

## Lapidary Polishing Compounds

For economy dedicate a buff, lap pan to a particular polish and simply recharge with fresh polish as required to maintain effectiveness.

- **CERIUM OXIDE** - the best gemstone-polishing compound for most uses. It's best with opal, agate, quartz, and obsidian. Not as effective with soft material or stones that tend to undercut.
- **MICRON ALUMINA** - a 5-micron polishing powder developed for computer disks. It is the best polish for seashells, pretty good for soft stones and excellent as a pre-polish in vibratory tumblers and laps - not rotary tumblers.
- **ALUMINUM OXIDE, MAP** - preferred by many to Linde A, this is a slightly faster and more economical rare earth polish that we call Miracle Atomic Polish.
- **TIN OXIDE** - a long time favorite. Use on leather for polishing turquoise and all soft stones.
- **ZIRCONIUM OXIDE** - a rare earth polish that is especially good for tumblers and laps. It's the most economical effective polishing media. White and will not discolor gemstones.'
- **LINDE "A"** - a tremendous favorite with gem cutters whether faceting or polishing cabs. Relatively expensive, you should consider polishing the stone then giving it a quick hit with Linde A to attain a super polish. It is available as powder to mix with water or an emulsified cream with the consistency of hand lotion that does not separate in solution.
- **OXALIC ACID** - used for polishing carbonate type onyx when mixed with another polish such as Tin Oxide. In a strong solution with water, it is used to clean iron stains from specimens, ie. Quartz. Mix with hot tap water by stirring in oxalic crystals until the water is saturated and will not dissolve any more. Crystals forming along the sides of the container indicate a saturated solution and should they disappear, you need to add more. **WARNING:** while this is a relatively mild acid all precautions must be taken to keep it out of eye, mouth, etc.

via Golden Spike News 4/01 via Owyhee Gem, 8/01

**Editor's note:** Recent discussions on one of the internet rock lists centered around using diatomaceous earth (silica) such as is used in pool filters for a polishing compound. I've tested it and while, by itself, I only came up with so-so results, adding a small amount of a regular polishing compound produced great results. It makes a great extender. I used about \$1 of polish/diatomaceous earth in place of \$3-4 of polish alone. 25 lbs was something like \$10. About a pound of this along with an ounce or so of synthetic tin oxide produced a great polish. That was in a 25 lb vibratory tumbler. The material has a very large volume per pound while dry so 25 lbs is a large box.

Also, the above list is far from complete but is a good starting point of fairly common polishes.

Via The Rockcollector 9/01