

Gem care chart

Ultrasonic and steam safety, hardness and what each stone cannot take, for 25 gemstones. Following GIA care guidance.

ULTRASONIC AND STEAM			SAFE METHOD (GIA)		STORAGE
SAFE	Usually safe for this stone.		Warm soapy water and a soft brush		Store jewels separately in soft pouches or divided boxes: diamond and corundum scratch softer gems and metals. Remove rings for heavy manual work and have prongs checked, since a worn setting can release a stone.
CAUTION	Depends on the individual stone. Read the note.		NO ULTRASONIC OR STEAM		
AVOID	Not recommended.		Emerald, opal, pearl, tanzanite, turquoise		
Our scheme, mapped from GIA's wording					
STONE	MOHS	ULTRASONIC	STEAM	NOTES	
Diamond	10	CAUTION	CAUTION	GIA advises against ultrasonic and steam cleaners at home because vibration can loosen settings; jewelers inspect pieces first.	
Ruby (untreated or heated)	9	SAFE	SAFE	Also safe for lattice-diffused stones. Boric acid powder etches even untreated corundum.	
Ruby (glass-filled)	9	AVOID	AVOID	GIA: high-lead glass is altered by chemicals as mild as lemon juice, so fracture-filled, cavity-filled or dyed ruby takes a damp cloth only.	
Sapphire (untreated or heated)	9	SAFE	SAFE	Fracture-filled, cavity-filled or dyed sapphires should be cleaned with a damp cloth only.	
Alexandrite	8.5	SAFE	SAFE	GIA rates both usually safe; use only warm soapy water if fractures have been filled.	
Spinel	8	CAUTION	CAUTION	Usually safe, but fractures can be a problem; rare fracture-filled stones need soapy water or a damp cloth.	
Topaz	8	AVOID	AVOID	Basal cleavage makes it prone to splitting; sharp temperature changes can break it. Coated topaz needs gentle cleaning.	
Emerald	7.5–8	AVOID	AVOID	Most emeralds are fracture-filled; vibration can worsen fractures and steam can draw out oils or resins.	
Aquamarine	7.5–8	CAUTION	CAUTION	Usually safe unless the stone has liquid inclusions or fractures; rare fracture-filled stones need soapy water only.	
Morganite	7.5–8	CAUTION	CAUTION	Usually safe unless the stone has liquid inclusions or fractures; avoid heat.	
Tourmaline	7–7.5	AVOID	AVOID	High heat can change color and sudden temperature change can fracture it.	
Amethyst	7	CAUTION	AVOID	Ultrasonic usually safe except for dyed or fracture-filled stones; sudden heat can fracture it.	
Citrine	7	CAUTION	AVOID	Ultrasonic usually safe except for rare dyed or filled stones; GIA says citrine should not be heated.	
Garnet	6.5–7.5	CAUTION	AVOID	Ultrasonic usually safe unless the stone is fractured; steam not recommended for any garnet.	
Peridot	6.5–7	AVOID	AVOID	Rapid or uneven heat can fracture it; sulfuric acid and, over time, acidic perspiration attack it.	
Kunzite	6.5–7	AVOID	AVOID	Perfect cleavage in two directions; color can fade with prolonged heat or intense light.	
Jade (jadeite, nephrite)	6–7	CAUTION	CAUTION	Safe for untreated jade; dyed, bleached, impregnated or coated jade should get warm soapy water only.	
Zircon	6–7.5	AVOID	AVOID	More brittle than sapphire; heat can alter color, and some heat-treated stones revert in bright light.	
Tanzanite	6–7	AVOID	AVOID	GIA says never recommended; cleavage and fair to poor toughness, sensitive to sudden temperature change.	
Moonstone	6–6.5	AVOID	AVOID	GIA says never recommended; two cleavage directions, and heat or sudden temperature change can break it.	
Opal	5–6.5	AVOID	AVOID	Warm soapy water is the only safe method; heat or sudden temperature change can cause crazing or fractures.	
Turquoise	5–6	AVOID	AVOID	Never steam or ultrasonic; heat and solvents damage treated surfaces, and skin oils and cosmetics discolor it.	
Lapis lazuli	5–6	AVOID	AVOID	GIA's 4Cs cleaning guidance lists lapis among heat-sensitive stones not to be cleaned ultrasonically; warm soapy water, testing dyed stones first.	
Pearl	2.5	AVOID	AVOID	GIA says never; acids in perfume, cosmetics and perspiration damage it. Wipe with a soft cloth after wearing.	
Amber	2–2.5	AVOID	AVOID	GIA's 4Cs guidance says amber should not be put in an ultrasonic cleaner; warm water and mild soap only. Light darkens it and chemicals harm it.	