



COZY SISTER

Tutorial: Antiquing with Liver of Sulphur

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This lesson discusses how to oxidize and antique copper and sterling silver jewelry with liver of sulphur.

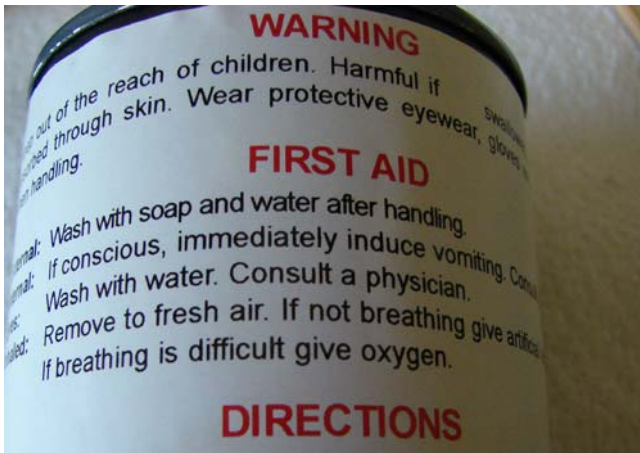
Note that this technique should NOT be used with Argentium sterling silver, which is specifically formulated to inhibit the oxidization process.

Materials

- Copper or sterling silver jewelry
- Liver of Sulphur

Tools needed:

- Tweezers
- glass or plastic container
- stir stick
- Fine #000 steel wool (this is *not* the steel wool used for scrubbing pots and pans! It is much finer.)
- Access to running water
- Fine Holed Sieve (recommended)



Step 1: Read Warning and First Aid Info

Liver of Sulphur is a hazardous chemical and must be treated with respect. Always work in a well-ventilated area.

Before you begin work, read over the warning and first aid info that came with your liver of sulphur.



Step 2: Gather Jewelry to be Antiqued

The jewelry must be clean as any oils on the jewelry's surface (such as skin oils) will inhibit the oxidization process.



Step 3: Place Liver of Sulphur in Container

Handle the liver of sulphur with tweezers, not with your hands! Always use a glass or plastic container that will never be used for food due to the hazardous nature of liver of sulphur. I like to use disposable cups to avoid all risk.

Drop one lump of liver of sulphur into the container.



Step 4: Add Hot Tap Water

Add very hot tap water to the container. The heat will help the liver of sulphur dissolve more quickly and will speed up the oxidization process. The liver of sulphur will begin to dissolve immediately upon coming into contact with the water. However, you should not heat the water to a temperature hotter than what comes out of your tap.

If you are reusing liver of sulphur solution from earlier in the day, the water will be at room temperature. In this case, heat the jewelry by running it under hot tap water instead, to help speed up the oxidization process.



Step 5: Dissolve completely

Crush and stir the liver of sulphur until it is completely dissolved. The color of the liquid should be a dark yellow or green color.

NOTE: The color of the liquid should be more of a greenish-yellow color like in the top picture; in the remaining photos the water is darker than it should be. While it will still work for blackening jewelry, this darker liquid is not appropriate for some other techniques.



Step 6: Add Jewelry

Add the jewelry to the cup. I like to lower the jewelry most of the way into the cup with the tweezers before dropping to prevent splashing.



Step 7: Wait

Allow the jewelry to soak until the metal is completely black. Copper will blacken almost immediately. The sterling silver will take longer.

Sterling silver will go through various shades of brown before reaching its deep black color.





Step 8: Rinse Thoroughly

Rinse the jewelry thoroughly under running water. Remember not to hold the jewelry with your hands until it has been rinsed thoroughly. Either hold the jewelry with your tweezers or hold it in a mesh strainer. Remember that if you use a mesh strainer it must never be used for food afterward.



Step 9: Allow Jewelry to Dry

Your jewelry is now oxidized. If you wish to leave it fully oxidized, you are done. If you wish to bring out the highlights for "antiqued" jewelry, continue to the end of the tutorial.



Step 10: Scrub with Steel Wool

Scrub the entire surface of the metal with steel wool. This will remove the black layer from the high points while leaving the crevices black.

Continue to scrub until you achieve the desired appearance.



Step 11: Rinse Thoroughly

Rinse the jewelry again to wash off any fragments of steel wool. You may also have to use the tweezers to remove bits of steel wool that have become trapped in tight places.

I hope you enjoyed this tutorial.
For comments or questions, please go to www.cozysister.com.

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