

Hello Everyone

I want to start this weeks newsletter off with an apology. You may have noticed that last week we didn't send off a newsletter. We had some major computer problems last week that took us a few days to fix. By the time that we had everything back in order it was Tuesday. So we had to decide whether we should send something out or not. We decided that it would be best to wait until today and then send something out. I hope that you understand and please forgive us.

Now...On to the newsletter

This week I wanted to focus on Rings. In particular, shaping the ring shank.

If you take a look at your fingers you'll notice something very interesting. Your fingers aren't round, they're oval. This is something that we need to keep in mind when we're shaping ring shanks. Since all ring mandrels are round (this allows for size standardization) it may be necessary to elongate the ring shank to get a better fit. It's important that your finished ring is comfortable to the wearer.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you are shaping rings-

1. To get the best shape begin shaping the ring shank a few sizes smaller than the finished size. This allows you to get a tighter curve on the ring. So if you are making a size 7 ring, start shaping the ring shank at a size 5 or 6. Once you have achieved a nice tight shape move the ring up to the finished size.
2. Use a raw hide mallet to tap around the ring shank while it's on your ring mandrel. Tapping around the ring shank helps get a nice smooth shank. It will also help you remove small bumps that may have formed on the wire.
3. Invest in a steel ring mandrel. They aren't all that expensive, I found one reasonably priced on eBay and have been using it for years. Wooden mandrels are nice to have around for sizing, but a nice metal ring mandrel allows you to get a little more aggressive when smacking the ring shank with a hammer or mallet. Being a little aggressive with the ring shank will help you get a nice shape.
4. Play around with a chasing hammer. If you use round wire to make your ring shanks you can use a chasing hammer to flatten the wire slightly. This can give you a smoother look to the ring. A good design to use this on is the Solitaire ring that we have available on our site (<http://www.macjewels.com/tutorials.htm>).

These are only a few tips that I think are helpful in shaping ring shanks. If you have a suggestion that you would like to share with everyone, just email it to jim.mcintosh@macjewels.com. If we add your suggestion to the newsletter we'll give you full credit, so please add your website address to your email so we can pass that

along in our newsletter. In the coming weeks we will explore the subject of ring shanks more...so stay tuned!

Coming Soon

I have received a lot of suggestions on subjects that you would like me to discuss in our newsletter. One subject that I thought was interesting is 'how to write tutorials'. We plan to write a series of articles on this in the coming weeks.

If you have a subject that you would like us to cover, please let us know by emailing me at jim.mcintosh@macjewels.com.

Until next week....Remember - Practice, Practice, Practice!

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