

Gluing Bails

There have been so many complaints about glued on jewelry bails coming off that many artisans have stopped using bails entirely. Although a mechanical attachment will always be more reliable than anything glued on, it is possible to glue metal bails onto glass in a way they can be trusted to stay on.

1. Clean the metal where it is to contact with the glass. All processed metal has a slightly oily film on the surface. Plus, the bails have been handled and probably picked up skin oil. Wash with alcohol or with soap and water.

2. Clean the glass where it is to contact with the metal. You may have applied skin oil while handling. Thoroughly clean with alcohol or soap and water. An efficient way to clean bails and glass is to swish them around in a bowl of hot soapy water, rinse off, and leave on a towel to air dry. Once dry, take care to not touch them where they are to be glued.

2. Sand the metal and the glass where it will be contacted. Lightly sand with coarse sandpaper or fine tooth file to slightly roughen where the glass and metal is to be bonded together.

3. Use the right glue. Use a 2 part epoxy. NOT the kind with twin tubes that you push a plunger to push out from both tubes together. No matter how carefully you try, it's pretty much impossible to get them to dispense even amounts. Also, do NOT use 5 minute epoxy. Use the kind that takes 24 hours to set.

4. Mix carefully. Squeeze out even amounts of resin and hardener onto a scrap of glass or piece of paper. Thoroughly mix them together. Thoroughly.

5. Apply carefully. A toothpick makes a good applicator to help avoid applying too much. How much to apply will depend on the size of the bail you're using. If you apply too much, it'll squeeze out from under the bail and look messy. For a small bail, you'll probably want a dollop about the size of a grain of rice. For a larger bail, a pile the size of a peppercorn.

6. Leave to set. Don't touch for at least 24 hours.