

How to Replace Stones in a Piece of Vintage Costume Jewelry



By Danielle Olivia Tefft

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I've replaced many stones over the years as a consummate costume jewelry collector.

This simple 5 step guide will show you how to replace rhinestones in an older piece of costume jewelry in which the stones were originally glued in.

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Step 1:

Select a tray or baking sheet with tall edges upon which to work. The edges are necessary because rhinestones are tiny and they bounce!

If a stone pops onto the floor, you may never find it again. Line the tray with paper napkins, towels or tissues. This stops the rhinestones from rolling around.

Tip: Try to find a replacement piece from the same era as the piece you are repairing. This will ensure that the stones match as closely as possible.

Otherwise, for example, you could end up putting cubic zirconia in a pre-1970s piece. This stone will be much brighter than its older counterparts!

Step 2:

Next, you will need a sewing needle. Sewing needles work well because they are almost flat and can easily be slid along the edges of rhinestones in older pieces to pry them loose.

A sewing needle also comes in handy when you need to position a stone in the piece you want to fix.

You have to pry rhinestones out of costume jewelry pieces patiently and slowly or the rhinestones will pop out into the air and could land outside of your tray or baking sheet.

Tip: If the rhinestones seem really hard to pry out, soak the piece in boiling water for at least 5 minutes. Then try again. They should just pop out now!

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Step 3:

Once you have removed the stone you want to put into another piece, get your "glue" ready. I put that word in parenthesis because you can't use regular glue.

Regular glue won't last over the long term. You'll just end up losing the replacement stone just like the original that was lost.

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Step 3 continued:

The best solution is to purchase a small tube of craft cement or epoxy recommended for attaching glass and metal.

I like to use G-S Hypo Cement. You should be able to purchase it online or at your local craft or bead store. If you can't find this type of cement or epoxy, you can use clear super glue but over time, the bond may not be permanent.

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Step 4:

Dab a tiny drop of craft epoxy or cement into the empty setting cup. Most craft cement tubes come with a tiny needle in the cap that you can use to dab with.

If you don't have one, use a needle. Wait at least ten seconds so that the cement "sets". Then put the replacement stone into the setting. Push the replacement stone firmly into the setting with tweezers. If the craft cement runs over the edges, quickly and carefully wipe the excess away a damp paper towel. Be careful not to wipe the replacement stone away!

Step 5:

Let the piece of costume jewelry that you have just replaced the stones in sit undisturbed overnight (about 8 hours).

There you have it! You can also use this procedure to replace glued-in stones that have become yellowed or damaged over time.

About The Author



Danielle Olivia Tefft is a GIA (Gemological Institute of America) accredited jewelry professional. She showcases her passion and knowledge for antique and vintage jewelry in the [Found in the Jewelry Box](#) blog.

She has also been the proprietor of [Treasure Box Antiques](#), an online antique and vintage jewelry lover's shop since 2008. Originally on Ruby Lane, the shop now resides on Etsy.

A collection of her jewelry identification courses in PDF format are available for sale at: www.danielleoliviatefftwrites.com