

Freeing frozen lower diaphragm of Leitz Berek condenser.

Judging from ebay listings it is not uncommon for the lower diaphragm to be stuck. Mine was locked up so tight that only reading the instructions let me know a diaphragm should be there. It absolutely would not budge.

The assembly containing the lower iris unscrews from the bottom of the body of the condenser. The iris assembly is attached to the base of a tube. A lens unscrews from the top of the tube and another lens unscrews from below the iris. A bead of naphtha applied with a syringe may be needed to loosen the assembly, but it WILL unscrew. After removing the lenses I soaked the iris assembly in a shallow bath of xylene in a covered glass jam jar for a week. Perhaps a shorter time would have worked but I didn't want to expose myself to the xylene fumes only to find more time was needed. Perhaps a less toxic solvent (naphtha) would have worked as well, but I had xylene on hand from soaking my Ortholux focus block. Xylene and naphtha are both available at hardware stores. After removing the assembly from the bath and letting the xylene run off, just a slight twist was needed to get the iris moving freely. As the xylene evaporated the iris started to firm up a bit, so I lubricated it with a tiny amount of Permalube applied with a syringe to the iris blade pivot points visible from below the iris assembly.

