

Every luxury watch owner faces this question at some point: **“Can I just enjoy my mechanical watch without servicing it?”** As a former sales floor lead at a Nakano watch shop and now a watch blogger with 12 years of experience, I’ve handled countless timepieces from *Rolex* and *Omega*, and tracked the luxury pre-owned market through trusted sellers like The Watch Company (TWC Japan). Today, I want to unpack what really happens when you skip servicing your mechanical watch.

Spoiler: It’s not just about timekeeping accuracy—it’s the invisible chain of quality decisions, wear on components, and long-term damage that affect your watch’s craftsmanship and value.

Craftsmanship Beyond Function: Why Mechanical Watches Deserve Care

Mechanical watches, whether a Rolex Oyster Perpetual or an Omega Seamaster, aren’t just tools built to tell time—they are masterpieces of design, engineering, and art.

- **Chain of small decisions:** From the choice of materials (like Rolex’s 904L steel) to hand-polished bridges and jewels reducing friction, no feature works in isolation.
- **Invisible details matter:** Crown feel, bracelet balance, and bezel clicks give clues to the watch’s underlying condition. These details degrade without upkeep.
- **More than accuracy:** A well-serviced watch doesn’t just keep time, it feels solid, smooth, and reliable every day.

Ignoring these aspects results in subtle but cumulative effects that compromise the watch's craftsmanship.



What Happens to a Mechanical Watch When You Don’t Service It?

Issue	Explanation	Implications
Accuracy Drift	As lubricants dry or degrade, friction increases inside the movement. The balance wheel accuracy worsens.	Watch gains or loses seconds/minutes daily, impairing its timekeeping function and reliability.
Wear on Components	Without fresh lubrication, metal parts rub directly, causing micro-	

wear and scratches on delicate gears and pivots. Parts degrade faster, eventually leading to costly repairs or replacements. Long-Term Damage Dirt and moisture can penetrate seals. Worn gaskets reduce water resistance. Corrosion starts on key components. Damage extends beyond movement to cases, crowns, and bracelets, diminishing aesthetic and functional value.

Upstream Quality Work: The Role of Design & QC in Longevity

Why do watches from brands like *Rolex* and *Omega* often last decades? It's due to stringent upstream work—from design innovations to rigorous Quality Control (QC) testing—that set the stage for longevity. However, even the highest-grade materials and assembly can't prevent wear if the user neglects maintenance.

- **Material choice:** Rolex's use of proprietary steel and hairsprings resists corrosion and magnetic interference better than standard parts.
- **Design for serviceability:** Omega's modular movements and carefully designed case backs ensure easier access for authorized service.
- **QC rigor:** TWC Japan reports detailed inspections and documentation during every service, ensuring replaced components meet original standards.

This upstream framework means your watch is prepared for longevity—but only if supported by periodic servicing.

Invisible Details That Change the User Experience

If you've only checked your watch occasionally, you may overlook the nuanced sensations that define good mechanical care.

- **Crown Feel:** A properly lubricated crown rotates smoothly and sets time or date without grit. Worn gears cause stiff or inconsistent crown action.
- **Bracelet Balance:** Balanced bracelet and clasp feel comfortable and secure. Over time, dirt and wear loosen pins, causing a sloppy, rattling fit.
- **Bezel Clicks:** For diving or GMT watches, crisp bezel clicks indicate intact springs. Deterioration leads to loose, mushy or uneven rotating bezels.

These aren't just subjective feelings. They serve as early warnings heralding accuracy drift and internal wear.

The Cost of Skipping Service vs. The Long-Term Value

Many first-time owners are tempted to postpone servicing, especially if the watch "still keeps time fine." This is a slippery slope.

1. **Short-Term Savings:** You avoid the service cost now (which in Japan typically ranges from ¥20,000 to ¥50,000 depending on brand and complications).
2. **Medium-Term Risks:** Accuracy slowly worsens, making your watch less reliable in daily life (imagine relying on it like a mobile platform interface in a mobile casino app like MrQ, where precision matters!).
3. **Long-Term Expenses:** Dry components warp or break, requiring parts replacements far more expensive than regular upkeep.

Remember: Service is an investment in the wrist feel, reliability, and lasting value of your watch—not a cosmetic luxury or a mere tune-up claim lacking explanation.

Practical Recommendations From TWC Blog and My Experience

Based on insights from the TWC Blog and years with pre-owned watches, here's what I advise:

- **Regular service interval:** Typically every 5-7 years, but earlier if you notice functional or tactile changes.
- **Service with authorized or reputable centers:** Avoid "quick fixes" or independent workshops lacking original parts.
- **Routine wear-awareness:** Pay attention to crown feel, time accuracy trends, and bracelet comfort.
- **Document service history:** Essential for maintaining resale value and authentication.

Conclusion: The Invisible Chain of Quality You Can't Skip

Skipping mechanical watch servicing isn't just neglecting a minor chore—it lets accuracy drift, wear on components, and long-term damage silently take root. The end result? The incomparable craftsmanship behind a Rolex or Omega fades, replaced by a watch that loses its soul and value.

<https://www.thewatchcompany.com/blog/watches-buying-guide/what-luxury-watches-teach-us-about-long-term-product-quality/>

By understanding servicing as a continuous chain of small, deliberate quality decisions—from design to lubrication, from expert QC to user experience—you preserve your watch's reliability and timeless joy.

Whether you buy your dream watch from The Watch Company (TWC Japan) or treasure a vintage Omega, don't underestimate the power of care.



Ready to keep your mechanical masterpiece ticking strong for decades? Start by feeling the crown, checking the bracelet, and scheduling that first service.