If you're like me, you realize the value of gold and silver. In these troubling economic times, the consistency of a commodity can feel more valuable than the security of some bank accounts. Holding silver and gold, and knowing when to sell it to an online metal broker, can be a great way to manipulate your cash flow and to make you some quick money, as well.

But how do you know you really have silver at home? Unless you're an advanced silver owner who knows what quality silver is, and how pure the silver you're buying is, you might not have the first clue about how to test for silver purity at home. Luckily, this article will help explain the purity of your silver, and how you can confirm that what you're holding isn't just another gray metal.

## Markings

The most obvious way to find out if silver is pure – and the degree to which it is pure – is to check markings on your silver jewelry.

Markings traditionally measure the percentage of silver present in the metal mixture you own. For example, a metal that is "975 silver is actually 97.5%silver . If it says "Sterling .925," likewise, it wouldbe 92.5% silver. These markings should be clear and obvious for your larger silver possessions, and if not, try another purity test before your alarms go off.

On sterling silver, which is defined as silver that is above 92.5% silver in the mixture, you shouldn't be surprised to find a clear "sterling" marking – this is especially true in sterling silverware. When you have sterling silver, you can determine the minimum amount of silver present in the metal, and you have a good idea about its relatively high amount of purity.

If you're looking with your naked eye, you might want to consider buying a magnifying glass to find these markings, as they sometimes can be printed in small fonts.

## Electronic Testers

If you feel like taking the guesswork out of the equation, you might consider an electronic tester. Electronic testers are usually crafted to handle precious metals like gold and silver and should be able to quickly help you discern what kind of purity you're working with.

Be careful that you're not buying an electronic tester from a sketchy source – you want to make sure that even what you use to confirm purity is on the up-and-up.

The fortunate thing about electronic testers, however, is that it should be able to remove any of your doubts quickly and easily. It might also come in handy if you plan on working with a lot of silver and don't have a lot of time to do hand-inspection on each piece of silver you come across. Again, do your own research to dig up the best kind of electronic tester for you.

## Density Tests

One of the most consistent ways to spot pure silver is to measure it's density – its weight divided by its volume. The obvious point is that the purer your silver is, the closer it will be to the common density of silver. If you're going to find out the density of your silver, however, you're going to want