

## Basic set up for silver jewellery making

### Getting started

So now you've picked up the silver jewellery making bug? Eager to get started and begin working on some lovely pieces?

It is surprisingly economic to get set up with the basics to begin with. Whilst it is great to have an extensive workshop with thousands of pounds worth of equipment, it is possible to get started with a few hundred pounds of investment and a bit of space (and a kitchen table will do for starting out).

### Some things to think about before setting up

#### 1. Workspace?

- It can be easy to get carried away and think that you'll need a dedicated workspace.
- These days some very useful (and portable) tools are available that make setting up for basic silver jewellery making simple.
- Ideally if you have a spare table/surface that you can bolt on a benchpeg/anvil with about a square metre of space, you should be able to get going.
- As you will be working with potentially hazardous materials ventilation and easy access to running water are key safety considerations.
- Posture is also important, so make sure you have a good adjustable chair, where possible and that your bench peg is roughly at shoulder height (you can always raise the level of a table with a few trusty bricks/phone directories)

#### 2. The essentials and costs

You will most likely at some time or other be given all sorts of advice on essential tools by different jewellers and tutors and in books/online. To be honest, as with anything with jewellery making and design, *there are no hard and fast rules*. That said, you might like to take into account the following:

- There is a fine balance between cheapness/accessibility or expense/durability (see saw/files/hammers section). If you can afford better quality this will pay for itself in the long run, as the tools will last longer and your work will be better with good quality tools.
- Buying lovely tools can be highly addictive and can turn into a lifelong habit, it can become an expensive habit but remember you don't need everything at once (*note to self – take this advice seriously!!*)
- It pays to look around and seek out deals, as most major suppliers are always having promotions and Ebay is increasingly becoming a better source for good quality cheaper tools.

### Tool Recommendations

To be able to start in earnest with silver jewellery to at least an accomplished level of making you need to consider the following list as a likely minimum, either as a home workshop/studio set up or to use in a rented/borrowed/begged-for space:

Forming, fabrication and general workstation	Pliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half round (best size is 130mm)</li> <li>• Round nose (best size is 130mm)</li> <li>• Flat nose (best size is 130mm)</li> <li>• Parallel (Maun good make)</li> </ul> (Klein from Sutton tools a good make)
	Hammers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rawhide/plastic Mallet, 1 ½ or 2 inch (Thor)</li> <li>• Planishing hammer (Cookson’s Value range)</li> <li>• Ball-peen hammer (Cookson’s Value range)</li> </ul>
	Files	Files (Vallorbe the best cut and most hard wearing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat file, 6”/15cm, cut 2</li> <li>• Half round file, 6”/15cm, cut 2</li> <li>• Three square file, 6”/15cm, cut 2</li> <li>• Wooden File Handles</li> </ul> Needle files Vallorbe the best cut and most hard wearing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pillar</li> <li>• Half round</li> <li>• Three square</li> <li>• Round</li> </ul>
	Sawing/piercing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustable Saw Frame 4" Deep</li> <li>• 2/0 saw blades (Vallorbe if possible)</li> <li>• Beeswax block</li> </ul>
	Workstation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeweller’s bench peg with anvil plate</li> <li>• G clamp (to secure any loose tools to table)</li> </ul>
Finishing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emery sticks, various grits</li> <li>• 00 Wire wool</li> <li>• Wet and dry paper sheets – 240, 400, 600 and 1000</li> </ul>
Soldering		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand torch (Proxxon is a good starting point)</li> <li>• Hard, medium, easy solder strip</li> <li>• Flux (Easy-flo for medium, Auroflux or borax, depending on personal soldering “style”)</li> <li>• Soldering Sheet 300x300x9mm Asbestos Substitute</li> <li>• Soldering Block 150x100x25mm Asbestos Substitute</li> <li>• Soldering pick</li> <li>• Reverse Action Tweezers, Straight And Curved Tip</li> </ul>

**Where to buy<sup>1</sup>:**

<p><b>Cooksongold</b> www.cooksongold.com 59-83 Vittoria Street, Birmingham, B1 3NZ</p>	<p>The best known jewellery supplier in the UK. A good starting point for buying silver and gold bullion supplies. Tools are generally a bit more expensive at Cookson than other suppliers.</p>
<p><b>HS Walsh</b> www.hswalsh.com Hunter House, Biggin Hill Airport, Churchill Way, Biggin Hill, Kent. TN16 3BN</p>	<p>A very extensive catalogue of tools and sundries for all aspects of jewellery making. If H S Walsh don't have it, it probably isn't available anywhere else.....</p>
<p><b>Sutton Tools</b> www.suttontools.co.uk 91 Vittoria Street, Birmingham B1 3NU</p>	<p>Worth checking out for tools and sundries as often prices are significantly better than Cookson</p>
<p><b>Palmer Metals</b> www.palmermetals.co.uk 401 Broad Lane, Coventry, CV5 7AY</p>	<p>Less known than other suppliers but can have some good deals on sundries such as safety pickle</p>
<p><b>Bellore Rashbel</b> <a href="http://www.rashbel.co.uk/">http://www.rashbel.co.uk/</a> 39 Greville Street, London, EC1N 8PJ</p>	<p>Some of the best prices for silver bullion (wire, sheet and tube). Have some good special sales on tools</p>

<p>Soldering torch set up</p>	<p>If you wish to a set up a more efficient and professional soldering/brazing station, you may like to consider some of the following options:</p> <p>Option 1: Surface mix propane torch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sievert Professional Jeweller's Torch Kit</li> <li>- Sievert ergonomic Sievert Pro 86 torch handle,</li> <li>- fixed 2 bar regulator for propane gas,</li> <li>- two metre hose with threaded fittings at each end,</li> <li>- SV8842 needle point burner and a neck tube to fit the burner</li> <li>- 3-6kg tank of propane</li> <li>- (optional) flashback arrestor</li> </ul> <p>Option 2: Precision oxygen/propane torch set up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smith Little Torch Kit Oxy Gas Kit</li> <li>- Smith Little Torch with size 3-6 tips</li> <li>- Oxygen concentrator (Tuffnel Glass)</li> <li>- 3-6kg tank of propane</li> <li>- flashback arrestor</li> <li>- fixed 2 bar regulator for propane gas,</li> </ul> <p>For both torch set ups, it is advisable to have on hand a fire extinguisher, a carbon monoxide detector and ventilation.</p>
-------------------------------	---

<sup>1</sup> This list is by no means exhaustive and it does pay to shop around and see if better offers are available