

USE & CARE GUIDE FOR STERLING SILVER

BR6

At the present time, most of the silver items sold by Rio Rondo may need to be cleaned and polished before they regain the desired lustre expected of silver. This brochure will help show you a number of ways you can polish and care for any sterling silver items you have.

BASIC SILVER CARE TIPS:

- avoid storing bare silver in open air for long periods of time. Moisture and chemicals in the air will cause it to tarnish quickly (known as oxidation) and the silver will ultimately turn black. This of course can be fixed and cleaned up, but with finished items, its usually best to take measures to prevent tarnishing in the first place.
- Coating silver with clear nail polish or other commercial silver preservation products will help to delay oxidation for a very long time. Clear nail polish may literally last for years.
- Uncoated silver is best stored in plastic bags until you are ready to use the items.
- Make sure that all silver items to be used on your tack are cleaned, polished and coated BEFORE you attach them to your items (see further notes for other specifics). Due to the small size of miniature items, it can be difficult to adequately clean things that are permanently attached.

CLEANING SILVER

There are many commercial products available that will remove tarnish from silver. Many of them work quite well. Follow all label directions and precautions.

Soldered items sometimes have a residue of rosin flux on them. This is easily removed by soaking the items in nail polish remover or acetone. (Observe all label precautions). Nail polish remover/acetone will also do a fairly decent job of helping remove stubborn tarnish as well.

Silver can be buffed using any one of many products for this purpose, such as Simichrome and Flitz (used in conjunction with a small muslin buff attached to your moto-tool, or used by hand on a cotton swab). Wash all parts thoroughly to remove any residue when you are finished.

Rio Rondo's polishing cloth (*part #HD20*) also will put a high lustre on silver, and remove all but the most stubborn tarnish by hand. The harder you rub, the brighter the shine.

PROTECTING SILVER FROM TARNISH

Once you have your items cleaned and polished to your satisfaction, it is best to soak them for a minute or two in either a silver cleaning solution or rubbing alcohol to remove all traces of oils, particularly from your fingers (which will cause it to oxidize quicker in the future). Wipe excess liquid from the piece using a plain kleenex (do not use kleenex that is perfumed, or has aloe etc. in it)

Set the parts aside to dry.

Some commercial cleaning products claim that they impart a long-lasting tarnish resistant residue. However, I have not found this to be the case... in fact, most products seem to cause the silver to tarnish FASTER in the future. But maybe it's just the weather we have here, who knows?

In most cases, however, once the part is cleaned, stripped of oils and residues and is dried, you can now coat the part with clear gloss nail polish. While not precisely the same lustre as bright silver, a coat of clear nail polish can stop tarnishing for YEARS. Often the polish itself may yellow long before the silver begins to tarnish.

Coat the surface of each part carefully and allow it to fully dry before handling the item further. One coat should be enough. Allowing 12-24 hours is best, as nail polish is easily marred if handled too soon.

If along the line you find that the nail polish has yellowed with time, you

can easily strip it off the item using nail polish remover on a cotton swab. Take great care *not* to get the remover on any leather around the silver item as it can strip the finish off the leather and discolor it. Once the polish has been removed, you can use a little rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab to remove any residue from the polish remover. Allow to dry.

Now you can recoat the item with clear gloss polish. For maximum control, trim the brush in the bottle-cap to a taper. Be VERY careful not to get any polish on any surrounding leather or other decoration.

SILVER LACE

Clearly it is impractical to coat silver lace with nail polish once it has been applied to a tack item. But, you don't have to. The coating you use to shine up the leather (such as Tandy's Super Shene) also serves quite nicely to coat the silver lacing which protects it rather nicely from future tarnish, sometimes for years. The biggest liability there is that it might wear off with use and handling, and those spots may tarnish.

To remove tarnish that may be on the silver prior to using it on a tack project, try running it through one of our polishing cloths (*#HD20*) held in your hand.

Should you ever need to repolish silver lacing, use alcohol carefully on a cotton swab (trim the swab to a tapered end for more control) and this should effectively remove any previously applied Super Shene coat-

ing. Use a clean, dry kleenex to dry the silver and rub off tarnished areas. A touch of nail polish remover on a swab will help with stubborn areas. Be very *careful* to avoid getting alcohol on the leather itself.

Once you get the lace shined up, carefully go over it with rubbing alcohol once more to remove residue, then recoat the lacing with Super Shene.

Of course, this might be a good time to recoat the entire tack item and make it look shiny and new again!

SOLDERING

If you are going to solder or otherwise work with any silver item, be sure it is NOT coated with any substance before you begin. Soldering an item that has polish on it may cause the polish to burn and this can result in a permanent stain on the silver that will be difficult to remove without sanding it off. If in doubt, clean the piece with nail polish remover before you begin working, and wipe it dry with a kleenex.

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