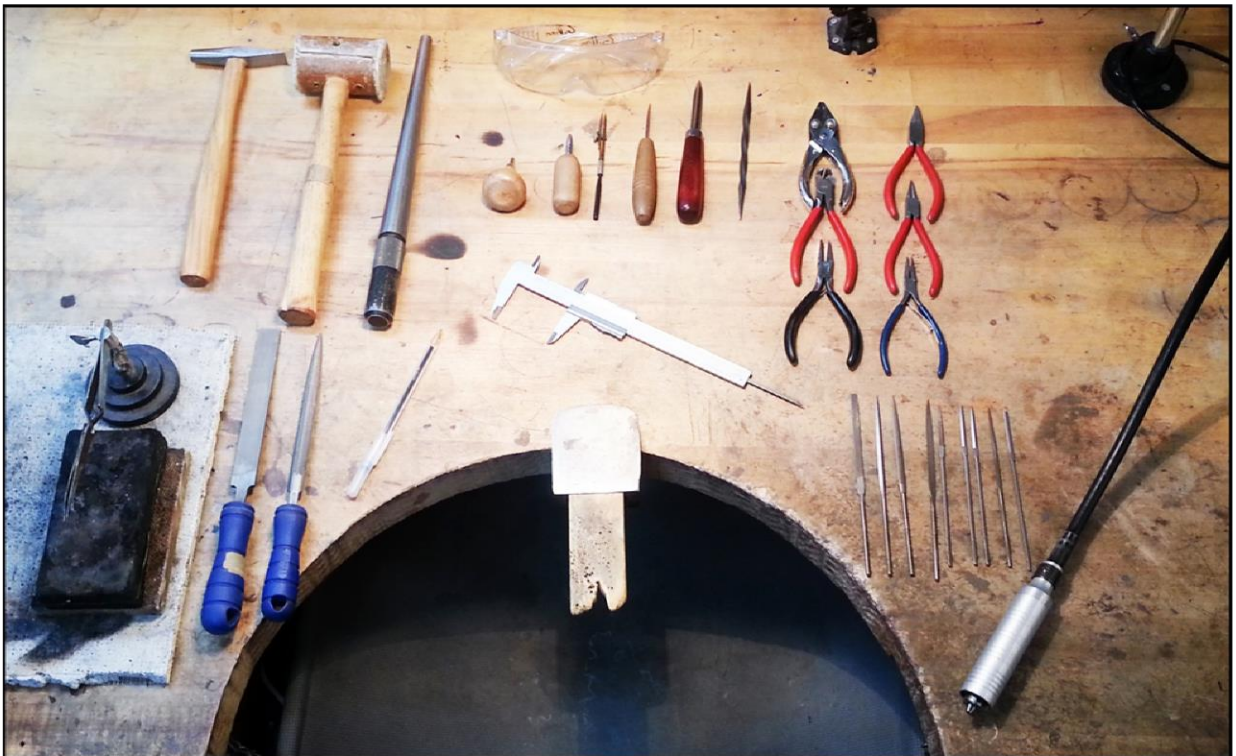


jewel  envy

20 TIPS ON MAINTAINING YOUR JEWELLERY



PLUS 5 BONUS TIPS ON BUYING NEW JEWELLERY

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About Jewel Envy



Jewel Envy is both a retail space and working studio. We design, make, and sell everything onsite for your convenience. Our showroom features only our on-site goldsmith's personal lines of work but we are so much more than a retail shop. In addition to our lines we also work closely with our customers to bring their vision of jewellery to reality. No job is too small or unusual for our creative team!

We only sell the work of our onsite goldsmiths as this allows exceptional quality control of all items made and sold through Jewel Envy. We can customize any piece, change dimensions and even reuse your metal and gemstones in new designs. We also specialize in repairs.

Information is power and we think educating you about your jewellery is an important step in forming lasting relationships with our clients. We are happy to take the time to explain repairs, the process of making something new, or really anything jewellery related you can throw at us! As part of our commitment to education we also teach classes to the public, which are a fun way to learn about our process. In doing so you will take away a finished piece of jewellery and have a better appreciation for the jewellery you own now, the jewellery you may buy in the future, and fine crafts made in Canada.

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About the Author



Gillian E. Batcher owns **Jewel Envy**, a collaborative studio located in the heart of the Roncesvalles Village, where she designs and makes jewellery marketed under the label **PASH Jewellery Design**. In addition to making jewellery she teaches classes from her studio, George Brown College, and OCAD University. She has a degree in Psychology from the University of Western Ontario and a certificate in Jewellery Arts from George Brown College, graduating from both with distinction. In addition to studying at George Brown she took an intensive jewellery course in Florence, Italy. Upon completing her training she was accepted into Harbourfront Centre's residency program where she worked as an artist in residence for three years. She has participated in numerous art shows and exhibitions in North America and has been the recipient of various awards for both technical and artistic achievement.

PASH Jewellery Design

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Chapter 1

The Basics of Jewellery Care

1. The importance of caring for gold, silver and platinum jewellery.

Imagine buying a new home built to your specifications. You know it will need periodic servicing but you expect it to operate smoothly for a period of time. You could even go a few years without major repairs, but you will also have to account for some yearly maintenance. Now picture that home in twenty years without regular servicing. It would probably be a disaster; but with a little TLC and advice from professionals it should be in good condition for years to come. Now think about that ring you have worn every day for over 20 years. It should make sense that for it to be in good shape someone should have a look at it every once in a while to check the settings on the stones and the ring shank along with some other areas you might not realize could be problematic. Although well-made jewellery is built to last it does take a beating over time through regular wear. The bottom line here is that jewellery needs maintenance just like everything else in life!

A reputable jeweller will usually consult with you on your jewellery needs for free, up to a point. If you have lots of jewellery you want to discuss, suggest booking your jeweller's time for a paid one hour consultation. Many jewellers will waive a fee like this for regular customers but offering to pay (and meaning it) will insure proper time is taken when looking at the pieces, especially if you are a new client. Many jewellers will also let you know what you can do at home to maintain your jewellery. Repair work means regular business but most jewellers would rather see you when you want to buy something new rather than to fix the same piece every year when you could be taking preventative steps at home.

2. Take your jewellery off before you go to sleep.

It may sound obvious but many people are in the habit of sleeping with their rings and necklaces on. So why does this matter? Your hands often swell at night and if you are wearing a ring all the time you may become so accustomed to it that you might not realize it has drastically reduced the circulation to your finger, which can cause nerve damage. Another problem that may occur over time is that your hands can change around the ring, so that it no longer comes off at any point. Both of these situations can lead to a trip to the hospital, and end with a surgeon cutting off your ring. If you like your ring, protect it and take it off at night.

Wearing chains to bed poses a slightly different risk in that they can choke you. Do you or your partner move around a lot at night? A chain can easily get caught and be pulling on your neck. If you are a deep sleeper you may not be aware this is happening but it can cause long term problems if it happens repeatedly. The clasps also get tangled in your hair and no one likes ripping out hair to undo a clasp.

3. Take your jewellery off before prolonged exposure to water and chemicals.

Do you like to wear jewellery when going for a swim in the lake or a pool? You may want to rethink that habit! Jewellery can easily slip off when you are swimming without you noticing and it is almost impossible to find it later in a large body of water. You are more likely to be able to find it in a pool but if it gets sucked into the cleaning systems it can be destroyed or become lodged inside with no way of getting it out. The chemicals in pools may also ruin your jewellery and can degrade stones. Many chemicals have a corrosive effect on metal and stones. Exposure to them can cause tarnish, change the colour of stones but can also eat away at materials. Repeated exposure can change the quality of jewellery and may affect its useful lifetime as well as value at appraisals.

Everyday cleaning supplies can also affect your jewellery. Jewellery is made using lots of chemicals but the rate of time metals and gemstones are exposed is controlled in the making process. Precious metals and stones are not meant to sit in cleaning solutions for extended periods of time as these solutions can actually corrode the materials. Over time they can actually change the grade of a stone and eat through some metals. Diamonds can drop one colour grade by repeated exposure to household detergents and dish soap.

Cola is often used as an industrial cleaner for steel and can eat through metal if it is left in a solution for a long enough period of time.

4. Keep your jewellery covered when not being worn to reduce tarnishing.

Jewellery tarnishes as a result of exposure to the oxygen in air. This process is called oxidation. Oxidation can be used decoratively in jewellery that you see as blackened areas but will also occur naturally over time. You can minimize this natural chemical reaction by keeping your jewellery in a box that absorbs moisture and reduces oxygen. Small sealed plastic bags are also an effective way to protect your jewellery from exposure to oxygen. Anti-tarnish covers and or cloths are also available to put around jewellery or to use in jewellery roll-up cases to protect pieces from oxygen. Oxidation will still occur over time but these methods will reduce the speed with which it happens.

The climate you live in will also affect the rate at which natural oxidation occurs. Warm humid environments will cause jewellery to tarnish faster than dry environments. Dry environments can cause their own problems by removing moisture in some gemstones and causes them to crack. An artificially dry environment such as a plastic bag may appear to be the solution for humid environments but will hurt some gemstones like pearls and opals that need moisture to preserve their lustrous qualities.



If you are wondering why some of your jewellery appears to tarnish more or at a faster rate than other pieces, it can be because some metals and their alloy components react to oxygen differently.

Costume jewellery- Likely will tarnishes but it depends on the alloys. Copper based alloys tarnish.

Fine silver- Does not tarnish.

Sterling silver- Tarnishes as the copper in the alloy reacts to the oxygen in the air.

Yellow gold- Lower karats will tarnish more as they have a greater copper content than higher karat gold.

Nickel white gold- Tarnishes a slightly yellow colour over time; lower karats tarnish faster than higher karats.

Palladium white gold- Does not tarnish.

Platinum- Does not tarnish.

Some white metal jewellery (this includes: base, sterling silver, nickel white gold) is plated with rhodium. Rhodium is from the platinum group (there are six types of platinum that make up this group of metal; they are not alloys but metals with similar properties) and is both hypo allergenic and does not tarnish.

Some yellow metal jewellery (brass, gold) is plated with high karat yellow gold for a bright yellow finish and because the higher the karat the less it tarnishes.

Just because a metal does not tarnish it can still get dirty. There are chemicals and dust in the air we breathe and this settles on jewellery forming a fine layer that can resemble tarnish but is not the result of oxidation.

5. Clean your jewellery regularly.

For years of wearability jewellery should be cleaned frequently. It is not advisable to let a thick coating of black tarnish build up on your jewellery as it can eventually eat away at metals and create permanent damage to the piece.



There are a variety of methods for cleaning jewellery. For light tarnish a polishing cloth is the least abrasive method. There are two types of polishing cloths, plain and with rouge embedded in them. A plain cloth is perfect for weekly cleaning of your pieces. It must be a cloth designed for cleaning jewellery as the fibers in these cloths will not scratch the metal. You would be surprised that some cloth can actually put scratches into silver and gold jewellery as it has a hardness greater than the metals. Use a polishing cloth by

rubbing it over the surface of your jewellery. Chains can be pulled through the cloth as you pinch them lightly between the cloth in your fingers. For a slightly heavier cleaning use a cloth embedded with rouge. Rouge is a polishing compound used in the final stage of finishing jewellery. It can be used on all metals and on most gemstones (check with a jeweller first). After rubbing your jewellery with the rouge embedded side of the cloth rub the jewellery with the non-rouge side of the cloth to remove the compound. Wash your hands well after touching rouge as it is a strong chemical and can easily transfer to other items you subsequently touch.

If you find that the cloths are not removing the tarnish the next step is a metal cleaner that is rubbed on with a sponge under running water. Polishing compounds such as this remove a thin layer of the metal in the process of removing the tarnish. Be careful if you are cleaning plated jewellery as repeated polishing will remove the plating over time.

There is also a way to create an electrolytic solution and gently cook your jewellery on a stove in a pot of water with baking soda to remove tarnish. This is a gentle enough process but not all gemstones can take heat so be sure to confirm they will not be damaged by this process. For deeper tarnish you will need to use a stronger cleaning method.

Another product that is often used to remove tarnish is a chemical dip. This is the harshest home removal method and proper care and consideration should be taken before using it. Dips are strong chemicals that take off a fine layer of the metal (be aware they can remove plating over time and corrode some gemstones) but can also deposit a thin layer of chemicals that are difficult to remove. If this thin film is not removed in the cleaning process the jewellery will tarnish faster than before creating a cycle that will necessitate more frequent cleaning of your pieces. To remove this layer of the cleaner, pieces must be rinsed for a long period of time under clean water until the film is gone. Chemical dips are corrosive and gloves should always be worn when using them. As they are a strong cleaner for jewellery they can damage some stones.



If you take your jewellery to a goldsmith to be cleaned they may use any of the above mentioned methods but they may also go back to stronger polishing compounds than rouge. Refinishing a piece implies taking it back to an emery to remove scratches and then taking it through the various stages of polishing, with rouge being a final polish. It is perfectly acceptable to ask for a goldsmith to use a specific method on a piece if you have a preference or experience with one method being more effective than another. It is important to go to someone knowledgeable and listen to their cleaning advice as it may conflict with what you think is the best way to clean a piece. Remember while the internet and YouTube have both good and bad advice on all things jewellery-related, getting direct advice from a reputable jeweller is the best way to preserve your cherished pieces.

Chapter 2

The Basics of Jewellery Cleaning

6. Should I just use a dip to clean my jewellery?

Now that you know how to clean your jewellery by a variety of methods, the dip may seem like the easiest method. If you choose to use it you must have some knowledge about the jewellery you are about to dip.

Does it have gemstones? If the answer is yes, they need to be non-porous stones. Porous stones will soak up the chemicals. This can lead to discoloration as well as contributing to a complete disintegrating of the stone. Some porous stones include pearls, opals, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and coral but there are many more.

You also need to know if your jewellery is plated. Dips work by removing the top layer of a piece which is the metal that has the tarnish on it. If your pieces are plated you will remove the plating over time with repeated dip cleaning.

7. Caring for pearl and opal jewellery

Pearls are one of the few gems that benefit from wear and touch. The oils from your skin help pearls keep their lustrous appearance. Even if you do not wear your pearls often you should hold them on a regular basis to transfer the unseen oil from your skin onto them. If their oils dry out, pearls begin to crack and will break. You must take the utmost care when cleaning jewellery with pearls in it. They cannot be exposed to many chemicals or heat. Chemical solutions will eat away at the lustrous finish and can eat through the layers of nacre that a pearl is made up of. A gentle plain cloth is the best way to polish pieces with pearls. This means they require regular care to minimize tarnish and ensure surface oils are present.

Opals are considered an unstable gemstone but are valued for the vibrant colours that are produced inside of them. The colours are a result of water held within the stone. Opals should never be exposed to extreme temperature changes or chemicals. When the water inside an opal dries out the stone cracks and loses its fire. Chemicals used for cleaning, which would not affect harder stones, can leach into opals and change their colours.

8. Caring for costume jewellery

A different set of rules applies to caring for costume jewellery and they really start with “if it isn’t broken don’t try to fix it”. Costume jewellery is put together using a variety of commercial techniques that include spot soldering, welding, casting, gluing, and plating. When costume jewellery breaks it cannot usually be repaired to look the same as before as a goldsmith cannot use the same procedure for soldering on softer metals as they are often toxic. Soft solder can be used in some cases but it is never a permanent solution. The piece is most often fixed with a glue or cement but it is only a matter of time before the piece will break again.

Costume jewellery is not made to last in most cases and is intended for disposal once it has broken. Inventive jewellers can often redesign a piece or come up with ingenious ways to reattach parts but you have to be willing to let go at a certain point or expense. A goldsmith will do their best to save your sentimental pieces but as they were not made in a way that allows for many traditional repairs, some pieces will have to be let go while others may be salvageable. Consider having your goldsmith remake a design in materials that can last over time and that can be repaired as part of its natural cycle of wear and use.

9. When should I have my jewellery cleaned by a professional?

Have you tried the above mentioned methods for cleaning without positive results? Does your favorite piece of jewellery have alternative materials in it? Would you feel better if someone else cleaned it for you? These are all valid reasons to leave the cleaning to the professionals.

Cleaning is a service often offered onsite by most goldsmiths but not at all jewellery stores. You may want to ask if it is done in the shop or elsewhere. You will probably get better service if it is done onsite by the person with whom you consult or by someone who can contact you directly if they have questions.

Chapter 3

The Basics of Jewellery Repairs

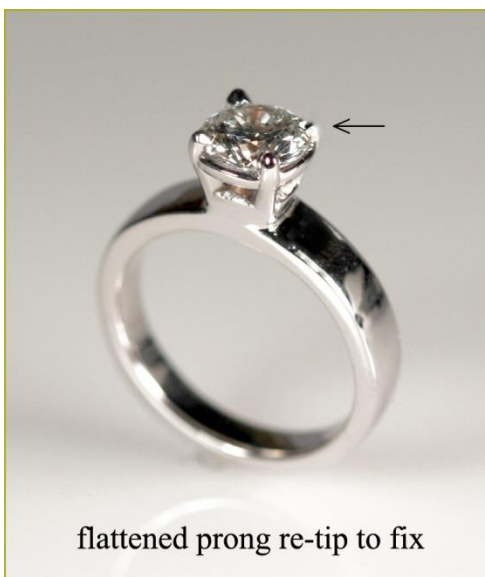
10. Do your settings need repairs?

Over time settings can wear away. Rubbing occurs with normal wear and if you are not careful you can lose a stone when a claw setting has worn thin or completely worn off. If you have expensive stones or lots of little stones you need to pay attention to your settings.

The first thing you can do is learn to hear a loose stone by tapping the stone with your nail and listening for a clicking or jingling sound. If the stone is loose you will be able to hear it move when you tap it. This is a good first line of defense for checking your stones in their settings.

Next, look at the metal holding the stones in place in your jewellery. If it is a claw setting, look at the balls on top of the claws holding the stone. There should be at least .5mm thickness of metal on each claw. If the claws look completely flat or if the ball is missing, it needs to be re-tipped. If your stone is set in a bezel (a rim of metal around the top of the stone) look for cracks in the metal around the stone. A bezel setting is the strongest setting and will show less wear than other types of settings.

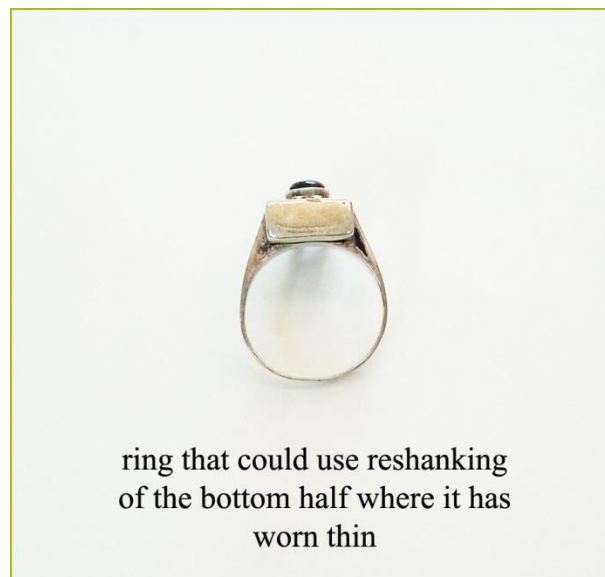
Finally, make sure all of your settings are fully touching your stones and have no sharp edges. A good rule of thumb is the nylon test. Run a nylon stocking across the setting and if it snags anywhere it needs some work by your local goldsmith.





11. Is your ring wearing too thin?

Metal wears over time and rings are the most common pieces of jewellery that need to be repaired because they are worn the most. If you notice your ring is much thinner under your finger than the areas in between your fingers, your ring may need to be re-shanked. This is the process where the thin area of metal is cut out and a thicker piece of metal is soldered back into place. If a thin ring has cracked it can be soldered back together but a good jeweller will also suggest re-shanking for a longer lasting solution.



12. Why does my chain keep breaking?

Chains take a lot of abuse from daily wear. They rub against your skin, clothes, other accessories, and are frequently pulled (even gentle pressure affects their strength). Depending on current styles, chains may be sold that are actually too fine for everyday wear. They may even be made from gold or platinum, but if they break frequently they are experiencing a heavier use than what was intended in their manufacture. This is information few jewellery stores selling fine chains are going to share as they make money from repairs and replacement orders.

Here is what to look for in a precious metal chain:

If the chain is really thin, it is not meant for everyday wear. It cannot hold a lot of weight (ie a large or heavy pendant), and will most likely break over time.

To determine the quality of costume chains, examine the links. If they are not soldered shut, meaning there is a break in the link, they can easily be pulled apart. This is more of a concern for small to fine chains than large, thick (thick refers to the diameter of each link) chains. Small chains that have links less than 1mm in thickness are most secure when there is no break in them. Chains made from stainless steel or titanium are quite strong but it is still important to make sure they cannot slip out from each other at the point where links have a break in them.

Some chains have what is called a break away jump ring on at least one side of the clasp. Do not confuse this with poor craftsmanship as this is considered a safety precaution. In the event a chain becomes caught on something, the unsoldered jump ring will allow the chain to break away first before the wearer can be choked.



13. What type of clasp should my necklace have?

There are many types of clasps and not all of them are created equally. Spring rings are the most commonly used clasp in commercial jewellery, and also the cheapest clasp with the highest rate of breakage. If you want to upgrade a chain without buying a new one, have a jeweller change your spring ring to a lobster clasp. It operates in a similar way but is just a little heftier and more reliable for keeping your safely attached.

Toggle clasps are often used as accents in the design of a piece and are strong provided they have the correct proportions. A toggle clasp is most commonly a ring with a bar that goes through it but they can be other shapes as well. The bar must be at least two times the inside diameter of the circle they are pushed through. For non-geometric shapes take the longest diameter of the space and multiply it by two for the length of the bar. There must be some weight to the chain for this clasp to work as it is held in place by both sides of the chain pulling away from each other.

Magnetic clasps can be perfect for people who have a hard time manipulating regular clasps. They have rare earth magnets inside, which are stronger than regular magnets. Beware they can interfere with things like pacemakers and hearing aids, if you have either of these you must check with your doctor before wearing them.



14. What type of earring posts and backs should I look for?

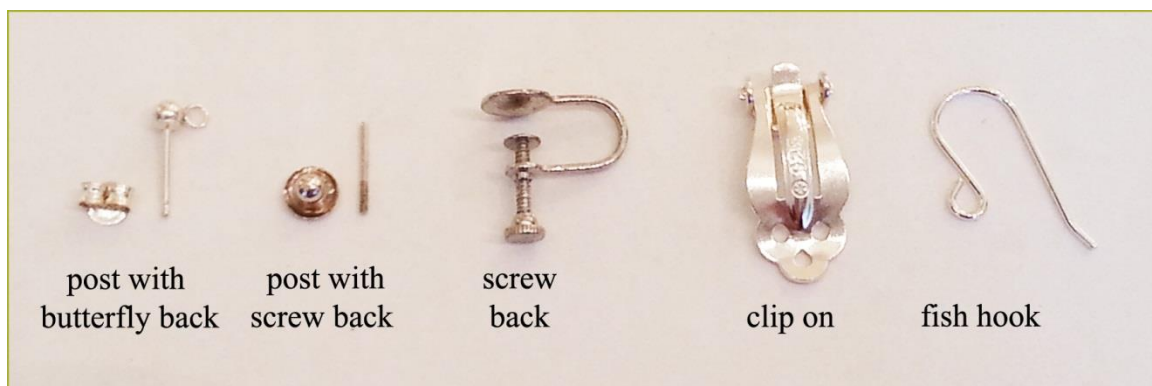
There are a variety of earring styles readily available and different ones will suit different people.

Earrings need to be thick enough to keep their shape when pushed into and pulled out of the ear, but not so thick that they stretch your holes. A good rule of thumb is that sterling

silver hooks should be between .7-.9mm in diameter, while gold earrings can be .6mm-.9mm in diameter. The actual thickness should also relate to how heavy an earring is; a heavier earring requires a stronger hook or post.

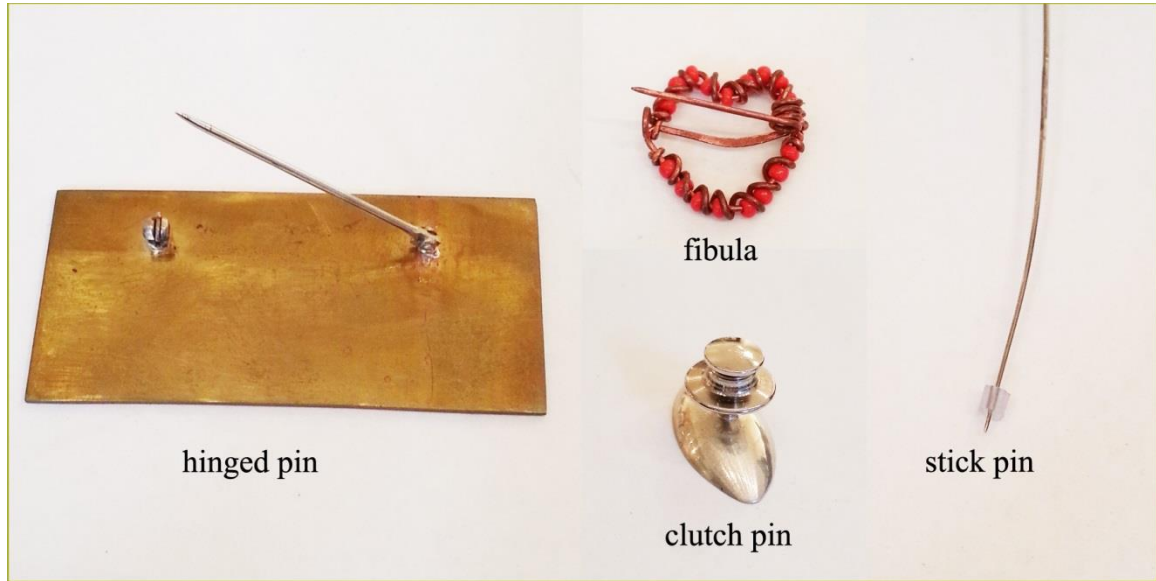
For post earrings you have a choice of a smooth wire with a butterfly back or a threaded wire with a screw-back butterfly. Threaded posts with a screw-back are stronger but tend to be on the thicker side. You will most often find them in higher end earrings but can request them for pieces made to order in sterling silver.

Many people have sensitive earlobes and costume jewellery causes their ears to swell. This is most often because of the nickel content in costume jewellery. Although sterling silver does not have nickel, it can still cause a reaction in the earlobes of some people due to the copper in the alloy. To avoid this, look for earring posts and hooks that are hypoallergenic. Search out stainless steel for less expensive jewellery and rhodium plating for sterling silver or nickel white gold jewellery. Rhodium is from the platinum group and is hypoallergenic. Plating can wear off over time so check that the piece can be re-plated if necessary or opt for the more expensive palladium white gold version (or full platinum) which will be hypoallergenic.



15. What do I need to know about pin backs?

There are stick pins, fibula, hinge pins, clutch backs, and many variations on each of these. The main thing to look for is that the pin backs are made from a material strong enough to support the weight of the jewellery. If the pin back is made from sterling silver or gold it can only support light pieces of jewellery unless it has a thicker wire than the average pin backing. If the wire is nickel or stainless steel it can be narrower in diameter and still support the weight of the decorative side of the pin without warping. Think about the clothing you want to wear the piece on and make sure the pin going through your clothes is the right size to stay in place and not damage the fabric or knit.



16. Can hollow jewellery be repaired?

Hollow jewellery should be appreciated for the technical skill required to make it either by hand or machine. Hollow work means a piece can be larger than expected for a desired look. This lends itself to larger sculptural works that remain comfortable to wear. The problem with hollow designs is that they can be difficult to fix if dented. Pulling out a dent in a hollow piece requires attaching a rod to the area that is dented (usually by soldering), heating the area, and trying to pull the rod holding the dent outwards. The rod is then removed and the piece can be refinished. If the piece is sealed, the goldsmith will need to make a hole somewhere before heating to let air escape. This process is difficult to trouble shoot; be sure to consult a goldsmith with extensive repair experience before attempting to restore a piece like this!



17. What is a soft solder repair? Why your precious metal jewellery should not be repaired this way.

Solder is the name given to any metal alloy with a lower melting temperature than the two metals it is being used to join together. This means that almost any metal can be used as a solder as long as it has a lower melting temperature than the two metals and can flow properly into the cavity between the two. A concrete example of this using precious metal soldering is using different karats of gold. 10K yellow gold and 14K yellow gold each has their own solders. But, if a goldsmith was working on a 14K yellow gold piece and ran out of that solder, they could use a piece of 10K yellow gold in place as it would melt at a lower temperature to the 14K gold and would flow into the cavity between the two pieces of 14K yellow gold. Gold works well as a solder because it flows well and becomes almost liquid when it melts. All precious metal solders work this way.

There is another class of solder called soft solder that is used when the pieces cannot take a lot of heat and or precious metal soldering is not important. Soft solder does not become liquid when heated (poor flowing properties) in the same way as precious metal solder but it does melt and adhere to the surface of the metals. Because soft solder does not fill the small cavity between the metals but is instead lumped on top, the bond is not as strong. There are times when a piece of jewellery cannot be fixed by precious metal soldering because the piece cannot take any heat. A soft solder may seem like the answer but the bond is not strong enough to make this a good solution. This type of solder can also have a corrosive affect and eat away at the metal. Soft solder usually contain lead and tin as the main ingredients which also means they react to the skin, lending further reason to not use them in precious metal jewellery.

18. When is laser welding the best choice for a repair?

Laser welding is the process of using a laser beam to melt metal at the point two pieces are attached together. The beam produced is so fine that it can be done next to stones and held in the hand during the process. It produces minimal heat outside of the joint and is therefore safe to use next to many stones that cannot take any heat. Laser welding is often the savior of many complicated repairs that were simply not possible in the past. But it cannot be used for everything. Trying to do so runs you the risk of losing important treasures.

It is an alternative to soldering for repairs when heating an entire piece would damage the jewellery. Laser welding does not use solder, the same metal as the piece being repaired is heated with the laser and melted directly into the cavity or areas to be joined. Consider a laser welder when stones are soft or porous, intricate metal work may melt with

reheating, glue has been used on other areas of the piece, to fill pits in the metal, and more. Laser welding works best when metal can be melted into a “v” shaped cavity and filled from the bottom of the “v” up to the top. It does not work as well when used to put metal over a flush joint as it does not heat a large enough area to allow metal to flow between the two pieces. When it is used over a flat joint, the area that has been laser welded ends up looking similar to a soft solder joint as metal needs to be spread over both sides of the metals being joined; the metal around the join does not become hot enough for metal to flow through the joint.

19. Is this even worth fixing or selling or should I just throw it out?

Some pieces are not worth the effort or cost to fix. There comes a point when you must be willing to let go of things you have enjoyed wearing. This point arrives sooner for a lot of costume jewellery than jewellery made from precious metals but it does happen for both types.

It is time to let go when the only thing holding your jewellery together is glue and it has been fixed that way multiple times. Listen to your jeweller, if they tell you they can fix something but it will break again you should be asking if there is something else that could be done to fix it or if it should just be put to rest. No jeweller wants to tell you to stop paying them to work, but honest ones will advise against repairs they know will just come back with the same problem repeatedly.

If you find your jewellery is breaking often, you may want to investing in one higher quality pieces. Higher quality does not have to mean more expensive materials or stones, just that it is made with more care for the longevity of the piece to withstand more frequent wear. Do not be fooled into thinking luxury brands are better because they are more expensive. Quality is not dictated by price, but rather is a reflection of how well the item is crafted. Glue rarely says well made!

20. What to do with grandma’s old jewellery.

Many people inherit jewellery from family members and sometimes there is great sentimental value attached to these pieces. For sentimental jewellery you should consult with a jeweller on a regular maintenance regime for the pieces so that they can be enjoyed and passed down to future generations.

If your emotions are tied to the loved one who gave you the piece but not necessarily to the design, gemstones and metals can be used in new designs on which you and your

goldsmith can collaborate. This can be a great way to remember someone but allow you to express your own style at the same time through the jewellery you wear. Redesigning can be anything from just changing a setting, making a pair of earrings into a pendant, or a complete overhaul where stones are cut out and the metal is melted down to be used in a new piece. When reusing metal remember that a jeweller must add at least 50% new metal to old metal for the best working qualities. This can shift to a lower percentage for higher karats of gold.

In some cases the metal simply cannot be reused but a goldsmith can sell the material at market value and apply this as a credit to a new design. Goldsmiths will not be willing to do this without the understanding that they will have an order to work on after. If you do not want to have something made after selling your gold, look for a jewellery store that advertises that they buy gold. They will not buy the gold at market price as they will need to make a profit from selling it at market price.

Bonus Section

What to look for when buying new or custom jewellery

21. How can you tell if something is well made without any training?

There are a few telltale signs to look for when buying jewellery that should help you avoid disappointment later.

Are the findings the appropriate size and weight for the piece of jewellery? The findings are connectors (earrings, pin back, clasps, etc.). If they look too thin, assume they are and that someone was trying to save money on materials. Does the clasp function easily and hold the jewellery on? It should! A handmade clasp is often a sign of attention to detail and should not be overlooked just because it is in the back. But be sure that it actually works.

How is the metal finished? Can you see scratches that are deeper in some areas than others? If the answer is yes, the piece should go back to the emery or polishing stage. Different finishes are acceptable, but consistency is an important distinction.

Are there purplish cloudy areas in the sterling silver? That is probably not just tarnish, but something called firescale. Firescale is a growth in the metal from overheating. In most cases it can be removed but it does take skill and practice to do this efficiently. So check with the maker to find out if removal is possible.

Are solder seams complete? There should be no pits or sections in a seam that are not filled with solder. Incomplete solder seams are weaker than full seams and create small crevices which catch debris and can be difficult to clean.

22. To knot or not to knot, which gems need a knot for protection?

Knots between beads are often used as a decorative element but they also serve a function within some pieces of jewellery, creating a protective barrier between beads so that they are not damaged by rubbing against each other during normal wear. Pearls benefit from knots between each bead but this is really only necessary in higher quality pearl pieces. Rice and seed pearls rarely have knots between each bead as they are inexpensive and worn more as fashion pieces than as fine jewellery pieces, although there are higher end \ pearls from these families that you would want to protect. Other soft stones that benefit from knotting between beads include turquoise, amber, jet, and coral, but there are many moreft.

23. Gemstone Basics: Which stones are good for a particular type of jewellery? What settings are best?

Some stones are perfect for any setting and type of jewellery, while others will have a longer wearable life if you plan their use a little more strategically. Below are some common stones and the best ways to use them in jewellery. These suggestions assume an average quality stone.

Diamonds- perfect for any setting, any type of jewellery (note diamonds have perfect cleavage which means when they break it is usually a slice that comes off so more care must be taken when setting princess (square) cut stones as the slices will be an entire side)

Sapphires- perfect for any setting, any type of jewellery

Rubies- perfect for any setting, any type of jewellery

Emeralds- very fragile, best suited to bezel settings in earrings and necklaces where they will be protected

Garnets- good overall stone can be used in any type of setting, any type of jewellery

Tourmaline- can be fragile due to many natural inclusions, best with a bezel setting to protect stones

Pearls- soft, should be used in earrings, as beads in necklaces, on pendants, pins under some circumstances, avoid use in everyday rings

Opals- fragile, should be used in protected settings, sometimes gluing into a setting is advisable, avoid use in rings

Coral- fragile, should be used in protected settings, sometimes gluing into a setting is advisable, avoid use in rings

Citrine- good overall stone can be used in any type of setting, any type of jewellery

Aquamarine- good hardness but surface loses surface luster quickly, better for jewellery not on the hands

Topaz- good overall stone can be used in any type of setting, any type of jewellery

Colour is not the best way to determine what a stone is. The colour is a clue but not the answer as gemstones usually come in a variety of colours for each species. Just because it is blue doesn't make it a sapphire, red doesn't make it a garnet, and purple doesn't make it an amethyst. These are the most commonly recognized colours for each of the mentioned stones but gemstones have a specific chemical composition and the presence of different minerals within the composition creates different colours.

Some examples of gemstones that are easily confused include sapphire, ruby, garnet, beryl, iolite and amethyst. Sapphires come in every colour of the rainbow except red with the red species being referred to as ruby. Beryl comes in a variety of colours and the red

variety can closely resemble garnet and ruby. Iolite and tanzanite are purple stones that can be confused with amethyst.

Most people have a particular colour in mind when looking for a gemstone rather than a concern over the species of the stone. Ask your jeweller about your options for stones based on the colour you want. Different stones have different price points and contain different properties that will affect how you wear it and care for it. Conversely, if you know you want a particular variety of stone (for working properties, historical significance, rarity, etc) ask about colour options so you know the full range of possibilities for the stone in your new piece.

If you are uncertain about the types of stones in your jewellery ask a jeweller to get an appraisal for you before doing any work to the piece of jewellery. Remember most jewellers are not gemologists but many will be able to identify stones based on their personal studies or experience. Goldsmiths will rarely give you a definitive answer on an expensive stone without an appraisal.

24. Can my baby wear jewellery?

Baby jewellery is a popular gift idea for new parents but is it really a good idea? Small pieces can be swallowed and chains can choke a baby. If the gesture is more symbolic consider a piece of jewellery that will be appreciated when the child is over 5 and not prone to putting things in his/her mouth. Frame it in a shadow box until the child is old enough to wear it. The parents will appreciate the thought that went into the gift for the child's safety and it will be a special treat for the child when they are old enough to understand what it is. If jewellery is an absolute must consider these things to help you choose safely:

No rings, no chains, and no charms. A cuff bracelet that is made from one solid piece of metal that is tight enough to stay on the baby but does not cut off circulation is the most advisable. It should also be of a dimension that won't be able to fit in the child's mouth in the event he/she manages to work it off the wrist. A cuff-like necklace would be ok for ceremony only but it is not advisable to let the baby sleep with it on. If the baby has pierced ears, stud earrings with a screw back butterfly are also a good option. Do not buy hoops, or studs with a regular butterfly back that can be pulled off. Make sure the earrings are high karat gold as they are less likely to cause skin irritation; 18K or higher is recommended.

Another route to consider is a silver spoon or rattle. A sterling silver baby spoon is safe for use with a newborn and has the sentiment of the wishing the baby riches throughout

life. Once the baby outgrows the spoon it can be framed and put on display to become an heirloom one day. The same approach can be used for a sterling silver rattle. Be careful if you choose a rattle as it can be quite heavy and therefore dangerous for a baby to have unsupervised.

25. Inform yourself!

Do you want to know if you are going to the best jeweller or goldsmith for the job? Do a little online research first. Look for how jewellers refer to themselves. A “goldsmith” infers formal training or apprenticeship; a “jeweller” can mean someone with formal training, training in repairs, self-taught, student, or even just a background in jewellery sales. A “designer” infers a lack of confidence in their technical skill with precious metals, and an “artist” can mean formal training but not enough experience with precious metals and/or custom designs.

Repairs often require a higher degree of skill than making most pieces of jewellery so be wary of mall repair shops without a trained goldsmith. Repair specialists may know how to fix a broken chain but they may not do it in a way that hides it was ever broken. They may also imply that many repairs are not possible but it is a lack of skill on their part and not an impossibility within the field. The best people for repairs are goldsmiths with years of jewellery making experience using precious metals as well as experience performing repairs on jewellery made by others.

When you are researching goldsmiths, have a look at their online portfolios. Do they use materials similar to what you want in your piece? Do you like the style of their work? Do you like the finish of their work? Are there any customer reviews available that you can access? Having something made can be a great experience so be sure you like the interactions you have with your goldsmith. Ask questions and do not be afraid to change your mind before critical stages in the process are completed. Ask for updates as you feel fit and remember if you can imagine it, someone can make it!