

## Answers to Your Questions About Watch Repair

### 1. “Why Does a Mechanical Watch Require Service?”

A typical mechanical watch contains more than 100 parts. Twenty of these parts are in constant motion. Oil is used in a watch, just as it is used in your car’s engine, to keep the parts moving smoothly and to prevent undue wear. The amount of oil used to lubricate a watch is so minute that it will fit on the head of a pin. This oil, in time will evaporate, and leave a coagulated residue, which can lead to the jamming of the gears. Loss of oil also causes increased friction, and wear of metal parts, resulting in a progressive decline in performance and accuracy. Cleaning and oiling a watch involves the removal of the movement from the case, the complete elimination of all old oil, inspection and replacement of worn parts, and the re-oiling of at least fifteen separate locations. Once completed, the watch must be retimed, often requiring realignment of wheels and adjustment to the balance staff.



### 2. “I Wore My Watch for 10 Years, and Now That It’s Been Cleaned, It’s Losing Two Minutes a Day – What Happened?”

Ideally, a mechanical watch should be cleaned and oiled once every three to five years. Beyond this, the oil begins to evaporate, and parts begin to wear. A watch may continue to run after the oil has evaporated, but the longer it runs without oil, the greater resulting loss in performance will inevitable be. The accuracy of a mechanical watch is a function of its original quality, construction, its care, regular service, and its age. Even with the best quality construction and regular service, the life expectancy of a typical ladies mechanical watch is 15 to 25 years, and a typical man’s mechanical watch at 20 to 50 years.

### 3. “What Kind of Performance Can I Expect From My Watch Now That it Has Been Serviced?”

Accuracy of watches varies according to the size of the movement (larger, more accurate; smaller, less accurate), quality of the movement, service record, and age of the movement. Many older mechanical watches require weekly or daily resetting to achieve

reliability. It is important to set a watch by the same clock every day.

With self-winding mechanical watches, one further factor in accuracy is the age of the owner. As a person grows older and becomes less active, it may be necessary to manually wind the watch daily, if there is not sufficient motion during the day to completely wind the watch.

4. “How Can My Watch Be Rusted, Just Two Weeks After it was Cleaned and Oiled?”

All watches are more susceptible to the penetration of water into the case as they get older. The most likely entry point is at the stem (the shaft attached to the winding mechanism). Both the stem and its opening wear with time and the opening may become a little wider with each passing year. Dust and coagulated oil residue may keep moisture out as they build up, leaving the watch particularly vulnerable just after the watch has been cleaned and oiled.

The process of cleaning a watch involves no water, and the chemicals used cannot cause rust. Exposure to water in a rain shower, perspiration, or while washing dishes can



cause entry of water, resulting in rust.

Unless a watch is certified as water resistant to a specific depth and has been pressure tested, it is not water resistant. If your watch stops after exposure to water or moisture and you suspect rust, bring it to us at Swiss Time immediately for repairs.

5. “I’ve Just Stated Wearing My Father’s Watch Which has Been in a Drawer for Ten Years... Could it Need to Be Cleaned and Oiled?”

The tiny amount of oil used to lubricate a watch will evaporate from an unused watch even more quickly than from a watch which is in regular use. The old evaporated oil becomes coagulated, creating a gummy residue, inhibiting the proper function of the watch. Cleaning and oiling the movement is definitely recommended before wearing a watch which has been stored away.

6. “I Love My Mechanical Watch, But Maybe I Should Just Buy a \$100 Quartz Watch, Instead of Servicing Mine...”  
It is true that by 1975, mechanical watches had just about disappeared from jewelry stores in the US,

replaced by the technology of quartz watch movements. Quartz watches have the advantage of requiring only periodic battery changes, but the disadvantage of much more costly repairs when they are necessary. Some people prefer the accuracy of a quartz movement, on time within a few minutes per month, while other prefer the special charm of a mechanical watch and its reassuring tick, tick, tick as it measures the time. Currently, we have seen a rise in consumer demand for reconditioned mechanical watches, and since the late 80's watch companies have been bringing back special limited edition mechanical watches because of the strong demand.

Watch repair is a specialized and highly technical craft. In today's world it is becoming rare, and thus prices are rising. If you have a mechanical watch that you enjoy, take advantage of us at Swiss Time with our trained staff and Master watchmaker directly from Switzerland.

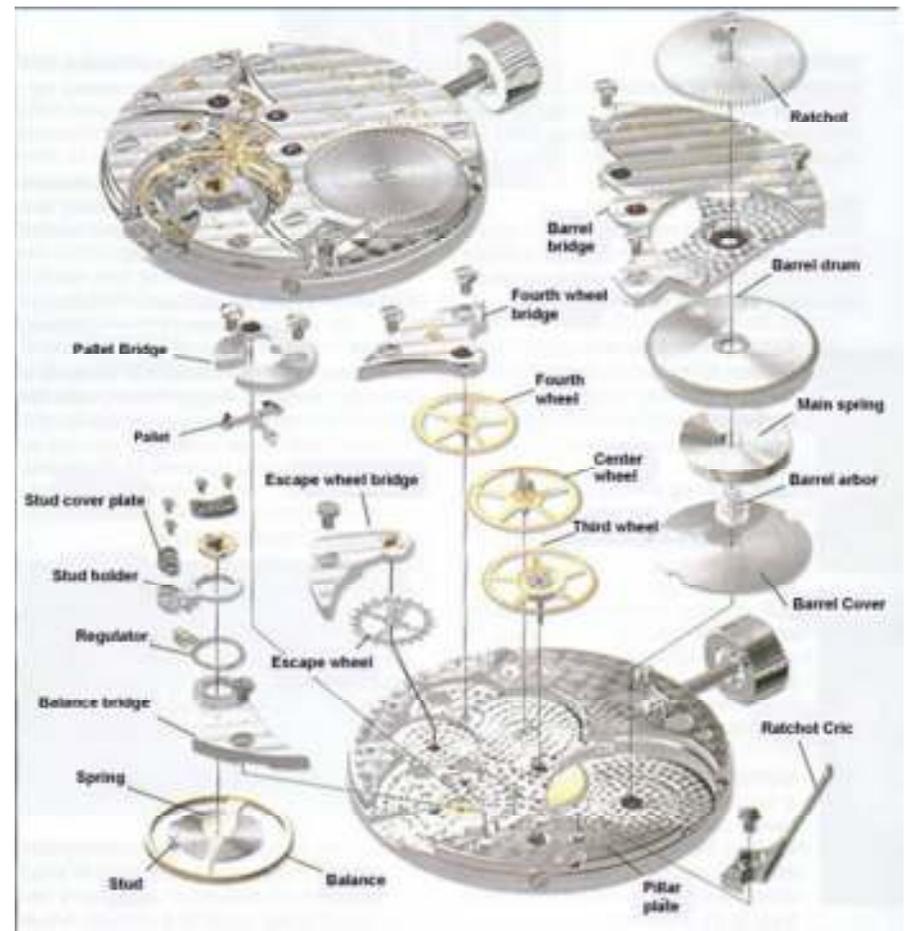
#### 7. "Why Does Fine Watch Repair Cost So Much?"

The repair and restoration of fine watches requires skilled craftsmanship, involving years of study and training. Watch repair is meticulous, time-consuming work, and today includes both

traditional and modern highly sophisticated and expensive testing equipment.

#### 8. "It Took Three Months to Repair My Watch the Last Time, Why So Long?"

Most older watches require part replacement as part of servicing, which involves a parts search. There are literally millions of different parts for the thousands and thousands of different watches made here in the US and abroad. To locate the necessary part sometimes requires us the patience of a saint and the determination of a detective.



Our watchmaker searched for 10 years for a part for a very vintage watch, but he found it! The diagnosis of necessary parts and repairs, along with the cleaning, reassembly and timing of the watch requires time. We are also the only certified watch repair shop in Maine and are inundated with work. This is great news for us, however, it means a bit of a wait for you. We at Swiss Time appreciate your patience in allowing us the necessary time to service your watch properly.



*Swiss Time*  
WHERE WATCHMAKERS WORK

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