



*MSG Jewellers*

## *Gem Talk*

by Michael S. George

*MSG Jewellers helps you buy diamonds with confidence . .  
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### **Jewellery Care**

Today I would like to talk to you about jewelry care – a much forgotten area of the jewelry industry that can make a huge impact on the longevity of your fine jewelry and not to mention your pocketbook in cost for repairs and replacements. When you apply some very basic rules, you may find that you can wear all your jewelry for many years with little or no investment in preventive maintenance.

Preventive maintenance are the key words here, and preventive maintenance begins as soon as you purchase fine jewelry. It is important that you have the jewelry protected when it is not being worn and stored in a proper compartment of a jewelry box - that you properly clean the jewelry that you have when it is not appropriate to wear fine jewelry. And that you can identify difficulties before they get out of control. Finally what to do when once you have identified a problem to get it corrected appropriately and with the least amount of risk and investment on your behalf. If you employ these five simple rules, you will enjoy your jewelry much more and with little to no expenditure. With the money that you will be saving, you be able to invest that into more jewelry!

Follow me here for just a moment and let's take this step by step. First of all, when jewelry is sold it is typically put into some type of display box or container. It is delivered to you so that when you take it home, or wrap it up as a gift, the jewelry is in a proper container. Not only is the container aesthetically pleasing, but it helps to keep jewelry free from damage and dirt. If you do not have a jewelry box, the boxes being used at jewelry stores are great to store your jewelry in when it is not being worn. My recommendation is that you have a fine jewelry case to store your jewelry in one compact area. This makes it easily accessible to you to retrieve and store your jewelry. And let's

face it, in the busy world in which we live in today, convenience is the key objective at times. And this convenience may be costly at first, but you will find that it will keep your jewelry in fine condition if you purchase the right jewelry box. There are so many to choose from ranging from wood to plastic, to marble and carved designs, to the simplest design – cardboard. When purchasing a jewelry box the thing to keep in mind is that you want something that will allow you to lay your chains and bracelets out flat, as well as your watches. Have your rings stored where they will not be rubbed or abraded by the top of the jewelry box. It should be large enough to expand with your purchases of fine jewelry, yet compact enough to be easily stored or hidden away if you should travel away from home.

If you should go on vacation, and have a large amount of fine jewelry, you might consider a bank vault or safety deposit box to store your jewelry and collectibles in when you are away. But of course, this is still not to be in lieu of insurance – a rider policy on your homeowner's insurance is always an excellent idea. For your piece of mind and security in knowing that if a jewelry item is lost, stolen, damaged, or any other peril, that it will be repaired or replaced at the cost of the insurance company – not from your pocket. If you are not familiar with the rider type insurance policy, please refer back to a previous issue of GemTalk regarding insurance or give us a call at (314) 353-9488 and we will be happy to send you a copy. Insurance is a very key and important aspect that we don't want you to overlook. Many have thought that they were insured under a blanket policy and have discovered that they were covered for certain things with very small limits and very high deductibles. A rider policy usually has no deductibles and covers the jewelry item in full for most every peril.

Cleaning is the next topic I would like to deal with. The simplest and easiest thing to do that most people aren't aware of is the proper procedure and what to use to clean their fine jewelry. Let's talk about what cleaning solutions can be used and how to clean, because proper technique is eminently important. There are jewelry cleaners in the marketplaces that clean predominantly with soap and ammonia and they work great on diamonds, gold, and most gemstones. However, they can be harsh on items such as pearls, emeralds, and opals and you must refrain from dipping these items into these solutions. For home use, there are non-ammoniated cleaners available. But the simplest, quickest, and easiest solution to use whether at home or while traveling is toothpaste. It's a great cleaner. If you want to mix your own cleaner, a great recipe is: in a mason-type jar, mix 1 teaspoon Spic 'n Span, 1 ounce Mr. Clean, ¼ cup of ammonia or Windex (this is optional), and 1 pint of warm water. Mix the

solution thoroughly and use it as a dip for your jewelry. If you choose to add the ammonia, do not put emerald, opals, or pearls in the solution. This is not a solution that you should soak your jewelry in for long periods of time. Dip your jewelry into the solution and with a very small, soft toothbrush gently clean the intricate sections of your jewelry. Make sure that you are doing this over a stopped up sink that has some water in it. Let the bristles of the brush do the work, whether you are using toothpaste or a solution. Make sure that you do not scrub the jewelry as it can loosen the prongs of the gemstones. Allow the bristles to do the work under the gemstone using a gently twist of the wrist to allow the bristles to clean. Thoroughly rinse the jewelry with warm water, shake the excess water off and with a fine, lint free cloth, and dry your jewelry. There are ultra-sonics on the market and they are excellent. They vibrate the dirt off the jewelry and deposit in at the bottom of the machine. These are wonderful tools to use with their cleaning and rinsing compartments. They must be used appropriately and your jewelry must never be left in the ultra-sonic for more than 3 to 5 minutes. Always read the instructions before using this piece of equipment.

There are times it is not appropriate to wear jewelry. These times are generally when you are doing manual labor with your hands where your jewelry might get scratched or bumped. When you are sleeping at night, believe it or not, your jewelry is rubbing up against sheets and pillowcases. Bed linens are great offenders to the prongs that hold your gemstones in place. We recommend removing your rings from the sides of the shank for leverage, not the top, at night or when doing manual labor. We believe that if you follow this precaution you will eliminate 90-95% of your chances of losing or loosening your gemstones. Think of your fine jewelry items as a mink coat that costs tens of thousands of dollars. You would never wear a mink while gardening or cleaning your house. So as a rule of thumb, wear your fine jewelry as you would your mink.

There are problems that can occur when jewelry is worn consistently over a period of time. Let's identify what some of those problems are. Remember that gold is a very malleable, soft item, and does have a tendency to have the shank of a ring conform to the shape of your finger. This type of repair is something that can be easily taken care of by your jeweler by putting the ring on a mandrel and rounding it out. Another concern that should be addressed is worn, broken, and/or bent prongs. Most of the time this happens without your knowledge. But there are signs that you can be aware of and identify and correct this problem. For example, careful inspection of your jewelry items after cleaning will identify if the prong head has been damaged. If the prong tip is missing, it will

most likely be catching on everything from nylons to shirts and blouses. It pays to inspect your jewelry on a regular basis; probably weekly or at the very least, monthly. It might be a good idea to invest in a magnifying glass so you can look at the intricacies of your jewelry and can readily notice if something is amiss.

Once you have identified a problem, such as a broken prong, you should have it properly repaired. Take the item to your jeweler. Be sure that you know what the cost of the repair will be and that no unnecessary work will be done.

Jewelry such as diamonds, rubies, and sapphires can accept heat without fear of damage to the gemstones. Many other gemstones can not accept heat and must be removed in order to repair a prong. Your jeweler should be able to properly explain the technique that needs to be done with your jewelry, whether it needs to be retipped or repronged. Retipping is adding gold to the tops of the prongs that may have worn flat. Repronging is where that tip is entirely missing and the gemstone is exposed. Repronging is generally a most labor intensive and costly process. Depending upon if the gemstone needs to be removed, fees can range from \$15 per prong and up. Retipping can be a much easier process if the gemstone can take heat. It may be a fee of \$10-12 or less, with the price going down for each additional tip, provided that the gemstones do not need to be removed. If they must be removed for retipping or repronging, generally there is an additional fee to remove the gemstones, retip or reprong, and then to reset the gemstone. Fees to remove the gemstone should range from \$5-10 per gemstone and up, depending upon their size and type. For instance, opals and emeralds are much softer stones and require special handling and pose a greater risk and liability for the jeweler. Some jewelers may charge a little more to remove these soft gems. You may have seen a commercial about up front pricing. A reputable jeweler should be more than happy to provide you with an estimate of up front pricing for the work to be done. Be sure that you are educated and informed before you say, "Yes." Don't be afraid to ask questions.

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