



**By Mary Waterfall**  
Jewellery Specialist

# Caring For Your Jewellery

The way people approach jewellery care can be very diverse. Some people constantly wear their jewellery and don't even think to remove their diamond rings when gardening or kneading dough to make bread. Other people take their rings off all the time – to wash their hands, do the washing up etc, often with husbands shouting in the background 'Where have you left them this time!!'

In my opinion, jewellery should be worn and enjoyed. It should be a source of pleasure and not locked away in a box or safe all the time for fear it may get dirty or damaged. I often get asked about the best way to clean jewellery, so I have included some advice and other tips in this article in the hope that somebody finds it useful.

I usually advise people to soak their jewellery in warm soapy water and then give it a scrub over with a soft toothbrush. You can buy jewellery cleaner at most jewellers which is just as effective. Some people swear by soaking it in gin! I have to say I have not tried that one and can think of better things to do with a glass of gin!

It's amazing how much dirt is attracted to the surface of diamonds and gems. Earrings that are constantly worn can collect a build-up of 'ear cheese' to the reverse, which will also have an impact on the way light interacts with the gemstones and consequently with their brilliance and sparkle. In these incidences a cocktail stick is useful in addition to the soapy water. I often have to clean jewellery in order to be able to grade and assess the quality of the gemstones. My clients are usually delighted at the renewed sparkle it brings.

Ultrasonic cleaners use sound waves to break down the dirt that accumulates on the surface of jewellery. However, it is not safe to put all gem stones in them. Softer, more delicate stones can be damaged by the heat and vibrations of an ultrasonic. These include emerald, opal, tanzanite, lapis, amber and other organic stones. Gemstones that have been treated to enhance their colour and clarity can also be damaged by an ultrasonic.

Pearls are very soft and delicate and may partially dissolve if cleaned with an ultrasonic. It is best to wipe pearls with a soft cloth and never use alcohol or chemicals on them. It is worth remembering to spray perfume before you put on your pearl necklace, rather than spraying the perfume on the pearls.

Another important thing to check on a regular basis is that the gemstones are secure in their settings. I have recently heard quite a few horror stories of how significant sized diamonds have fallen out and been lost. I recommend people do 'the tap test' at least once a month. All you do is hold the piece of jewellery securely, close to your ear and lightly tap on it. If you can hear any rattling the stones are probably loose in their setting and in need of attention. It's also a good practice to check the fittings on necklaces and bracelets are secure as it may have implications on your insurance cover if they are not. At Doerr Dallas Valuations these checks form part of our valuation procedure.



Jewellery cleaning bath



Ear cheese!



Do 'the tap test' at least once a month

**Call us today to enquire about an appointment on 01883 722736 or email [enquiries@doerrvaluations.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@doerrvaluations.co.uk) or visit our website [www.doerrvaluations.co.uk](http://www.doerrvaluations.co.uk)**