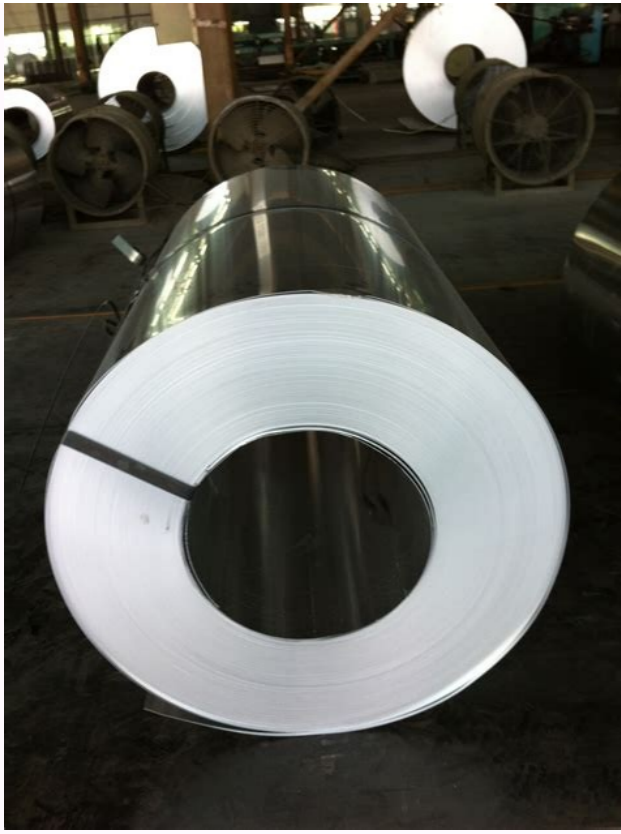


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How is body jewelry measured? While you may be aware of the different gauge sizes for body jewelry, if you are new to these measurements, you'll need a lesson in the basics since they're a little counterintuitive. You may be asking questions like, what is the range of gauge sizes? And, why is knowing gauge size important? We asked top piercing experts Cozmo Faris and Brian Keith Thompson these questions and more. Keep scrolling for their savvy advice on how to find the right gauge size for your body jewelry. Meet the Expert Cozmo Faris is a professional body piercer based in Atlanta, GA who specializes in body jewelry. Brian Keith Thompson is the proprietor and Chief Piercing Officer of Body Electric Tattoo in Los Angeles, CA who specializes in tattoo designs and piercing services. Joanna Nix-Walkup / Unsplash Images The word gauge (pronounced GAY) is used to refer to the overall thickness of a piece of body jewelry—how wide the shaft of a post is rather than how long it is. A gauge size indicates how big a piercing hole must be to accommodate the jewelry. Fun fact: According to Faris, the jewelry gauge system is based on the wire gauge system used by electrical workers. Gauge is abbreviated "g." Gauge sizes are usually a number followed by "g" or the word "gauge." "In Europe and Asia, jewelry is measured in millimeters," explains Thompson. "Here [in the U.S.] it's measured by gauge." Gauge sizes work in reverse, meaning that the higher the number, the thinner the wire, and the lower the number, the thicker the wire. So higher numbers (like 16 gauge) are thinner than smaller numbers (like a 6 gauge). When discussing gauges, references to a "larger gauge" means bigger around, not a bigger number. That is to say that if you're told that you need a larger gauge than 14, you need to look at 12 or 10 which are wider, not at 16. Standard Piercing Sizes Standard Gauge Standard Length (inches) Standard Length (millimeters) Common Piercing Type 18 g 0.04 1.0 Ear, nose 14 g 1/16 1.6 Tongue, navel, labret, nipple, septum Body jewelry gauges usually range from 18 g to 00 g. As the jewelry size increases beyond 00 g, the size of the jewelry is then expressed in its actual measurements, such as with 1/2-inch plugs. "Gauge [size] will vary pretty widely based on the client's anatomy, preferences, and piercing location," Faris explains. "Standard size is 18 g, which is what I mostly use for all my ear piercings," Thompson reveals. "For piercings in general, 18 g through 16 g is the most common. For nipple or navel piercings, 14 g through 12 g is most common. For larger gauges—like stretched ear lobes—the smallest gauge usually starts at size 8 and goes up from there." Here is how gauges compare to diameters in inches and millimeters: 18 gauge = 0.04 inches or 1.0 millimeters14 gauge = 1/16-inch or 1.6 millimeters8 gauge = 1/8-inch or 3.2 millimeters2 gauge = 1/4-inch or 6.5 millimeters0 gauge = 5/16-inch or 8.3 millimeters00 gauge = 3/8-inch or 9.3 millimeters Unless you request something different, most piercers have a standard size they prefer to use for starter jewelry based on the location of the piercing. If you can't make it to your local piercing studio to determine the right gauge size for your body piercing, you can order a gauge wheel tool online instead. A gauge wheel is a "flat disk with notches cut in it that correspond to gauge sizes," Faris explains. "You simply slide your piece of jewelry into the notches until you find the one it fits perfectly in. The size will be printed on the wheel next to the notch." If you need to know what gauge size your piercing jewelry is, the best thing to do is go back and ask your piercer. One thing to keep in mind is that in most cases, larger gauges are going to be your best option for body jewelry. A very small gauge like 18 or even 16 runs a greater risk of migration, causing a lot of pain and possible rejection. As long as it's pierced properly, a larger gauge such as 14 or 12 will be much more stable. Some will avoid larger gauges because they assume that getting pierced with a 12 will hurt more than getting pierced with a 16. This is really not the case, as it's going to be uncomfortable either way and neither is unbearable. It's also worth it to ensure you won't have to remove a piercing a few months down the line because of migration. Joshua Rawson-Harris / Unsplash Images At the end of the day, knowing the perfect gauge size for your piercing is like knowing what size shoes you wear, except for the fact that if you accidentally choose the wrong size, you risk causing physical damage to your piercing. "Jewelry that is too thin of a gauge could cause your piercing to shrink, and may even lead to tearing or cutting of the piercing," Faris warns. "Jewelry that is too thick just might not even go in gently, and if forced could also cause tearing, bleeding, and obviously, pain." Never force jewelry into your body piercing. With many different gauge sizes to choose from, and a myriad of measurements to keep in mind, finding the perfect gauge size for your piercing can feel daunting. But don't worry—with the right tools, professional guidance, and research, you will find yourself on the fastest track to finding the perfect match for your body piercing. Byrdie takes every opportunity to use high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial guidelines to learn more about how we keep our content accurate, reliable and trustworthy. Association of Professional Piercers. Safe piercing FAQ. When working with sheet metal, it is common for the term "gauge" to be used. Someone unfamiliar with the gauge system may not understand what is meant by 18 gauge steel, for example. To help, this blog will explain the gauge system and features a sheet metal gauge chart. How are Sheet Metal Gauges Used? Gauges are used to specify the thickness of a sheet metal. Gauges are neither standard nor metric and the values are independent of those measurement systems. A gauge conversion chart can be used to determine the actual thickness of sheet metal in inches or millimeters. For example, 18 gauge steel, according to a gauge conversion chart, is 0.0478 inch or 1.214 millimeter. The gauge number "18" holds no relevance to the actual measurements. There are several different gauge systems used today, with specific gauge designations used for specific metal types. For example, in one gauge system, 18 gauge steel measures 0.0478 inches thick, but 18 gauge aluminum is 0.0403 inches thick. Because of the varying thicknesses, a gauge chart should be used to ensure the metal meets the required dimensions. History of the Gauge System The gauge system has long history in metal fabrication. It most likely originated from the British wire industry before the standard and metric measurement systems were widely adopted. At that time, gauges were used to describe the diameter of the metal wire being drawn. Since then, it has remained a prevalent method of designating the thickness of both wire and sheet metal. Sheet Metal Gauge Charts To determine what metal gauge you need, use these sheet metal gauge charts: Jump to: Mild Steel Gauge Chart Aluminum Gauge Chart Stainless Steel Gauge Chart Galvanized Steel Gauge Chart Brass Gauge Chart Copper Gauge Chart or Download a Printable Version Gauge Number Inches MM 7 .1793 4.554 8 .1644 4.175 9 .1495 3.797 10 .1345 3.416 11 .1196 3.038 12 .1046 2.656 14 .0747 1.897 16 .0598 1.518 18 .0478 1.214 20 .0359 911 22 .0299 .759 24 .0239 .607 26 .0179 .454 28 .0149 .378 Gauge Number Inches MM 7 .1443 3.665 8 .1285 3.264 9 .1144 2.906 10 .1019 2.588 11 .09074 2.305 12 .08081 2.053 14 .06408 1.628 16 .05082 1.291 18 .04030 1.024 20 .03196 .812 22 .02535 .644 24 .02010 .511 26 .01594 .405 28 .01264 .321 30 .01003 .255 Gauge Number Inches MM 8 .17187 4.365 9 .15625 3.968 10 .14062 3.571 11 .125 3.175 12 .10937 2.778 14 .07812 1.984 16 .0625 1.587 18 .050 1.270 20 .0375 .9525 22 .03125 .7937 24 .025 .635 26 .01875 .476 28 .01562 .396 30 .0125 .3175 Gauge Number Inches MM 8 .1681 4.269 9 .1532 3.891 10 .1382 3.510 11 .1233 3.1318 12 .1084 2.753 14 .0785 1.9939 16 .0635 1.6129 18 .0516 1.310 20 .0396 1.005 22 .0336 .853 24 .0276 .701 26 .0217 .551 28 .0187 .474 30 .0157 .398 Gauge Number Inches MM 7 .1443 3.665 8 .1285 3.264 9 .1144 2.906 10 .1019 2.588 11 .09074 2.305 12 .08081 2.053 14 .06408 1.628 16 .05082 1.291 18 .04030 1.024 20 .03196 .812 22 .02535 .644 24 .02010 .511 26 .01594 .405 28 .01264 .321 30 .01003 .255 Gauge Number Inches MM 7 .180 4.572 8 .165 4.191 9 .148 3.759 10 .134 3.404 11 .120 3.048 12 .109 2.769 14 .083 2.108 16 .065 1.651 18 .049 1.245 20 .035 .889 22 .028 .711 24 .022 .559 26 .018 .457 28 .014 .356 30 .012 .305 \*Actual thickness will vary due to tolerances. Metal Supermarkets is the world's largest small-quantity metal supplier with over 100 brick-and-mortar stores across the US, Canada, and United Kingdom. We are metal experts and have been providing quality customer service and products since 1985. At Metal Supermarkets, we supply a wide range of metals for a variety of applications. Our stock includes: mild steel, stainless steel, aluminum, tool steel, alloy steel, brass, bronze and copper. We stock a wide range of shapes including: bars, tubes, sheets, plates and more. And we can cut metal to your exact specifications. Visit one of our 100+ locations across North America today. The thickness of sheet metals is specified by gauge. The table below shows the actual thickness of sheet steel in millimetres and inches compared to gauge size. These dimensions vary slightly between different materials such as stainless steel and aluminium - but should be accurate enough for most everyday purposes. Gauge No Inch Metric 0 0.324" 8.2mm 1 0.300" 7.6mm 2 0.276" 7.0mm 3 0.252" 6.4mm 4 0.232" 5.9mm 5 0.212" 5.4mm 6 0.192" 4.9mm 7 0.176" 4.5mm 8 0.160" 4.1mm 9 0.144" 3.7mm 10 0.128" 3.2mm 11 0.116" 2.9mm 12 0.104" 2.6mm 13 0.092" 2.3mm 14 0.080" 2.0mm 15 0.072" 1.8mm 16 0.064" 1.6mm 17 0.056" 1.4mm 18 0.048" 1.2mm 19 0.040" 1.0mm 20 0.036" 0.9mm 21 0.032" 0.8mm 22 0.028" 0.7mm 23 0.024" 0.6mm 25 0.020" 0.5mm 26 0.018" 0.45mm 27 0.0164" 0.42mm 28 0.0148" 0.37mm 29 0.0136" 0.34mm 30 0.0124" 0.31mm 31 0.0116" 0.29mm 32 0.0108" 0.27mm 33 0.0100" 0.25mm 34 0.0092" 0.23mm 35 0.0084" 0.21mm 36 0.0076" 0.19mm 37 0.0068" 0.17mm 38 0.0060" 0.15mm 39 0.0052" 0.13mm 40 0.0048" 0.12mm Page 2

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