

# Silver education – Cash Gold Canada

## SILVER EDUCATION

### Silver

Silver is another popular metal used in jewellery. Pure silver is soft, too soft to create durable jewellery, so it's mixed with other metals to enhance performance. One popular silver mixture (an alloy) is known as sterling silver.

It is bright and durable, and more abundant than gold. It does not carry the popularity of gold or platinum because it does tarnish and lose its bright shiny color easily. Jewelers will avoid using silver in a diamond setting or as fine jewelry because of this. Silver is less expensive because of its flaws and is more readily available than gold or platinum. Silver is the most lustrous, or reflective, of the precious metals. Also, silver is the whitest metal. However, silver is considered to be too soft by itself for fashioning jewelry. The most popular silver alloy worldwide, sterling silver, contains at least 92.5 percent pure silver, with copper as the other metal in the alloy. Copper improves the strength and durability of silver. Also, a silver alloy tarnishes less than pure silver. Yet, any silver will fade over time.

Silver is wonderfully malleable and it is easily hammered and formed into jewelry shapes. Silver melts at a lower temperature than gold.

Beware of silver imposters. For example, “nickle silver” actually contains no silver at all. It is an alloy composed of the base metals copper, zinc, and nickel that is made to resemble real silver.

## **Sterling Silver Markings & Descriptions**

Jewelry sold in the United States and Canada cannot bear silver markings or be described as silver, solid silver, sterling silver, sterling, or with the abbreviation Ster. unless it contains at least 92.5 percent pure silver.

The minimum silver content can also be stated as 925 parts per thousand of pure silver, so you might see the figures 925 or 92.5 used to designate silver content.

## **Copper in Sterling Silver**

Copper is the metal most commonly used to make up the remaining 7.5 percent content of a sterling silver mix. Copper makes the silver harder, but gives it a tendency to tarnish, a darkening that occurs when sterling silver reacts with gases in the air or with other substances that it comes in contact with.

# **Caring for Sterling Silver Jewelry**

Store your sterling silver jewelry in tarnish prevention cloths or bags. The treated cloth slows down the tarnishing process and keeps the jewelry from rubbing against harder jewelry that might scratch it. Try to keep your sterling silver jewelry in a cool, dry place.

# **Cleaning Your Sterling Silver Jewelry**

Polishing cloths are an excellent choice for cleaning your sterling silver jewelry. You might read recommendations to use toothpaste to clean sterling silver, but avoid doing that – toothpaste is abrasive and can leave scratches.

# **Sterling Silver Patina**

Sterling silver jewelry that is worn continually often develops a lovely patina, a kind of glow combined with darkened areas. If you like the look, leave it alone. If you prefer a bright and shiny look for your sterling silver, use a polish cloth to restore the jewelry to its original appearance.

# **Sterling Silver Affordability**

Sterling silver jewelry is beautiful... and affordable. Sterling silver jewelry and components are within reach of nearly any budget, ours and the pocketbooks of artisans who create the sterling silver jewelry we love so much.