

HOW TO ANTIQUE AN ALUMINUM MIRROR

ABOUT ALUMINUM MIRRORS

Some commercial mirrors – often those imported from China and India – are “silvered” with aluminum instead of silver. The glass is passed through a high heat vacuum chamber where the aluminum is heated until it evaporates onto the glass.

Aluminum does not react to the same chemicals that you use to “antique” a silver mirror, but we have developed some techniques you can use to make these mirrors into your own artistic creations.

IS THIS MIRROR SILVER OR ALUMINUM?

The first clue is to scrape off a small area of backing paint. If the metal underneath looks gold or light copper, you have a silver mirror. If it looks bright silver, you probably have an aluminum mirror.

The only sure way to tell is to apply either Silver Remover or Aluminum Remover to the bare metal. Silver Remover does not dissolve aluminum and Aluminum Remover does not dissolve silver.

SAFETY

- **WEAR GLOVES** - Aluminum Remover will attack your skin and make it feel soapy. *This is not a good sign.* Wear rubber or latex gloves and wash your hands well after using these chemicals. Use hand lotion after washing.
- **Storage** - Store the chemicals in a cool, dark place away from children and pets and curious visitors.

STEP 1 – APPLY THE MULTI-STRIP



Apply a heavy layer of Multi-Strip paint remover to the back of the mirror using the plastic scraper.

Allow time for the Multi-Strip to work. Depending on the paint, it can take anywhere from 15 minutes to several hours for the paint to lift up. Multi-Strip works faster in a warm damp environment.

STEP 2 – SCRAPE OFF THE LOOSE PAINT



Use your plastic paint scraper to remove the dissolved backing paint. Metal scrapers and razor blades will scratch the mirror.

If you cannot easily push the paint off the mirror, dab the Multi-Strip back on and give it more time to work.

The paint may be any color underneath depending on the mirror manufacturer.

STEP 3 – WASH OFF THE MULTI-STRIP



Use a cotton ball and water to wash off the last of the paint stripper. The surface must be clean for the antiquing process to work.

Multi-Strip Paint Remover is non-toxic and bio-degradable. It is safe to put used Multi-Strip into the trash.

Once the mirror is clean, you can antique it using one or more of the techniques below. These techniques are just the basics – we're sure you will invent techniques of your own.

TECHNIQUE #1



1. Pour a little Aluminum Remover into a plastic measuring cup. Do not use a paper cup.
2. Put on rubber gloves. Aluminum Remover is damaging to your skin.
3. Dip an old toothbrush into the Remover and use your thumb to rub the bristles and spatter it onto the mirror.
4. Wait about 3 minutes.
5. Rinse the mirror well with distilled water.

TECHNIQUE #2



1. Measure out some Aluminum Remover into a plastic measuring cup. Do not use a paper cup.
2. Add an equal amount of water.
3. Use our misting bottle to mist the mix over the mirror.
4. Wait about 2 minutes.
5. Rinse the mirror well with distilled water.

TECHNIQUE #3



1. Rinse the mirror with water.
2. Dip a Q-tip into the Aluminum Remover and drag it across the wet surface of the mirror.
3. Rinse the mirror just as soon as the lines begin to show – you do not want to wipe off the entire mirror!

TECHNIQUE #4



1. Dampen a cotton ball with water.
2. Dip it into a jar of Extra-Fine Pumice.
3. Buff the mirror surface to thin the mirror coating.

This is the easiest technique to control. Use it by itself or after you have used our other techniques.

STEP 4 – PAINT THE MIRROR



The final step is to paint the back of the mirror to protect it.

Aluminum is much less reactive than silver so you can use any color paint you like. The color will show through where you have distressed or removed the reflective aluminum.

STAND BACK AND ADMIRE YOUR CREATION



The process is simple but the result will always be unique.

Practice on small mirrors to develop a range of techniques before you attempt your masterpiece. No one else will have a mirror just like yours!

ANGEL GILDING
MIRRORING SUPPLIES & TECHNIQUES