



MSG JEWELLERS

Gem Talk

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Gold: Its Karating, Color, Cost, and Care

Gold is a universally accepted commodity that was once used to back our economy. It is a precious metal that is formed deep within the earth and brought to the surface through volcanic eruptions or mined predominately in Africa, but also found in Russia and the USA as well as other nations.

KARATING:

Gold in its purest form is 24 karat. This is very soft and generally not recommended for use in jewelry. A process called alloying is used to strengthen gold. By blending other metals to gold such as copper, silver, nickel, and titanium, to mention a few, the hardness level will increase significantly. 21 karat Gold is 21 parts pure gold and 3 parts alloy; 18 karat gold is 18 parts pure gold and 6 parts alloy, while 10 karat gold is 41.67% gold and 58.33% alloy. To find the amount of pure gold in any karat of gold, simply divide the karat in question by 24 (pure gold) then multiply by 100 to receive the percentage of gold content.

COLOR:

The color of gold can be manipulated from yellow to white, green, blue, or pink simply by adding more of one alloy than another. For example, to achieve green gold, more silver is added to pure gold than copper. To make gold pink, copper is the only alloy needed. The color of gold generally does not affect its character except in white gold. Due to the alloys being used to make white gold, it has been found that the final product can be brittle and difficult to work with if exact standards for blending are not adhered to.

COST:

The cost of gold changes daily based upon the supply and demand of world

markets as defined by the Second London Fix, which is a global stock market that the jewelry industry uses as its price standard for raw gold as well as finished jewelry items. Gold can be purchased in many forms, for example coins may be purchased and each coin type may have a different gold content. Maple leafs from Canada are 24 kt gold while American liberty coins are only 21 kt gold. The sale of these coins directly affects the economy of the country from which they originate. Gold is most often purchased in the form of rings, chains, earrings, and bracelets. Most of these jewelry items are manufactured in the US, however there are many other nations we import from such as Italian chains and rings from Hong Kong, Greece, and Thailand to name a few.

CARE:

The care of gold is very important to keep its beauty and luster, yet it is fairly easy to maintain. As mentioned earlier, gold is a very soft metal and therefore will scratch rather easily. It is recommended that fine gold jewelry be worn with care at appropriate times only and not to sporting events you are playing in since the likelihood is much higher that damage or loss may occur during these times. Swimming is another event where many have lost and not recovered rings. Due to the fact that your fingers will shrink while immersed in water, the ring that normally fits just right now slips off without your knowing it. Gold is a somewhat highly reactive type of metal that will change colors or react on your skin due to chemical reactions, but don't be dismayed, most of these reactions can be easily dealt with. Polishing the jewelry is generally all that is necessary to remove the reaction, which may have been caused by air-borne vapors or immersion into detergents or the like.

For home care it is recommended that those of you who have more than a few jewelry items to clean, purchase an electrosonic jewelry cleaner which mimics the ultrasonics we use professionally. These machines will vibrate the dirt away from the gems and pull it to the bottom of the tank. Care should be taken when using these units not to leave your jewelry items in them for more than 2 to 3 minutes to avoid loosening the stones. Another way to keep your jewelry clean is to purchase jars of cleaner to soak rings in, however one of the most effective jewelry cleaners is toothpaste. That's right - toothpaste! It is a non-abrasive cleanser that when used correctly, will make your jewelry sparkle. The key is to make sure the toothpaste is liquefied before using a wet, soft bristle brush to clean in small areas. Rinse with warm water over a stopped up sink and pat dry with a clean lint-free towel.

