

Caring For Your Pearls

by The Pearl Doctor



Pearl care is rather simple once the basics are understood. Since pearls are somewhat softer and more delicate than other gemstones and precious metals, they can be more easily scratched, cracked, and damaged. Prevention is key. Additionally, cleaning and proper storing of pearls will go a long way to keep your pearls beautiful. Finally, an annual check-up is a good idea to check the state of the silk cord and the clasp.

PROTECTION

The beauty of a pearl is in its luster. Any marring of the surface of the pearl will diminish the luster, thereby reducing the beauty of the pearl. Because pearls are relatively soft gemstones, their surface is susceptible to damage from hard objects, substances containing acid, alkaline, ammonia, alcohol, and chlorine, as well as over-exposure to arid environments (i.e., air conditioning, desert climates) and ultra-violet rays. *Potential damage can occur from the following:*

Hard Objects – Bracelets and rings are especially in danger of being struck against hard objects. Take care when wearing them to avoid cracking or chipping your pearls.

Surface Contaminants and Chemicals – Cosmetics, sun block, lotion, perfume, hair spray, other hair products, body oils and perspiration, household cleaners, and even food and beverages may contain acid, alkaline, ammonia, alcohol, and/or chlorine. These substances may cloud the luster of the pearl or, in more severe cases of damage, even etch or pit the surface. Take care not to get these substances on your pearls.

- Immediately wipe off any of these types of substances should they get on your pearls to reduce the chance of surface damage, and, as soon as it is possible, clean them more thoroughly in the Spa Tub.

- Remember: All Pearls Last On – First Off. Wait 30 minutes after applying personal care products to put on pearls. And then, remember to remove your pearls before removing make-up.

- Remove pearl jewelry before exercising to avoid contact with perspiration.

- Remove pearl rings before you apply lotion, sun block,

- Do not wear pearls in chlorinated swimming pools, spas, etc., as the chlorine is harmful to pearls. Also, strands of pearls strung on a silk cord should not be worn if the silk cord gets wet, as it will stretch.

Arid Climates and High Temperatures – Arid climates (i.e., deserts, air-conditioned rooms, safes) and extended exposure to high temperature environments usually lack the humidity necessary to keep pearls from drying out and cracking over a period of time. Excessive heat will cause pearls to discolor, even turn brown. Pearls like humidity. Pearls do very well when worn regularly because of the humidity of the body.

- Provide humidity when pearls are kept in air-conditioned environments. Safes and safety deposit boxes are too arid for pearls. Put a moistened cloth/sponge in an open jar in the safe with the pearls. Hint: Hang pearls in a compartmentalized lingerie bag on the back of the bathroom door for a daily dose of humidity resulting from bathtub or shower use.

- Provide humidity when pearls must be in high temperatures (i.e., in a suitcase in a car) for an extended period of time by placing a slightly moistened cloth near the pearls. While water will not harm your pearls, a dampened silk cord will stretch if worn or hung while damp. Should the cord become damp, be sure to lay the strand of pearls flat on a soft cloth to fully air dry. (Note: Never use a blow dryer to quicken the drying process, as it will become too hot for the pearls!)

- Never leave your pearls on a television set, fireplace mantel, a radiator, or any other such place, nor wear them while blow drying your hair, as they will discolor or turn brown from the heat.

Ultra-violet rays - Over-exposure to UV rays, such as that which would come from allowing pearls to sit in direct sunlight day after day, may result in damage to the pearl's surface, as well as to the silk cord.

- Keep out of direct sunlight when not being worn.

CLEANING

Just as important in pearl care is routine cleaning of your pearl jewelry. Pearls should be cleaned after wearing them as they usually end-up coming in contact with a variety of substances just from wearing them against your body. Skin exudes a natural acid in our body oil and

perspiration. Make-up, lotion, facial moisturizers, perfume, hair care products, sun block, etc., contain chemical substances, which rub off or drop onto pearls when they are worn at the same time. Even a small amount of chemical residue can dull the luminosity of a pearl, which will diminish its beauty.

Jewelers, and stringers alike, will tell you that the drill holes where the silk thread runs through the pearl is where impurities collect, build-up, and begin to erode the pearl. Most cleaners only address the cleaning of the pearl's surface, and not this vulnerable area. Our Pearl Spa cleaning system addresses this concern.

Our Pearl Spa cleaning system, sold as the Pearl Spa Kit, was developed using a truly safe pearl cleaner. Our cleaner is safe for both pearls and skin. Equally important, is that it is efficient at removing soil from the entire pearl. Our Rx cleaning formula is a natural, non-toxic, earth-friendly cleaning formula. With our Rx formula, not only can you soak your pearls in the prepared solution as directed without any damage to the pearls, but no harm will come to either you or the environment. We do recommend changing the Spa Tub solution between cleanings to ensure the contaminants from the previous cleaning are not transferring to the silk cord.

With our Pearl Spa Kit, cleaning your pearls is a quick and simple task. Our Pearl Spa Kit, sold in two versions, the Essential Spa Kit and the Ultimate Spa Kit, comes self-contained in their own pouches. This way, when you're ready to take care of your pearls, your cleaning tools are right there, convenient and ready to use.

PEARL SPA KIT TREATMENTS

There are four Spa Treatments that we recommend to keep your pearls clean, refreshed, and beautified. Please note: The Full Spa Treatment is not suitable for strung jewelry due to the delicate nature of knotted silk cording, especially when it is wet.

SOFT CHAMOIS THERAPY

This quick treatment will help protect your pearls from non-visible residues. Though you may not see dirt or grime on the surface of your pearls, simply handling pearls will transfer a small amount of body oil from your hands. Habitually wiping your pearls with the Ultra Soft Chamois after handling or wearing your pearls, prior to putting them away, will provide much protection from non-visible residues. As a simple reminder to do this,

keep your Ultra Soft Chamois where you keep your pearls. This therapy is suitable for strung jewelry.

THE MINI SPA TREATMENT

This treatment uses the Spa solution for wiping the surface of the pearls without dipping the jewelry piece in the Tub. Use this treatment for strung jewelry if make-up or hair spray should get on the pearls as you are putting them on. People who have higher than normal acid levels in their perspiration should use this treatment after wearing their pearls.

For the MINI SPA TREATMENT: Mix the Rx with water in the Spa Tub according to the Directions, as noted below. Dampen the Towelette in the solution. Wipe the surface of the pearls and its setting. Special care must be taken if you are wiping a pearl strand so that the silk cord and knots are not dampened by the Towelette. Next, rinse out the Towelette, so that it is dampened with just plain water. Wipe the pearls a second time to remove any residue from the surface. Dry gently with the Terry Towel. This treatment is suitable for strung jewelry.

THE BASIC SPA TREATMENT

This treatment will help to remove most all residue on the entire surface of the pearls, flush away the body oils and dirt that get trapped in silk cording, as well as help loosen and flush away dirt that collects in tight places up against metal settings. Prepare the Spa Tub according to Directions as noted below. Place your pearls in the basket and clean according to the Directions. This treatment is suitable for strung jewelry.

THE FULL SPA TREATMENT

This is the recommended treatment when visible residue is present on the surface of the pearls, or if you are cleaning your pearls prior to storing them (not suitable for pearls strung on a silk cord).

For the FULL SPA TREATMENT: Follow the Spa Tub Directions as noted below, steps 1 through 3. Then dip the small Towelette in the prepared Spa Tub solution. Then carefully wipe the soiled pearl(s), dirty metal shanks and/or settings with the Towelette. A small brush may be used on metal parts only. After gently wiping the soiled jewelry, place the item back in the Spa Tub basket again, and follow steps 3 through 5. **WARNING: Do not use a brush on pearls; damage may result! This treatment is NOT suitable for strung jewelry.**

HAIR SPRAY

Hair spray is especially damaging to pearls. Wait 30 minutes to put on pearl jewelry after applying personal grooming products. And then, remember to remove your pearls first before removing make-up.

A good rule to remember: ALL PEARLS LAST ON – FIRST OFF. If hair spray does get on your pearls prior to wearing them, immediately, and carefully, give them the Mini Spa Treatment. Later, after wearing, we recommend giving them either the Basic Spa or the Full Spa treatment (strung jewelry should not receive the Full Spa treatment, as stretching of the silk cord will result).

SPA TREATMENT GUIDE

| TYPE OF JEWELRY | WHEN | TREATMENT |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>FREQUENTLY WORN:</i> | | |
| Pearls strung on silk cord | After wearing | Chamois or Mini Spa |
| | 1 to 2 times per month | Basic Spa |
| Pearls set in metal settings | After wearing | Chamois, Mini Spa or Basic Spa |
| | At least twice per month | Full Spa |
| Pearl rings | After wearing | Mini Spa or Basic Spa |
| | At least twice per month | Full Spa |
| <i>INFREQUENTLY WORN:</i> | | |
| Pearls strung on silk cord | After wearing | Chamois or Mini Spa |
| | After wearing several times | Basic Spa |
| Pearls set in metal settings | After wearing | Chamois or Mini Spa |
| | After wearing several times | Basic Spa or Full Spa |
| Pearl rings | After wearing | Basic Spa or Full Spa |
| <i>Any time your pearls lose their bright luminosity or appear dirty, it is time for a Spa treatment.</i> | | |

For directions using the Spa Tub in the Spa Kit Treatments, please refer to the Spa Kit Instructions, available from The Pearl Doctor's web site, Product Instructions Page.

STORING

The relative softness of pearls requires some care in the way we store them. Pearls should not be stored in direct contact with other jewelry. Strands of pearls strung on a silk cord should be laid flat when not being worn to prevent the silk cord from stretching from the weight

of the pearls. Pearls need humidity and air. Air-conditioned rooms, safes, and safety deposit boxes are not suitable storage places without providing humidity for your pearls.

- A compartmentalized jewelry case with soft lining is ideal, so each piece of pearl jewelry can have its own compartment. However, a roomy jewelry case will suffice, so long as the pearl jewelry is not getting bumped and pushed around by other objects, especially metal jewelry.

- Storing individual pearl jewelry pieces in a jewelry pouch, such as The Pearl Doctor's Soft-Suede Pearl Pouch, is a great way to protect your pearls. These pouches have two compartments inside and can hold two jewelry items. A perfect way to reduce unnecessary contact with metal earring backs, shanks, clasps, etc.

- For air-conditioned homes: Try keeping your pearls in a jewelry case in the bathroom. Leave it open during bathtub or shower use to give them a regular dose of humidity. Pearls can also be laid in a compartmentalized lingerie bag and hung on the back of the bathroom door.

- When traveling use a jewelry pouch, such as the Soft-Suede Pearl Pouch, to protect your pearls.

- Safes or safety deposit boxes are too arid for pearls. Provide humidity when pearls must be kept in a low humidity or air-conditioned environment, such as a safe or a safety deposit box. Place a wet cloth/sponge in an open jar in the safe with the pearls to add humidity to the air.

CHECK-UP

Strands of pearls strung on a silk cord should get an annual check-up to check for wear and/or loosening of the silk cord and/or clasp. If your strand of pearls is worn frequently, annual restringing is highly advisable.



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