

# Nickel care

**Polished Nickel is a reactive metal, not a sealed finish like Chrome. It tarnishes.**

The "milky" haze you see is oxidation, and ammonia based cleaners accelerate it.

ELECTROPLATED ALLOY (WARM TONE) ·

MANUFACTURER-COMPLIANT (WATERSTONE/ROHL) · 4 MIN READ

# How to Clean Polished Nickel: Science-Backed Protocol

Polished nickel is a living finish that tarnishes. It requires tarnish management, not just cleaning.

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## Polished Nickel

TARNISH CONTROL AND HAZE PREVENTION

Polished nickel is plated nickel over brass. Unlike Chrome, it does not have a clear topcoat, making it a living finish that reacts with the air.

Prohibited methods include Ammonia-Based Glass Cleaner\*, bleach, and vinegar soaks. This protocol focuses on removing the "milky" oxidation haze without scratching the soft plating.

## **The science: why nickel turns "milky"**

### **The "Living" Plating**

Nickel is a reactive metal with golden undertones. It oxidizes when exposed to air and humidity, creating a white, milky haze over time.

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### **Surface sensitivity**

Abrasive sponges that are safe on stainless steel will leave swirl marks on Nickel.

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### **The Ammonia Risk**

Ammonia (found in glass cleaners) attacks the plating bond on all finishes. On Chrome, ammonia weakens the bond and causes peeling. On Nickel, ammonia causes immediate pitting and accelerates the "milky" tarnish.

## Part 1: Myth vs. Science

**Myth #1: It is just like Chrome, so use glass cleaner.**

**Science: False.** Ammonia destroys both finishes. On Chrome, ammonia weakens the bond and causes peeling. On Nickel, ammonia causes immediate pitting and accelerates the "milky" tarnish.

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**Myth #2: Soak water spots in vinegar.**

**Science: False.** While some manufacturers allow a brief wipe with diluted acetic acid, soaking nickel in acid risks dezincification of the brass underneath if the plating is thin.

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**Myth #3: Scrub the haze with a melamine sponge.**

**Science: False.** The haze is chemical tarnish, not dirt. Melamine Foam Sponge\* is a micro-abrasive that acts like ultra-fine sandpaper, dulling the mirror finish.

## Part 2: The Clean Era Protocol

### Step A: The daily maintenance

**Agent:** pH-Neutral Anionic Surfactant (mild dish soap) and warm water.

**Method:** Wipe gently with a microfiber cloth.

**Critical:** Dry immediately. Nickel holds onto water spots, which can become permanent corrosion points.

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### Step B: The tarnish removal (the "Milky" Fix)

**Agent:** Deoxidizing Metal Polish\* (non-abrasive).

**Frequency:** Every 6-12 months, or when the finish looks foggy.

**Method:** Apply a pea-sized amount to a cloth. Rub gently until the black oxide lifts onto the cloth. Buff to a shine.

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### Step C: The wax shield

**Agent:** Micro-Crystalline Wax\* or high-grade carnauba wax.

**Why:** Wax seals the nickel from the air, delaying the return of the milky tarnish.

## Summary for your home

#### NEVER USE

Ammonia-Based Glass Cleaner\*, bleach, vinegar soaks, or Melamine Foam Sponge\*.

#### ALWAYS USE

Mild soap, immediate drying, and Deoxidizing Metal Polish\* for tarnish.

#### GOLDEN RULE

If it looks milky, it needs polish, not scrubbing.

## **Manufacturer verification data**

### **Waterstone**

Explicitly recommends non-abrasive polishing pastes for removing "cloudy" tarnish. Warns against all ammonia and acid-based cleaners.

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### **Newport Brass**

States that Polished Nickel (Finish 15) has "No Protective Coating" and is designed to oxidize. Recommends periodic waxing to manage it.

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### **Rohl**

Advises drying after every use to prevent spotting. Recommends Micro-Crystalline Wax\* to protect the "living" surface.

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### **Clean Era note**

We treat Polished Nickel as a "Silver" equivalent. It needs occasional polishing, or it will look dull.

## FAQ

### Why does my faucet look cloudy?

That is natural oxidation (tarnish). Use a Deoxidizing Metal Polish\* to remove the haze and restore the shine.

### Can I use glass cleaner?

No. Most glass cleaners contain ammonia, which can damage the plating bond.

### Is Polished Nickel the same as Chrome?

No. Nickel has a warm, golden tone and tarnishes. Chrome is blue-cool and does not tarnish.

## Clean Era standard

Clean Era uses manufacturer-compliant, science-backed protocols for living finishes.

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- \* Ammonia-Based Glass Cleaner: The active ingredient that damages plating is Ammonia (Ammonium Hydroxide).
- \* Melamine Foam Sponge: The material is Melamine Foam, which acts as a micro-abrasive (essentially ultra-fine sandpaper).
- \* Deoxidizing Metal Polish: These are pastes containing fine abrasives (often Aluminum Oxide) and chemical deoxidizers that remove tarnish without stripping plating.
- \* Micro-Crystalline Wax: A refined petroleum-based wax that has a higher melting point and tighter seal than natural waxes.
- \* pH-Neutral Anionic Surfactant: "Anionic surfactant" is the chemical term for soap that lifts grease (oil) without being acidic or alkaline.