

1 millimeter = .03937 inches

1 inch = 25.4 millimeters



# beadology

BEAD SIZES  
SHAPES  
TIPS

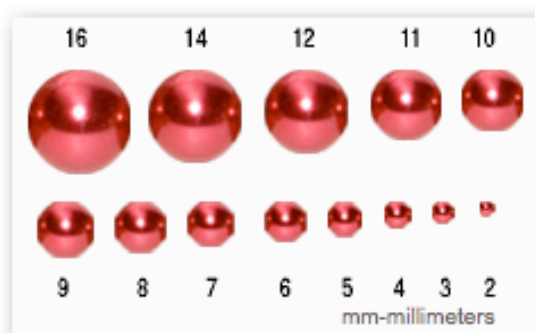
*This page focuses on all things bead related. We will add to it periodically and do our best to keep you up to date. Visit our [Jewelry Making Techniques & Tools](#) page for general jewelry making information.*

## Bead Sizes-----

Most instructions for beading call for a specific size bead to complete a design or pattern. While it might sound easy to simply go buy the size bead called for, it isn't always, depending on where you shop. Often, strings of beads may have no sizes indicated at all. If the beads come in a bag of assorted sizes, things get even more confusing.

The next time you go bead shopping, print out our Bead Sizing Card and you'll always know what size bead you're buying. It's the same dimension as a business card which makes it easy to carry with you. Just hold the bead in your hand over the beads on the card to determine its size. You may find minute variations in accuracy due to printing.

## Bead Sizing Card



## [bead sizing card.pdf](#)

*Use the red beads on the card to determine the size of nearly any shaped bead. Just keep in mind, the size of an irregular shaped bead can be determined by measuring it at its widest point.*

## Seed Beads-----

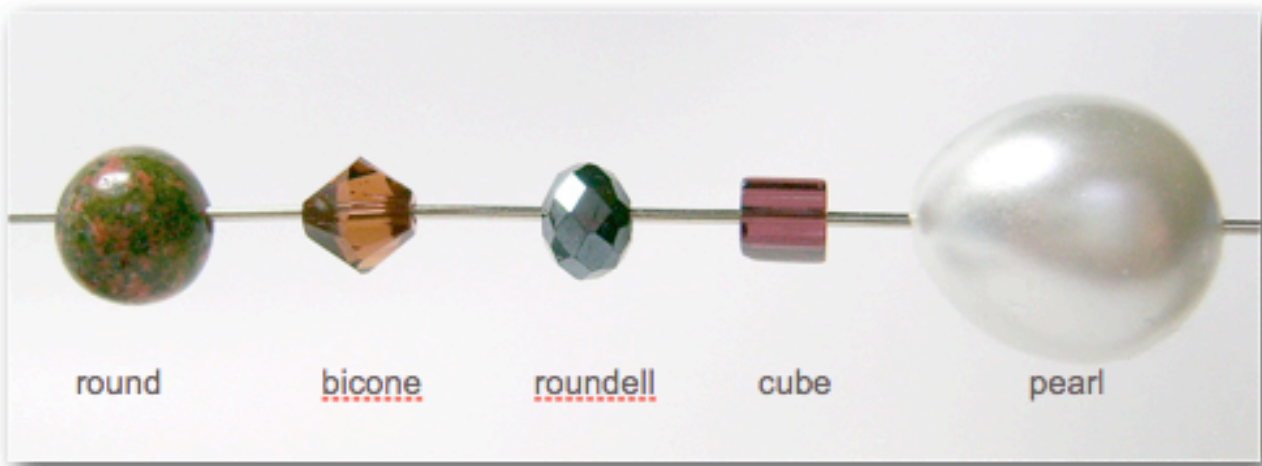
As you can see in the Bead Size Card above, bead sizes have a natural progression. A size 4 bead is a lot smaller than a size 14. Just what you would expect. But for some reason, the sizes for seed beads run in the opposite direction. A size 7/0 seed bead, is huge compared to a size 20/0! The larger the number, the smaller the bead. Generally popular sizes for seed beads run from 7/0 to 20/0. As a general guide you can expect to use 20 beads per inch for a size 11/0 bead, and 7 beads per inch for a size 5/0.

Seed beads vary greatly and come in different finishes and shapes, some with rounded edges and others with sharp squared off edges and more. You can buy seed beads on strings and in bags by the gram. There are roughly 1500 size 11/0 seed beads in 8 grams. Watch for seed beads that are basically the same size but sold in slightly irregular lengths and shapes. The finished product for many jewelry designs, like our Woven Crystal Bracelet would be affected in a negative way by using seed beads that are not uniform. Other designs might welcome the irregularity. Be sure to look over beads to see what you're getting.

When working with seed beads be sure to use a beading needle and thread in an appropriate size. This is especially important if you will be passing through the same bead more than once. In one inch, you can expect to find 20 size 11/0 beads, 12 size 8/0 beads, and 7 size 5/0 beads.

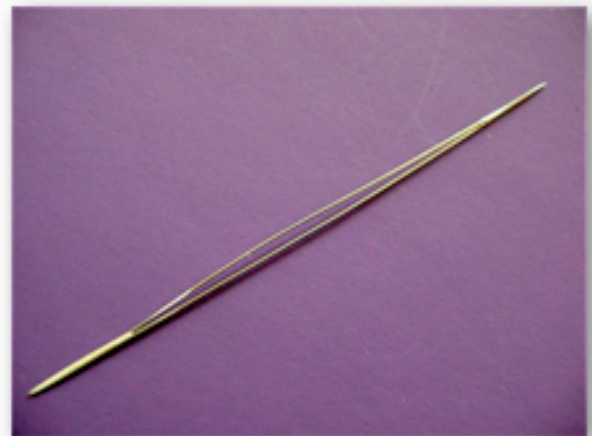
## Bead Shapes-----

It would be a monumental job to list all the shapes of beads today. But some of the most basic and popular are round, bicone - cone shaped on both sides, roundell- a round bead slightly flattened, cube, and pearl. Within each of these shape categories you will find smooth and faceted surfaces as well as unlimited finishes.



## Beading Needles-----

Beading needles can be purchased in varying sizes and designs. Often called English beading needles, some have sharp edges on both ends with the eye in the center. Others are more like a typical sewing needle with the eye on one end and the point on the other. The similarities in these beading needles is they both are flexible and both have collapsible eyes which allow it to pass through the bead easily. The type with the eye on one end tend to be a bit more flexible, which might be a good thing for certain projects. But when you need to push the pointy end between two beads, the type with the eye in the middle is a stronger tool. It also has very sharp ends which can be painful if you poke your finger instead of the bead hole. Which type needle you chose is pretty much a matter of taste and dependent upon your project.



## Beading Techniques-----

### HALF HITCH KNOT

Woven bracelets use a half hitch knot technique to end bracelets and also to finish with one length of thread and start another. The technique calls for passing the needle through a couple of beads, making a knot, and passing back through the beads again. This is done several times through several sets of beads to secure the work.

You may be wondering why you would use more than one length of thread for a project. If you're asking, you've never had to pull a thread that is longer than your outstretched arm, through a lot of beads. It requires repeated pulls. Also, the longer the thread, the greater the chance of accidental knots. Working with shorter lengths makes beading easier.

When you are coming to the end of your thread (about 6") but have not finished your project, you should tie off your work so you can add another length and continue working. You will not be tying the two threads together.

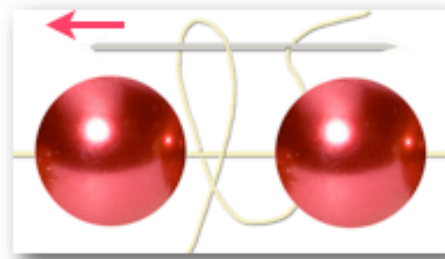
To tie off your work, first make note of the last bead on the string. It's important to recognize this bead as this is where you will resume beading on the new length of thread.

Create a half hitch knot between the last bead of your work and one next to it. Knots should be hidden between two beads. Once you've made the knot, go back through two beads and create another knot. Do this several times for at least 1 1/2". When finished, remove the needle and attach the new yard of thread.

Insert your needle in roughly the same spot. Go through two beads. Leave about a three inch tail. Make a half hitch knot and continue working to the point where you added your last bead to the bracelet. Pass the thread through that bead and continue beading.

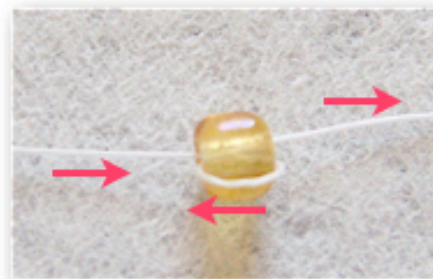
### STOP BEAD

A stop bead is essentially a bead that is meant to stop your work from slipping off at the end of the thread. To add a stop bead, use any bead (it will not be part of the finished work). Pass the needle through it leaving a 12" tail on the end. Pass the needle through it again going in the same direction.



### HALF HITCH KNOT

*Create this knot by looping thread between two beads, then passing the needle through the loop. The knot is hidden between the beads.*



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