

Jewelry Pickle Solutions

As part of the solder setup, metal smiths need what is referred to as a “pickle pot.” Weird term, yes, but you won’t actually need a pot of pickles on your work bench. Rather, you need a pot of solution referred to as a pickle, and this pickle solution is kept in a pot. Thus, the term, “pickle pot.”

Pickle is an acidic solution used for cleaning metal components while soldering. It can come in liquid or powder form and often needs to be diluted with water. It’s important that metal is clean before it is soldered. Pickle solutions remove oxidation and flux from metals such as silver, gold, and copper. Sparex, sulfuric acid, and nitric acid are all used for pickling solution.

Once you select your pickle solution, you’ll need a safe pot to keep it in. Remember, we are talking about something that is acidic. You also need to keep the solution warm. Therefore a few good choices for a pickle pot include a small crock pot or a coffee pot on top of a hot plate. Of course, once you decide to use equipment that you normally would eat from for your pickling needs, you will never again use these for food preparation. A good place to pick up old crock pots and coffee pots is at thrift stores and garage sales.

When you have your pickle and pot to keep it in, you will also need a pair of copper tongs for dipping the metal in and taking it out of the pickle. Copper will not contaminate the pickling solution, and it is crucial that you keep your pickle clean. If not it can contaminate your metal and thus cause problems when you solder.

Be careful when adding metal to the pickle pot. Don’t just drop it in or the pickle can splash up at you. It’s a good idea to wear gloves, goggles, and an apron to protect yourself, and gently set the metal inside the pot rather than drop it in. To discard old pickling solution, add baking soda to it and let it bubble. When the bubbling slows down, it is okay to flush it down most drains.