

Gold

Gold won't tarnish, rust, or corrode, and though it's very strong, it is also the most malleable of all metals.

Purity

Pure gold is too soft to withstand the stresses of every-day wear, so it is alloyed with a mixture of metals like silver, copper, nickel, and zinc to give it strength and durability. Karatage, noted by a number followed by "k" indicates purity, or how much of the metal in a piece of jewelry is gold. Karatage is expressed in 24ths, making 24k gold 100% gold.

Color

The color of gold is determined by two factors:

1. The type of metal alloys included in it
2. The percentage of each metal alloy

24 karat = 100% gold

Too soft for jewelry

22 karat = 91.7% gold

Very soft – not recommended for jewelry

18 karat = 75.0% gold

Recommended for fine jewelry

14 karat = 58.3% gold

Recommended for jewelry

12 karat = 50.0% gold

Not acceptable for jewelry

1. 10 karat = 41.7% gold

The legal karat limit considered as real gold in the United States

Gold, element Au, was one of the first known metals. The gold standard defines the world's currency system, whereby money represents a value in gold.

Yellow Gold

In jewelry at Blue Nile, you'll find 18k and 14k yellow gold. 18k gold contains more precious metal than 14k gold. It is composed of 75% gold, which is alloyed with other metals to make it strong enough to withstand every-day wear. Because 14k gold is composed of only 58.3% gold, and 41.7% other metals that give it strength, its gold color is not as rich as 18k gold. 14k gold is most commonly found in cases where strength is most important, like in earring backs and bracelet clasps.

White Gold

Because 18k white gold is 75% gold, and 14k white gold is 58.3% gold, jewelry made from these metals has a slight yellow color. To enhance the whiteness, almost all white gold is plated with rhodium, a shiny, white metal which is extremely hard. Depending on the amount of wear to a piece of jewelry, over time this rhodium plating may wear off, revealing the original metal color. Re-plating is a simple process that can be done to restore your jewelry's whiteness if needed.

Rose Gold

Rose gold gets its color from a larger proportion of copper in the metal alloy. This gives the gold a beautiful pink color.

Care

Keep your gold jewelry away from harsh chemicals such as chlorine and cleaning fluids. This will reduce daily abrasions and prolong gold's luster. To clean gold jewelry, use a solution of warm water and detergent-free soap and wash gold gently with a soft-bristled brush (a dull tooth brush works well). To protect your gold you need to store them in separate soft cloth bags, or original boxes to protect them from the exposure to harsh daily elements.

Pricing

The price of gold jewelry is dependent upon the purity of the gold used or karat weight, as well as the design and construction of the piece of jewelry.