

How to Test Gold And Silver When Bartering

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A societal breakdown or a big disaster would revert us back to an early civilization entirely operating on the barter system, as centralized forms of currency did not exist. However, that is not to say that certain items weren't valued more than others when it came to trade. Just as it is in today's society, gold and silver have always been revered as objects of wealth.

Investing in Gold and Silver

So, should you invest your hard-earned money collecting gold and silver in preparation for a disaster situation? As in all things prepping, you should never put all of your eggs (i.e. dollars) into one basket.

Since you never really know what shape a disaster will take or when it will come, you can never have a true sense as to what to spend your time and money on. No matter what happens, both precious metals will be highly sought after in the aftermath of a disaster--maybe even more so than they are now.

But chances are that you aren't a numismatist (an expert of coins and fine metals) and don't know how to gauge the authenticity of the gold and silver you may purchase or already have.



5 Ways to Test Your Gold and Silver

Before you go worrying about the purity or value of any gold and silver you may possess or come across, you should first know the basics between which types are investible and those you should pass up.

First of all, the whole point of collecting gold and metal is to get your hands on the physical object itself. Anything you buy that's represented on a piece of paper or in a computer will be no better than paper currency when SHTF.

In essence, only buy physical metals in the form of coins, bars, ingots, or junk metal. Every prepper has their own idea as to what form of gold/silver is best to obtain for bartering purposes, but in the end the metal's purity is just as important (if not more so) than its shape or size.

Commerce today is inundated with fakes and forgeries of goods, services, and currencies alike. In all likelihood, a post SHTF world will see the emergence of many of those forgeries, especially in the form of fake gold and silver.

If you were to come upon a stranger offering you a couple of gold coins for one of your backup rifles or a few jugs of fuel, would you be able to tell if its real (and if you were making a good deal)?

Fortunately, testing precious metals is a skill you can learn if you have the right supplies and know what to look for.

1. Acid Test

One of the quickest and most accurate ways to test gold and silver is to get an acid testing kit. These acids, which come in various degrees of potency, react differently to different types and purities of metals. With of these inexpensive kits, you'll be able to test gold, silver, and platinum and discover their purity on a scale of 10-22 Karats. All you have to do is administer a drop or two of the acid onto the metal in question and it will react to display its true purity of gold/silver/platinum.

2. Ring Test (Silver)

Silver has a distinct ringing sound when it's tapped with another solid object. If you flip a silver coin in the air or tap it with another metallic object, it should emit a bell-like ringing sound that resonates for 1-2 seconds. If you try this with a pre-1964 quarter, which is made up of 90% silver, you should be able to hear the distinct sound. Alternatively, a post-1965 quarter, made primarily of copper, will give a duller, thudding sound.

3. Magnet Test

Silver is not a magnetic metal. If you use a strong, rare-earth magnet on a silver coin or bar, it should not stick. If held at a 45-degree angle, a silver bar should slowly slide down the surface of the magnet without actually sticking. If it does stick, it's probably not silver--but that is not definitive.

4. Ice Test

Of all the elements, silver has one of the highest levels of electrical conductivity and thermal conductivity. Thus, if you were to place an ice cube on a silver coin or bar, the ice should begin to melt immediately. Though ice will melt if placed on any room temperature surface, silver's thermal conductivity should cause it to melt much faster than other materials.



5. Naked Eye Test

With some practice, you may be able to distinguish real metals from the fakes just by looking at them. Many fake coins feature plated silver or gold finishes to give the appearance of authenticity.

Real silver (and gold for that matter) has a unique sheen that's neither too glossy nor too dull. A forged, plated coin may fail to fill in all the crevices of the coin's surface or be visible where the rim of the coin meets the two sides.

If the coin edge should be recessed or textured and is not--or if it should be smooth and features some texture--chances are it's a fake.

These are just a few of the more basic ways to test gold and silver for authenticity. Remember, prepping is an investment that is made up of a variety of different but related parts.

If you take as much time to learn about various forms of silver and gold as you do practicing your shooting, you will be much better off when it comes to bartering in a post-disaster world.



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