

# Quick Do's & Don'ts for your metal finds

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## CLEANING – WHAT TO USE:

These are the safest, most controllable techniques to reduce the risk of damage occurring during cleaning and ensure valuable information is not lost.

- ✓ Gentle manual techniques
- ✓ Sharpened wooden or plastic tools
- ✓ Distilled water or acetone on cotton wool swabs
- ✓ A microscope or a hand lens
- ✓ Protective equipment – corrosion is toxic so gloves are essential



## CLEANING – WHAT NOT TO USE:

These products cause short- and long-term damage to objects, which may reduce their commercial and historical value.

- ✗ Lemon juice, vinegar or tomato ketchup
- ✗ Cola
- ✗ Ammonia
- ✗ Household cleaners
- ✗ Olive oil
- ✗ Tap water
- ✗ Baking soda
- ✗ Aluminium foil
- ✗ Wire brushes
- ✗ Barrelling, electrolysis or ultrasonic cleaners



## COATING – WHAT TO USE:

These will not damage the object and are stable, reversible ways of providing long-term protection.

- ✓ Long lasting conservation grade materials such as Paraloid B72™
- ✓ Instead of coating store the object in a 'Dry box' with silica gel instead



## COATING – WHAT NOT TO USE:

These products are unstable and will attack the metal itself causing irreversible damage to objects.

- ✗ Oils (including olive oil)
- ✗ Waxes e.g. microcrystalline wax
- ✗ Off the shelf varnishes



## JOINING – WHAT TO USE:

These will ensure the join is long-lasting and will not negatively affect the object.

- ✓ Conservation grade materials with a long lifespan
- ✓ Stable, reversible conservation grade products



## JOINING – WHAT NOT TO USE:

These products cause damage to objects. They are unstable and will fail over time, leaving residues that are extremely difficult to remove.

- ✗ Superglues
- ✗ Coloured epoxies



If you record your finds with PAS, it's always best to record them uncleaned.

The full PAS conservation guide can be found here:  
[https://finds.org.uk/documents/file/PAS\\_](https://finds.org.uk/documents/file/PAS_)



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&  
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