

# Care, Cleaning & Storage of Silver

## CARING FOR SILVER JEWELLERY:

Over time oxidation reactions will occur, especially with sulphur and oxygen, causing silver to become tarnished. Care should be taken to prevent this tarnishing.

To avoid this tarnishing, try to avoid the following:

- Applying hair colours or permanent solutions while wearing your jewellery.
- Showering or swimming with your jewellery on.
- Hair spray, perfumes & deodorants, body & suntan lotions or oils of any kind on your jewellery.
- Physical Activities (Sweat).

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## CLEANING:

Silver is a soft metal. Use care in cleaning it. No matter how mild an abrasive polish is used, some silver will be removed each time it is polished. Rubbing with a soft cloth causes some wear.

- Clean with mild soap (not detergent) and water.
- Rinse and polish with soft cloth or felt (tissue is not recommended).
- Dry the silver jewellery very well before storage to prevent residual water stains.
- Use a Silver polishing cloth for general cleaning.

Silver polishes, rubbing and buffing removes tarnish but they should be used with care. Avoid polishing silver with any compounds containing abrasive.

After using any commercial silver specific polish, such as Silvo, rinse the silver in water and polish dry with a soft cloth. Residues of some polish left on silver may cause silver to tarnish faster. Soap may dull silver. Detergents with phosphates may leave a stain if not rinsed.

Chemical electrolysis should not be used on silver items, which have oxidized areas as a part of the decoration, or on plated silver. The silver plate may be stripped off. Valuable silver items should be treated with care and carefully stored and cared for. Consult a conservator or a jeweller knowledgeable about silver, silver polishes and processes before attempting to clean valuable items.

Remember!

Stainless steel damages silver.

Don't use rubber gloves when you wash or polish silver – they emit sulphurs!

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## **STORING SILVER JEWELRY**

While silver jewellery is quite sturdy and does not spoil easily, the right care and proper precautions will ensure that your silver jewellery shines brighter and has a longer and lustrous life. Caring for silver jewellery is much easier and here are a few do's and don'ts about storing sterling silver.

### **Do's**

If you wear your jewellery often, it is good to know that it will not spoil easily. This happens because body oils help to keep tarnishing down and cleaning at a minimum.

When you are not wearing your silver jewellery, keep them in an airtight bag which is made of tarnish proof material. Plastic zip lock bags made of Mylar or polyethylene bags may be a good option. These bags also protect your jewellery from scratches.

As silver is not scratch proof, store it away from articles that may rub up against them. Keep them secured in a drawer inside a specific jewellery box with a soft cotton lining. Do not store them loose as they may rub against other items and tarnish or scratch easily.

### **Don'ts**

Never store your sterling silver jewellery in open air and do not expose it to much humidity or sunshine. Over an extended period of time these factors can cause your jewellery to tarnish quickly. The effect of tarnish would first come through in the form of a golden hue that slowly turns to a shade of black.

While plastic bags may be a good option for storing jewellery to protect it from humidity, avoid polyvinyl plastic bags. Also avoid plastic bags that contain sulphur compounds which can cause your jewellery to tarnish faster or stain.

Do not store your sterling silver jewellery directly on wood surfaces. This is because wood usually contains acids that can mar the finish of your silver. Oak is seen to be the worst in this category. Also, avoid storing your sterling silver with other metals, such as coins and also rubber, as these items can cause silver to tarnish quicker also. Paper, polyester and coarse fabrics also often contain wood fibres or synthetics that can cause tiny scratches in the surface of fine sterling silver jewellery. Dirt left over from previous cleanings can scratch the surface as well.