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CARE & MAINTENANCE

General Care & Maintenance - All Materials

Any item kept or used outside will need regular care and maintenance. The regularity of maintenance required will be dependent on your location and where the item is placed but, as a general rule, we advise that any maintenance is done annually or as and when is required. To help you keep your purchases in great condition, we have put together the following guidelines for the care of different metals and materials. To determine the exact material/s of your product, please see individual product descriptions. Advice for all metals and finishes:

- As a general rule of thumb, all exterior metals that are treated with either paint, lacquer or beeswax should have that same coating reapplied annually.
- Metal products will require additional care and attention when used in proximity of the sea. This is due to the increase of salt in the atmosphere which accelerates corrosion.
- Apply a lubricant such as WD40 to all moving parts before installation and at regular intervals.
- Do not use chemical cleaners on any metals or finished products in case they harm the finish or remove any protective coatings. This includes all household cleaners.
- Cover garden metalwork or bring it indoors during wet or adverse weather conditions.
- If you are in doubt as to the material or finish of a product on our website, please call us for further advice.

Please note that this guide predominantly refers to items that are being placed outdoors. Indoor items will not require the same level of maintenance as they are not being exposed to the outdoor elements. If you are unsure of any of our products, please do get in contact via email at sales@blackcountrymetalworks.co.uk or call us on 0121 6888 386. 1

Lets Talk...

WROUGHT IRON & STEEL



Our wrought iron and steel products are untreated unless otherwise stated and are supplied in a primer coat or base coat only. Untreated iron and steel will develop a surface rust over time if exposed to moisture. Many people find this 'aged' patina attractive and choose to leave their products untreated however, if you want your metalwork to remain in a 'like new' condition, we recommend annual maintenance in the form of a full re-paint using a metal-based paint of your choosing.

Upon installation of your product, it is advised that any cracks, chips or scratches are touched up with a metal-based paint to prevent water ingress and to further protect the area. An alternative method for protecting the original finish of the piece is to apply a universal clear lacquer. Our personal preference is to use a clear yacht varnish, which is particularly effective if you would like to preserve more intricate or detailed paint finishes. This is typically applied within the first three to six months to ensure the lacquer is applied while the original paintwork is at its best.

Heavy rainfall can cause a staining known as 'French bleed' at the fixing points or around the bolted areas. This is simply discolouring and will not affect the integrity of the metal. 'French bleed' can happen the first time a product gets wet and will normally not deteriorate any further. To remove, lightly sand the affected area with 00-grade wire wool and apply a coat of paint suitable for use on metal.

CAST IRON & BEESWAX



For painted cast iron, we recommend an annual maintenance schedule of repainting in full using a metal-based, protective paint of your choice. If left untreated, the iron will take on a beautifully aged patina relatively quickly. Due to the higher levels of maintenance required with cast iron, it is best recommended for those who prefer its aged appearance. Iron is incredibly robust however it can be prone to cracking if dropped or hit with force, so please take care when maintaining or repositioning these items.

To preserve the beeswax finish of your iron item, maintenance will be needed annually or as and when is required. Wipe the goods with a waxy cloth or a cloth lightly coated with shoe/boot polish - avoid abrasive cleaners as these will only damage the wax further. Beeswax is available to purchase from most good hardware stores. If your product develops surface rust and you wish to remove it, rub the surface with 00-grade wire wool to remove the rust and then apply a coating of beeswax suitable for outdoor use.

All of our cast iron furniture is finished and dispatched in a primer only, unless otherwise stated. For exact details, please see individual product descriptions.

COPPER METALS



Most of our copper products have been finished in a tough layer of lacquer, applied to the surface of the metal. This will initially protect the copper from the elements but, over time, the lacquer will be broken down allowing the copper surface to be slowly exposed to the outside air. The copper will then go through a slow oxidation process whereby it patinas down, gradually turning a deep and rich green colour. To find out more about this process, you can read the full guide [here](https://www.blackcountrymetalworks.co.uk/general-care-and-maintenance/).

Generally, we advise our customers to only purchase a copper sculpture or product if they are looking to achieve this colouration in the long term. However, to preserve the shiny copper finish, we advise yearly varnishing or, for coastal areas, varnishing every six months.

BRASS & POLISHED FINISHES



Left untreated, brass will lose its bright, shiny finish as it oxidises over time. Many of our brass products have been treated with a clear lacquer to help keep the polished brass look for longer. If your product has been lacquered, we recommend wiping over with a soft, dry cloth. Using abrasive cleaning products (including most household cleaners) will break down the lacquer coating, allowing the brass finish to become susceptible to the elements.

Many of our bright chrome and black finished products have also been crafted from brass. Bright chrome finishes should be treated in much the same way as polished brass is treated, but painted finishes may need an occasional touch-up using a metal-based paint. An untreated brass product should be polished regularly with a metal polish such as Brasso if you want it to remain shiny. Read our Brass Care & Maintenance Guide to find out more.

POLISHED NICKEL



Polished nickel is a beautifully delicate polished finish which ages over time as exposed to the outside elements. Polished nickel generally dulls down over time darkening the initial high mirrored shine. The rate of aging is affected by pollution, proximity to the coast and other factors such as humidity and temperature. To help maintained the polished finished, light cleaning is required to remove dirt and water marks. It is important that this is done gently and without the use of abrasive polishes or cleaning products. It is best to use a specialist nickel product in combination with a soft clean cloth. As with most metals it will show signs of aging overtime which is generally unescapable.

PEWTER FINISHES



Antique pewter finish refers to nickel plating on a solid brass base or cast-iron base which has been dulled and darkened to stimulate that of solid pewter. To clean an antique pewter finished item, simply wipe regularly with a lightly oiled non-abrasive cloth, as this will help with build-up of corrosive residue. Please note, that pewter finishes are not lacquered and we advise that once you have received your item, to lacquer with a yacht varnish annually. If living near coastal areas, this lacquer will need to be applied approx every six months.

More expensive due to its properties and its close relation to silver and platinum, solid pewter is a type of metal alloy composed predominately of tin and lead. To retain the antique finish on a solid antique pewter item, dust your item gently with a soft brush. Fingerprints and tough dirt can be removed by a light swabbing of methylated spirits, which will need to be dried using a soft cloth. If you do want the shine to remain, a simple periodic clean with an all-purpose metal polish (not silver) will suffice.

CAST & SHAPED ALUMINIUM



Aluminium requires little maintenance as it does not rust or corrode in the same way as other metals. However, if left for an extended period amount of time, particularly outdoors, grime or dirt built-up can cause the surface of the metal to stain. To avoid this, ensure that your item is cleaned regularly using a damp cloth. Mild soap and detergents can also be used but please be wary of any paint finishes, as these may not be protected against chemicals found within these cleaning products.

If you wish to keep your item in "like-new" condition, we recommend that repainting is scheduled annually, or as and when is required. We do not recommend using a metal-based paint on aluminium products or pieces. Instead, we advise that your product is sanded down using a wire brush to ensure that all loose paint and powder is fully removed. We then advise three coats of BEDEC Multi-Surface Paint (available from most good hardware stores) mixed to your desired shade. Please ensure that any green algae is removed before re-painting.

When handling aluminium products, be careful of scraping them against any sharp items as this will damage or scratch the surface of the metal.

WOODEN MATERIALS



To keep the wooden elements of your product in pristine condition, annually sand and re-varnish the wooden areas using sandpaper and a varnish designed specifically for wood materials. As with our metal products, wooden items or those containing wooden elements should not be left outside during the winter months. Ideally, they should be kept indoors or under cover for the colder months of the year to protect the integrity of the metal and wooden elements, particularly during weeks of adverse weather conditions.

LEATHER MATERIALS



Most of our leather products are designed predominantly for indoor use only. Genuine leather items that aren't being subjected to the outdoor elements will require little to no maintenance in order to keep them in 'like new' condition. As a general rule, leather should be kept away from direct sunlight or heat to prevent premature ageing and 'cracking'. To keep leather clean and supple, simply wipe with a damp cloth every few weeks, or as and when is required. We do not advise using soap or any household cleaner as this may damage the leather over time.