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## Stabilizing Stones – or – As the Chrysocolla Crumbles

This is adapted from a forum posting originally found here:

<http://www.gemcutters.org/LDA/StabilizingTurqOpal.htm>

and is offered as a convenience to club members without any guarantee of success or suitability to your purposes.

Please read, understand, and respect all safety information provided with any materials mentioned in this article.

### Question:

I've noticed the term "stabilized" used with respect to turquoise and certain opals, and I assume this is a process of curing flaws in a stone so as to be able to shape and polish it without getting a lot of cracks and pits.

What are the commonly used stabilization processes?

-- bsmith@infodial.net

### One response to the question is as follows:

Greetings, Friends:

The most common method I'm aware of is using a 3-1-1 (two part) epoxy and acetone mixture.

### Materials needed:

1. Epoxy 330. Two parts, one hardener, one resin.
  - a. Water Clear Epoxy - example here: <http://tinyurl.com/lxp94dk>
2. Acetone: One Pint. Available in the paint supplies section of Lowes or Home Depot
3. Chemically non-reactive and tightly-sealable container
  - a. Examples:

- i. Empty paint can from Lowes or Home Depot
- ii. Glass jar with tight fitting lid (but no plastic seal - acetone melts most plastic)

Procedure:

1. Mix both tubes into Acetone *\*\*very thoroughly\*\**.
2. Place stones into mixture and seal tightly.
3. Allow stones to steep for 7-10 days.
4. Swirl brew around about every other day.
5. Remove stones and let them set for a minimum of one week prior to further activities. Good ventilation is exceedingly important! Outdoors if the climate allows.
6. Place extracted stones on a surface that no one's going to mind if it gets a little crudded up (wife's china - DON'T DO IT!).
7. Keep the mixture sealed when not in use and in an area that's cooler than my back yard during the month of July. If sealed tightly, it will last quite a long time.
8. Places NOT to keep it:
  - a. Near the water heater or other sources of heat that could emit either sparks or open flames (acetone is very combustable).
  - b. Where the children can find it, if you're still blessed to have them in the house. "Daddy! Look at these beautiful blue rocks I found in this jar!", goo dripping from their fingers, on the wife's carpet, trailed through the kitchen. Trust me, no one's going to be happy at this point!

-- Vincent, Vybt1@aol.com

[Edited for length and clarity]

