



## MERCURY AIR PRESS INSTRUCTIONS

Note: The press has been improved with a 1 7/8" polypropylene, 4 micron filter disk.

The mercury air press, sometimes called the air tort, is made from PVC pipe. The object is to force the mercury through the filter disk. This is accomplished with air pressure. One end of the mercury press is fitted with an air valve for compressed air to be added after the mercury is in place.

Operate as follows:

- ❶ Use 1 to 30 pounds of mercury at a time. Dry the mercury. (Pour off the water and then use paper towels to get it completely dry.)

**WARNING:** Do not touch the mercury with your skin. Do not let mercury chemicals (such as mercury in nitric acid) touch your skin. One good breath of mercury during furnace retorting can kill. Keep mercury covered with a lid when in closed rooms, as it does give off gases.

- ❷ Turn the mercury press upside down and pour in the mercury.
- ❸ Cover the complete PVC pipe thread end opening with the washer, the filter disk, stainless steel screen and washer.
- ❹ Carefully screw the PVC nut down over the filter. Use Teflon tape.
- ❺ Now tighten down with channel locks to prevent mercury from leaking around threads.
- ❻ Turn the air press over so that the filter is on the downside and hold over a 5 gallon bucket that has some water in it. Apply 20 pounds maximum of air pressure. It should take about 5 minutes for 30 pounds of mercury to go through the filter. In some cases it does take longer. It can take 4 or 5 times as long when iron is in the mercury.
- ❼ Leaving the press with the filter down, relieve air pressure at air valve. Unscrew the PVC nut and carefully remove the filter. The mercury gold sponge should be setting on top of the filter or a layer of cake around the opening.
- ❽ If any mercury came out of the press between the filter the press sides, all the mercury must be pressed again. All of the mercury must come out of the press, through the filter. This does happen so long as the mercury comes out on the PVC nut-side and not on the press-side of the filter.
- ❾ Use nitric acid with 2 parts distilled water to one part nitric on the mercury sponge to remove the mercury. The filter can be leached with aqua regia to dissolve any gold trapped in the filter.

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