

Mounting and Setting Stones: Design and Make - A Comprehensive Guide



Mounting and Setting Stones (Design and Make)

by Sonia Cheadle

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The art of mounting and setting stones is a crucial aspect of jewelry making, transforming raw gemstones into exquisite pieces of wearable art. Whether you're a seasoned jeweler or a keen beginner, understanding the techniques and considerations involved in stone setting is essential for creating stunning and durable jewelry.

Types of Stone Settings

The choice of stone setting depends on the design of the jewelry, the type of stone, and the desired aesthetic effect. Here are some common types of stone settings:

- **Prong Setting:** A classic and versatile setting where prongs are bent over the gemstone to secure it in place.

- **Bezel Setting:** A metal rim or border that surrounds the stone, creating a protective and secure setting.
- **Channel Setting:** Multiple gemstones are set in a groove cut into the metal, forming a continuous row of stones.
- **Pavé Setting:** Tiny gemstones are set very close together, resembling a pavement or cobblestone pattern.
- **Flush Setting:** The stone is set in a recess or groove, creating a smooth and seamless appearance.

Materials for Setting Stones

The choice of material for setting stones influences the strength, durability, and aesthetics of the piece. Common materials used include:

- **Gold:** A popular choice for its beauty, durability, and hypoallergenic properties.
- **Silver:** A versatile and affordable material that can be easily worked and polished.
- **Platinum:** A high-end material renowned for its exceptional strength and resistance to wear.
- **Copper:** A soft and malleable material often used in combination with other metals for color and durability.
- **Stainless Steel:** A durable and corrosion-resistant material becoming increasingly popular in jewelry making.

Tools for Stone Setting

Various tools are essential for setting stones securely and accurately. These include:

- **Burin:** A small chisel-like tool used for engraving and cutting metal.
- **Graver:** A sharp tool used for carving and detailing metal.
- **Burnisher:** A smooth tool used for hardening and polishing metal.
- **Stone Setting Pliers:** Specialized pliers designed specifically for stone setting.
- **Magnifying Glass:** Essential for close-up work and precision stone setting.

Techniques for Stone Setting

The technique used for setting stones varies depending on the type of setting and the specific stone being used. Common techniques include:

- **Prong Setting:** Bending prongs over the stone to secure it.
- **Bezel Setting:** Shaping and soldering a metal bezel around the stone.
- **Channel Setting:** Cutting a groove into the metal and setting the stones flush.
- **Pavé Setting:** Using a specialized tool to create small beads on the metal to secure the stones.
- **Flush Setting:** Carving a recess or groove into the metal to accommodate the stone.

Considerations for Stone Setting

When setting stones, several factors need to be considered to ensure a secure and durable result:

- **Stone Size and Shape:** The size and shape of the stone will determine the setting technique used.
- **Stone Hardness:** Harder stones require more pressure and care during setting.
- **Jewelry Design:** The overall design of the jewelry will influence the choice of stone setting.
- **Personal Preference:** The desired aesthetic effect will dictate the type of stone setting used.

Mounting and setting stones is a rewarding and intricate aspect of jewelry making. By understanding the various techniques, tools, and materials involved, you can create stunning and durable pieces of jewelry that showcase the beauty of gemstones. Remember to experiment with different settings, materials, and stones to find the perfect combination that matches your design aesthetic and brings your creations to life.

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