

Experiment in Finger Prints

1. Find a piece of unwanted polished metal.
2. In a clear area, press your thumb firmly on the metal surface.
3. Put the metal piece to the side for a few months where it will not be handled or get dusty.
4. Observe the results and compare the area you touched with the surrounding surface.

Note: for a more dramatic result, handle a sugary or oily food directly before touching the surface of the metal.

The oil on our hands is very powerful. It will adhere to the surfaces of most materials and leave their mark. Some effects are discolorations, smudging, and even corrosion. In some cases, the oil on our finger literally etches its print on an object. Though detectives love to find fingerprints on things, museum workers cringe! That is why we wear gloves to protect artifacts from our fingers.