

case	crystal	Rolex crown logo: on crystal surface, at 6 o'clock position. This very small detail can only be inspected with an eye loupe. The true logo should be etched, not embossed. Glass crystals often have an embossed logo, which forms clear glossy bumps. The etched logo has a frosty translucent appearance, probably cut with a laser or ion beam due to the precision required.
		Sapphire composition: Many fakes use plain glass or "mineral glass". Learn the technique of testing for true sapphire by using water surface tension. On sapphire, a smeared film of water will slowly pull itself together into a smaller, taller blob, leaving the rest of the crystal surface dry. This effect is most pronounced on sapphire, due to the super-smooth surface.
		Date magnifier: the date must appear to be big, but not distorted through the lens. This is a difficult balance of design technique and a common weakness in fakes. The most common sign of distortion is pincushion (peaked corners on date digits). Cheaper fakes usually have less magnification and smaller date digits.
		Date magnifier alignment: The lens is attached by hand, after watch assembly. This step is very critical and almost always has problems. The lens must be carefully aligned, horizontal / not tilted / aligned with stem / centered with date window. Try to view the watch directly perpendicular to the crystal, such as over a level table. Even the most expensive fakes often fail this test.
	back	engraved on inside: "Rolex" is complete, any other wording could indicate surplus parts
		toothed rim: teeth should have uniform, "clean" sparkly appearance, indicating precise casting / cutting. Most fakes have odd, not-quite-even appearance of these teeth.
dial	surface	Single downward dimple around hands shaft is OK – normal even on real Rolex dials
		Should not have dimples under markers – The rest of the dial base surface should be absolutely flat.
	imprinting	Precision of lettering – A high-magnification eye loupe should reveal clean edges around type.
		Accuracy of crown-shaped logo – Study it carefully. Many of them are just not shaped properly.
		Color of imprinting paint: too dark / too light? Normally, the black dial Rolex has printing that is almost-white, a very light gray. I've seen many fakes with this color just too dark.
	markers	Size: circles too small? That's a common problem with the fakes for some reason.
		Color: uniform color / correct color?
		placement & positioning – very critical (aligned with minute marks, etc)
		3-D frames too tall / too short?
subdials (Daytona)		Usually spread apart too far, for example using Valjoux 7750. Only the Zenith El Primero movement has the proper spacing, and that's an expensive "wow" movement. I did meet one guy a few years ago who was assembling Daytona's with Zenith movements in single quantity, but the cost of manufacture was about 1200 USD. Since then I've only seen Asian clone Valjoux, Lemania clones, and some real Valjoux. Those just don't fit and the dials will not have the right geometry.

date	<i>dial window / aperture</i>	Proper shape: too short / narrow? This is really difficult for the manufacturer, because the base plate is first cut with a larger size window, then enamel coating is applied to make the dial base color, which adds material around the window aperture and sizes it down. It's not a tightly controlled process and the window is often left with the wrong dimensions in the end.
	<i>date wheel</i>	centered alignment with date numbers - is the 1 in "14" clipped?
		correct font? the font can vary with watch model imprinting: clean edges around numbers remember to check all numbers 1 - 31
hands	<i>geometry</i>	proper lengths, relative to dial markers etc
		white blob on second hand: size and distance from dial markers
		mercedes marker on hour hand: size of features and overall size
		minute hand glow paint cavity width: usually too narrow esp on Yachtmaster
	<i>process technology</i>	root ring around mounting shaft: circumference too big?
		stamped (round-over edges) or laser cut (sharp, Xacto-like edges) flat, straight, mirror-like surfaces many models have either sharp or curved ridge along length
<i>surface coloring</i>	pigment coating or oxidized / anodized 24hr hand: bright red	
bracelet	<i>body joints</i>	solid, milled steel blocks
		curved only toward bracelet, milled *straight* and sharp from side-to-side
		snug / tight against watch body
		rubbing to first links will cause visible wear marks
		first links should move freely without binding
		first links shouldn't be loose / sway side-side
	<i>links</i>	if allowed to touch, will rub and mark each other
		shouldn't spread and rattle / squeak
		check each link for binding / too tight
	<i>clasp</i>	taper from fattest at watch body down to clasp
Intermediate links on Submariner with cavity, not flat-sided		
logo stamp: clean on both sides of each stamp		
bezel	<i>rotation</i>	stamped dimple on each side of clasp lock (bad), or flat exterior (good)
		milled recess for thumbnail under clasp lock (good), or stamped (bad)
	<i>imprinting</i>	detents: ratchety and precise alignment follows track without side/side slop.

movement	<i>engraving</i>	should have "Rolex" on rotor / engraved? might be an overlay sheet
		any other rotor engraving indicates surplus movement ("SAK", "KBC", etc)
		ETA stamp under flywheel rim?
	<i>complexity</i>	bi-directional winding?
		Fake jewel count? Check for jewels on winding gears
		24hr hand: separate adjust on Exp-2
<i>calibre</i>	Too small for case? plastic ring around movement?	
overall	<i>face</i>	hands & dial markers all glow-in-dark same color
		date: centered alignment: lens + window + date numbers
	<i>general</i>	The overall registration and proportions can be the most difficult to control in design and manufacturing. Take a few minutes to back up and look at the big picture. Look for anything that just doesn't add up, for example a dial that's too big for the case (minute markers touching the steel rim under the crystal edges) or markers and hands that glow with different color hues. *ALL* fake Rolex watches will fail this kind of "big picture" test to some extent - NO EXCEPTIONS. The question is, how much will a particular watch fail by?

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