



# Make Jewelry Sparkle

Spiff up your favorite pieces fast—no special products needed

## Biggest Challenges

- Tarnished silver pieces
- Gunky gold and costume jewelry
- Dull pearl necklaces

## Fastest Fixes

**1 Shine silver** Tarnish is the enemy, and here are your weapons: For items that are merely dull, filmy, or starting to discolor, mix a few drops of mild dish soap with warm water, and dip in a soft cloth. Rub the jewelry, then rinse in cool water and buff with a cloth until dry. For heavier tarnish, mix a paste of three parts baking soda to one part water. Wet the silver and apply the cleaner with a soft, lint-free cloth (not

paper towels, which can scratch). Work the paste into the crevices, turning the cloth as it gets gray. Rinse; buff dry. Don't soak silver; this speeds up rather than removes tarnish.

**2 Brighten gold and gems** Ever look under your ring? Lotion, soaps, and everyday dirt can clog the prongs, making stones appear facetless and flat. Even gold chains and pendants can get gunked up through everyday wear. Give gold a bubble bath by pouring a few drops of mild dish soap into a small bowl of sodium-free seltzer water or club soda (in GHRI tests, the carbonation loosened soil and removed debris). Put the jewelry into a small strainer, and place it in the bowl to soak for about five minutes. Swish it around, fishing out each piece to go over settings and crevices with a soft toothbrush. Return items to the strainer and rinse under running water; dry with a soft cloth. For costume jewelry, especially if stones are glued rather than set, dab a cloth into the bubbly solution and gently wipe any smudges or grime, then "rinse" with a cloth dampened in plain water. Pat dry and lay the pieces upside down so moisture won't soak into the setting.

**3 Freshen your pearls** Because they're so porous, pearls can easily lose their luster. Whether real, cultured, or faux, they must be cleaned with care. First lay the strand on a soft cloth. Dip a clean, small makeup brush into a mixture of warm water and a little shampoo, and go over each pearl. To finish, rinse the pearls with a clean, well-wrung damp cloth. Let the strand dry flat to prevent the string from stretching. This no-soak treatment is also good for turquoise, another porous stone.

## Make It Easier Next Time

- Try Connoisseurs UltraSoft Silver Jewelry Polishing Cloth (\$6), designed for cleaning silver. Silver's shinier the more it's worn (the friction slows down tarnishing), but storing pieces in antitarnish bags can help.
- Remove rings when washing your hands or applying lotions, to keep the settings clean.
- After wearing, wipe body oils and perfume off pearls with a soft cloth. —Christina Peterson

