

# Cleaning your Finds

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One of the most exciting parts of metal detecting / treasure hunting is finding the treasure. But sometimes the object is so dirty that it is hard to see what it is, or what that date is on your found coin, or that silver / gold mark on the piece of jewellery that you found.

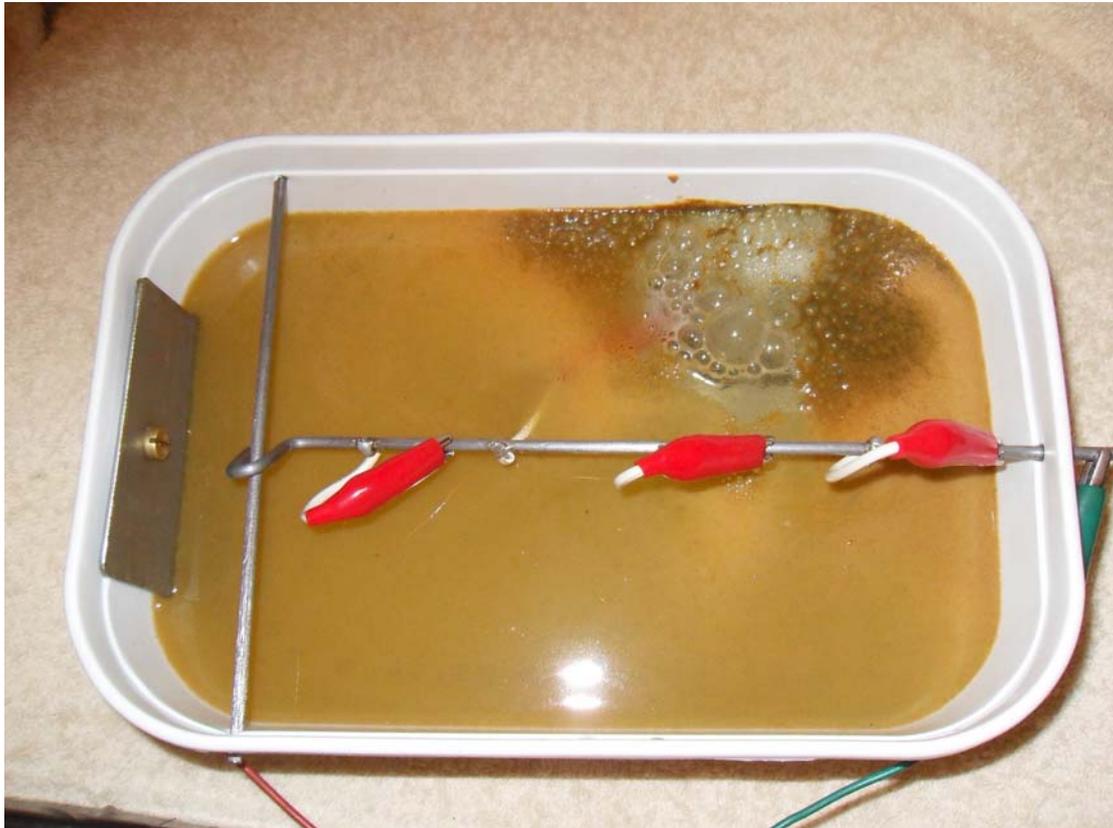
One thing that I love to do when I get back from a hunting trip is to clean all my finds to see exactly what it is I have found.

I have got a basic kit that I use for my general cleaning. If I am not sure about the value or rarity of an item, then the cleaning methods change.



Above are the main items that I use with great effect for cleaning most items that I find. The items include toothbrushes for any scrubbing work using just water and soap. I also have a brass wire brush for removing stubborn rust or other debris (do not use if scratching is a problem). I then have toothpicks and other pointed objects for getting into crevices and for cleaning out holes etc. The craft knife although not used too often is quite handy for removing items of clothe or cotton from torn off buttons. The silver foil is used for a gentle electrolysis, by wrapping a silver coin in the foil and placing the package in water with a little salt, it does wonders (be careful on very fine silver as the salt can attack it sometimes).

Using the above items will be all you need for the majority of finds. If there is a lot of rust or contamination on the found item, then an electrolysis bath will do the job of cleaning.



For items of gold and silver, I just wash the item in soapy water and only then if there is further cleaning do I change my tactics. Gold the majority of the time will just need a good wash and dry. Silver which tarnishes very quickly, I will use a “Silver cleaning Plate” which you can buy for a relatively small price.



This plate just uses water and soap washing powder to do the work. If you lay the item that needs cleaning on the plate a reaction takes place and the tarnishing disappears. This method of cleaning silver is great as it does not do damage to the item being cleaned.



Some of the chemical items I will use if needed are vinegar or lemon juice for a mild acid, this is great for cleaning coins (non valuable) and small items made with steel, copper, aluminium and nickel chrome.

The dish washing liquid is fantastic, as you can place some of this on a coin and leave for a couple of hours before washing the liquid off. The soaking in dishwashing liquid often loosens the grime, using a toothbrush to scrub the item a bit if needed.

The lacquer spray is great to help stop items tarnishing after being cleaned. I use this only on the cheaper items as on expensive coins; it could knock the value down by as much as 60%. On horseshoes and large items of no value, I normally heat up the object and rub a candle over it to put a thin layer of wax to seal it off. This is great for war relics. If you do use wax, it will make the object look slightly black, but will look nice and clean, and you can still see the object through the wax.



I do not usually use brass or silver metal polish as this only cleans temporarily. This cleaner can also scratch a good relic. What I do use the brass cleaner for is rubbing on glass to get rid of scratches. It is a lot of hard work, but the results are good. I have removed scratches from watch glass with this method.

With just the above items, you will do probably about 75% - 80% of all your cleaning with great success.

I hope that this tutorial will help the beginner to get started with the clean up of his or her finds.

Please remember, that if the item is valuable or you suspect it could have value, clean in soapy water and leave it at that, or get it cleaned by an expert.

If you have any questions or comments or ideas, please feel free to go onto the forum at <http://petergill.webs.com> and leave us a message under the "Restoration and Cleaning" section.