

## Button Cleaning Kit and Supplies

According to #ButtonLovers

May 27, 2024

### Button Cleaning Supply Kit

Most items can be purchased online on popular ecommerce websites or local stores.

#### General Supplies

- Newsprint or plastic to cover the work surface.
  - Cloth - Have several on hand
  - Soft Natural Fiber Cloth
- Jewelry Polishing Cloth - not washable.
- Paper Towels
  - Soft Small Brush
  - Tooth Brush
  - Paint Brush
  - Mascara Brush
- Eraser – Under the Artist category there are many good ones.
  - Artist Gum or Kneadable Plastic Eraser (Not Rubber)
  - Artist Perfection Eraser (Pencil like with eraser on end and brush on the other)
- Lead Pencil
- Q-tips
- Tooth Paste (non-whiting and contains no acid)
- Tooth Picks
- Latex or Nitrile Gloves
- Pipe Cleaners (Optional)
- Baking soda
- Wood Polish (Howard's Feed and Wax is good brand)
- Leather Conditioner (Suggest CPR Cleaner and Conditioner)
- Ivory Snow Soap or Orvus WA Paste Cleaner
- Vinegar (White)

#### Washing supplies when appropriate

- Container - To hold water.
- Distilled Water – Some locations' water supply might contain unwanted contaminants.
- Soft Wash Cloth
- Biodegradable Dish Soap – Contains no acid or petroleum
- Soft Rag or Towel – For Drying

#### Button Restoring and Protection (Select one based on your preference)

- Renaissance Wax Polish - Good for different materials.
- Howard's Feed-N-Wax for Wood
- Oil - Walnut Oil or Mineral Oil – No other kitchen oils, since they can turn rancid over time.
- Bee's Wax (Mostly for metal)
- Jewelry Cleaner - Non-toxic, non-ammoniated formula

### **Tools (optional)**

- Small Hobby handheld power tool (Such as Dermal)
  - Eraser Wheels – Depending on color can be soft, medium or hard
  - Bristle Wheel Brushes (Grit Material should be Wool)
- Small Portable Hobby Table Vise to hold button
- Vibratory Tumbler

### **Proceed with Caution**

Always be **EXTREMELY** cautious when cleaning buttons until you have some experience with all the materials. Start with your least expensive buttons like modern plastics and go to the next. Always start with soft dry cloth or jewelry cloth is reserved for metal. Inspect the button entirely until you have an understanding of all the materials used in making the button.

### **Embellishments**

If the button has any type of embellishment additional caution is warranted. If the embellishment is contained in a setting, make sure it is secured before proceeding. If an embellishment is missing, finding the original might be very challenging especially if they are imitation stones or pastes. Using any glue has some dangers and users should read instructions to see if the glue is a good fit.

### **Paint, Glaze, Tints, Iridescence or Luster**

These can be easily damaged depending on the type or brand along when it was applied. This is especially important on certain materials.

### **Polishing Creams or Paste**

The purpose of polishes, creams and pastes is for restoring and/or protection. A little bit goes a long way. Don't let dry without puffing first, because it will be harder to remove at a later time.

### **Orders (Smells)**

If you open a container and it smells "BAD", you might initially see many affected buttons. Make sure you have your latex or nitrile gloves on. The damage is the result of many factors – water exposure, mice invasion, Celluloid deterioration, to mention a few.

You might not understand the source of the smell initially, but you should let the buttons breathe. Find a spot in the house where you can isolate these buttons. Placing them outside might damage many of the man-made polymer or plastic buttons from sunlight or dampness, unless they have been UV protected and/or water proofed. Look for any buttons that have crystallized and those Celluloid buttons might be the source of the smell. The smell might linger for a while after you remove and throw them away, but give it some time.

### **Different Cleaning methods**

Depending on the materials present on the buttons, you might have to determine the best cleaning practice that works best without further damages. Remember these are suggestions and you proceed at your own risk. If there is more than one method, don't think you need to go with the most expensive or extensive one for the best care.

**To be continued.....**