

Jewelry Care Card

Identify the complete piece before cleaning. Let the most delicate detail set the limit, choose the gentlest supported method, and stop when anything changes.

VERSION	2026-08-25
CANONICAL	https://switchrm.com/resources/jewelry-care-decision-card
USE	Free to read and cite. Request written permission before reproducing images or the full document.
CREDIT	Courtesy of Switchroom / switchrm.com

Before the cloth comes out

Gold-colored and silver-colored describe appearance, not full construction. Record the maker, product name, base metal, surface application, stones, enamel, glue, cords, clasps, moving parts, repairs, and deliberately darkened finishes. If construction is uncertain, pause rather than guessing.

1. Start with the label

Find the maker, product name, and material description. A receipt or product page is more useful than color alone.

2. Look beyond the metal

Check plating, coatings, stones, glue, cords, clasps, moving parts, repairs, and intentionally darkened finishes.

3. Skip the clever shortcut

Toothpaste, dips, steam, and ultrasonic cleaning are not universal answers.

4. Go as gentle as possible

Use the maker's mildest recommended method with light pressure and brief contact.

5. Watch the surface

Pause at the first unexpected change in color, texture, movement, or fit.

6. Dry well, store softly

Dry every crevice and separate surfaces that can scratch, press, or snag.

STOP

Stop if the material is unknown, a setting or join is loose, moisture can become trapped, the finish may be altered, or the piece changes unexpectedly. Cleaning cannot solve structural wear.

A decision path for the piece in your hand

Construction verified	Follow the care note for that exact piece.	Do not extend it to every piece with a similar color.
Plated, coated, or deliberately finished	Minimize abrasion and use the gentlest method the maker allows.	Do not promise a permanent finish, waterproofness, or unlimited polishing.
Stones, pearls, enamel, glue, or mixed media	Let the most sensitive part set the limit.	Do not assume immersion, steam, or ultrasonic cleaning is safe.
Construction unknown	Pause before using water, polish, or chemicals.	Do not guess the metal or promise a home remedy.
Loose setting, clasp, hinge, or join	Stop and seek an appropriate repair assessment.	Do not use cleaning to solve structural wear.

Specialist sources

SOURCE	WHY IT IS HERE
Tips on Caring for Jewelry Gemological Institute of America https://www.gia.edu/articles/gia-news-research-tips-caring-jewelry	Gem treatment, setting, coating, heat, solvents, steam, and ultrasonic use can change what care is compatible.
Caring for metal objects Canadian Conservation Institute https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/metal-objects.html	Identifying metal and preserving original finishes are part of preventive care; storage and contact materials also matter.
Jewelry Guides U.S. Federal Trade Commission https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/topics/tools-consumers/jewelry-guides	Material and surface-application descriptions should be truthful and specific rather than inferred from color.

This free card cannot identify materials or replace an in-person assessment by a qualified professional. Current maker instructions for the exact piece come first.