

UV Resin

A Must Keep

Product Review

Projects

by **Petra x**

UV Resin is a great way to add colour to your jewellery, or to set and trap precious keepsakes, creating wearable mementos.

It is a clear transparent gel, which can be used coloured or left clear. It can be applied to a wide range of different materials, **our favourite is of course to use it with metal clay!**

The gel is applied thinly to coat items, or thick in layers to fill cells. It is applied like a gel, and then cured (hardened) in a few minutes under a UV light to give you a hard crystal like surface.

A few ways the UV resin can be used:

- Use it to trap and embed stones, dried flowers, glitter, photos, drawings, etc.
- Fill cavities in metal and wood jewellery with colour.
- Use the resin on its own in moulds to create adorable 3D components to set in your silver .

The difference between UV resin and most other resins, is that you don't have to mix two components, and you don't need to worry about measuring up exact measurements. The UV resin doesn't smell, is non-yellowing and self-levelling.

It takes about 2-5 minutes to cure under an ultraviolet light. When cured, the resin has a hard, smooth, shiny finish. It can be filed into shape and then sanded and polished into a high shine. So all-in-all, very easy to use!

If you want to create layers of different colours, you can really see the advantage of using the UV resin. Traditional resin needs up to 24h to cure each layer before you add the next colour. With UV resin, each layer cures in about 5 minutes, and you can then add your next layer straight away.

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

Use resin in a well-ventilated room. Avoid direct contact with skin, eyes, and clothing, use gloves and protective wear. Keep away from high temperatures and open flames. Avoid working in direct sunlight or under a fluorescent light, as this can make the resin tacky and speed up the curing. Store the UV resin in a dark

place under 20° C.

UV CRYSTAL RESIN

UV resin gel can be used with or without pigment colourants. It is ready to use, and can be applied straight from the bottle (eliminating waste as you only use what you need), or with a tool. Toothpicks are handy for mixing and manipulating the resin into position.

It can be applied to silver, copper, brass, paper, plastics, wood, and many other surfaces. It really is a product which calls for experimentation! If applied to a very highly polished and smooth surface, the resin might not bond well enough - do some tests first. You can create some tooth by gently sanding the polished surface before application.

The gel cures rock hard in minutes with a UV light. The exact time varies depending on the UV lamp, how new your bulbs are, ambient temperature, how well the light can reach all of the resin, and if you add colour to the resin.

The resin is perfect for sealing an inlay of mother of pearl or abalone (like the Japanese Raden technique). It will not leave a sticky surface, and doesn't need any polishing, unless you want to reshape it.

UV RESIN COLOURS

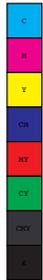
Use these to add a whole range of gorgeous colours to the UV resin. They can be mixed with each other, and can be used in varying amounts to give a wide range of tones.

I prefer to mix my colours on a small paper palette, like you use for artistic paints; you can also use baking paper or a teflon sheet. Drip out ONE drop of colour on your mixing surface, then pick up a small quantity of colour on a toothpick (or pick it up on the toothpick straight from the bottle) and transfer this to your gel. Mix carefully.

If you add the entire drop of colour to your gel it will be too much, it is better to add more in small quantities. The colours are very rich in pigment. Shake them well before use. Some colours require more mixing and blending than others.

I like to start with a thin layer of clear gel, which I cure before I add the coloured layer. The clear gel will bond better with the silver, so will create a strong bond. You can also try adding a clear layer on top of your coloured gel - this gives your colour a beautiful depth.

Note - the gel takes longer to cure if you add colour. Very deep colours (gel with A LOT of colour added) might actually not cure at all as the UV light can penetrate to access all of the resin



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needing curing.

OTHER WAYS TO ADD COLOUR

You can add colour using many different products. Pearl-Ex Powders and Alumilite Powders are some brilliant options. We've even heard of people using eyeshadows, and crushed watercolour pigments with great effects. Simply mix a little in with your resin before you apply it. You might need to adjust the curing time slightly.

You might have heard about using coloured pencils, like Berol Prisma or Karisma, to add colour to your metal. These need to be covered with a fixative to seal the colour - clear UV resin is perfect for this!

UV LIGHT BOX

The UV lamp has a 120 second switch. If you turn this on the light will switch off after two minutes. We recommend you leave this off, as you likely will want to run the lamp for longer than 2 minutes. Turn the light off between each cure to ensure the lamps last longer, and to avoid the box heating up.

In a 36W UV light box, clear gel normally cures in 3-5 minutes, in smaller boxes it can be around 5-10 minutes.

Make sure your UV light can reach all the corners of the gel. Add, and cure, in thin layers if you need. Angle your piece differently throughout the different curing sessions to help cure all of the resin. You can make a holder for your jewellery using a bit of polymer clay.

The UV bulbs need changing regularly to keep them efficient.

Some UV lamps create a lot of heat when they are used. This can slow down the curing. If your piece still feels tacky after about 5 minutes of curing, turn the light off, leave the piece in a cool spot, and then re-cure once the light has cooled down.

Make sure your UV light reaches all the corners of the gel - add, and cure, in thin layers, ideally not thicker than approx. 2mm at a time. Remember it is the light which hardens your resin, so if the light can't reach everywhere, the resin won't harden. Angle your piece differently throughout the different curing sessions to help cure all of the resin.

Note - UV light is harmful to your skin and your eyes. Do not look into the light when it is switched on and avoid exposing skin to the light.

SAMPLES OF UV RESIN JEWELLERY

To create a colour gradient, you add the resin in several stages, starting with the strongest colour, gradually using less colour and more resin, until you have a final clear layer. Create the silver frame first and finish it with a polish. Carefully cover the sides of the frame with clear sellotape, to create a dam which you will then fill with resin. Burnish the tape onto the silver to ensure the resin won't leak out. Make sure there are no marks or finger prints on the tape before you set it, as this will leave marks in the resin. Once the dam is in place, add your resin in layers, and cure each layer as you go. Let sit for 5 minutes to cool off after the final curing, then carefully remove the tape. If the tape has left a sticky residue, remove this with rubbing alcohol.

The same technique can be used to give a plique-a-jour or stained glass effect - so the resin is applied to cells with no backing, which lets light shine through it. To do this, simply create cut-outs in your metal, once finished and polished, apply sellotape to the back of the piece and fill the cut-outs with resin.

The flower earrings here have had two or three thin layers of different colours, from bright yellow to red, which creates a lovely transition of colour. In the middle, the resin has been used to trap some red microbeads.

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