

1308-2

Meredith Arnold is on location with a lesson on etching.

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Etched Metal Discs for Bracelets or Earrings



Expand your jewelry making horizons by putting patterns into metal easily using just a few materials and etching solution that can be used again and again.

Materials needed

- Rubber stamps
- Staz On black stamp ink pad
- 7 red brass, copper or yellow brass discs, 1" diameter (bracelet)
- 2 red brass, copper or yellow brass discs, 1/2" diameter (earrings)
- Plastic container, see directions below for an idea of what size
- Packing tape
- 8 oz. Ferric Chloride (available at Dick Blick At Supply)
- 8 oz. white vinegar
- 2 tsp. salt
- Metal hole punch, punches 3/32" (2.3mm) hole, (Rio Grande Jewelry Supply)
- Wood dapping block, comes with 2 dapping dies, use the broader die
- Heavy rubber mallet or hammer
- Latex-like gloves
- Apron
- Plastic table cover

Note: the etching solution stains clothing, etc. brown-yellow so be careful not to spill it, etc. Use eye protection when handling

in case of splashing and always wear gloves when working with it. Yellow/orange stained skin is not attractive.

Instructions

1. Clean discs: soak in Permatex Fast Orange for 10 minutes or so and scrub with a nail brush until water sheets off rather than beads up on the surface of the metal. Note it will always pull away from the rim or edges. Dry thoroughly.
2. Use double stick tape to hold discs down on work surface. Tap rubber stamp gently onto ink pad until design is evenly covered and shiny.
3. Set stamp down onto the metal. Press gently to make sure total contact is made but be careful. This is when the stamp will want to hydroplane off the metal smearing the design. Lift the stamp straight up to remove. Let the ink dry completely before going to the next step. Note that this may take a bit of practice. If so just clean off the ink with Staz On stamp cleaner, rinse and dry the metal and try again. It's worth the effort to get it right.
4. Place discs as close as possible but without touching in a staggered pattern onto the sticky side of a piece of packing tape. If you have a sandwich sized container this will take two pieces of standard sized packing tape side by side in the bottom. All discs should be able to lie flat in the bottom of the container. Be sure to fold over the sticky ends leaving one end long enough to stick out of the container so it can be used as a handle to pick the strip up with easily. Be careful that the long end doesn't flop into your container once the etching solution has been poured in or it will be messy.
5. Turn the tapes over on a plastic surface once discs are in place. Burnish the tape just around the rims to seal the edges so etching solution doesn't get behind the discs and etch the back sides. Remove air bubbles if they're on the rim edges otherwise don't worry about them if the disc edges are sealed with to the tape.
6. Place tapes in the bottom of the plastic container with discs facing up. Pour in solution gently so it doesn't splash, to about a two inch depth remembering to keep the long end out of the container and solution.
7. Place the lid of the container gently on top – just setting it down but not really closing it. This just to keep the handle from flopping into the solution and protect the solution from sloshing if someone bumps the table.
8. Let the solution work for about 45 minutes. Check the depth of the etch and see if it's deep by running a gloved fingernail over the pattern area gently. Slide it back in if you want a deeper etched pattern and start checking it every 15-20 minutes to see if you're done. Note that a warmer day or warmer room will speed up the etching process. It's usually done within an hour and a half on a 70 degree day outside in

Seattle.

9. Mix vinegar and salt together in a plastic bowl to make a neutralizing bath for later.
10. After etching is done, remove a tape from the solution, letting excess liquid drip back into the container. Place the tape onto a pad of paper towels and blot dry. Place into the neutralizing bath. Once it's in, the solution is neutralized and etching stops.
11. Clean discs with Staz On cleaner to remove the ink and polish with Weiman's metal polish, (available in variety/grocery stores)
12. Use the metal punch to make holes in the disk where you need them, either on opposite sides a little less than 1/4" from the edge or in the center, depending on your stringing design.
13. To dap discs into a cup shape: Put a bit of paper towel into largest cup of dapping block to act as a shock absorber and protect the wood block a bit. Place disc pattern side down in the center of the largest cup in dapping block. Place dapping die in the center of the disc and give 2-3 good whacks to just begin curving the disc.
14. Next slide the disc so that the rim is now in the center of the same cup and with the die give it 2-3 whacks. This will begin curving the edge. Slide the rim around some and repeat the whacking. Continue this way around until the rim is completely curved.
15. Attach flat discs together to make a bracelet using split rings. This is like putting keys onto a key ring, sliding the disc in between the two rings. Split ring pliers make this easier but aren't totally necessary. Attach two discs to one split ring then add another split ring, another disc and so on.

Note: The goal is to stretch the metal evenly to make a nice cupped shape. Each whack stretches the metal and I find if I stretch the rim, the rest will follow. If you're not going to solder two curved discs together then this is acceptable. If you're planning on soldering two cupped discs together to make a hollow bead then you only want to dap around in the center of the disc to avoid making the rim too thin.

For more information visit: www.mereditharnold.com