

JEWELRY MAKING TIPS TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

STARTING & FINISHING.....

DOUBLE CRIMPING

Many of the necklaces on our JEWELRY pages as well as items included on our ON THE TABLE page use the double crimp method of starting and finishing a beaded project, which requires a special crimping tool. Double crimping is a simple, easy to learn method. But an even simpler method is to flatten the crimp bead once with a pair of pliers. Although it is an option, we don't suggest this method because often times the squared edges of the flattened crimp bead can be very sharp and scratch the skin. We recommend the double crimp because it creates a smoother, more cylindrical finish.



double crimp pliers

The first notch of the crimping pliers close to the handles is the first position for the double crimp method. This is where the bead will be crimped into a "u" shape. The bead is then rotated 90 degrees and placed in the upper notch. Here the "U" shape will be closed, creating a more rounded shape.



crimp beads/tubes

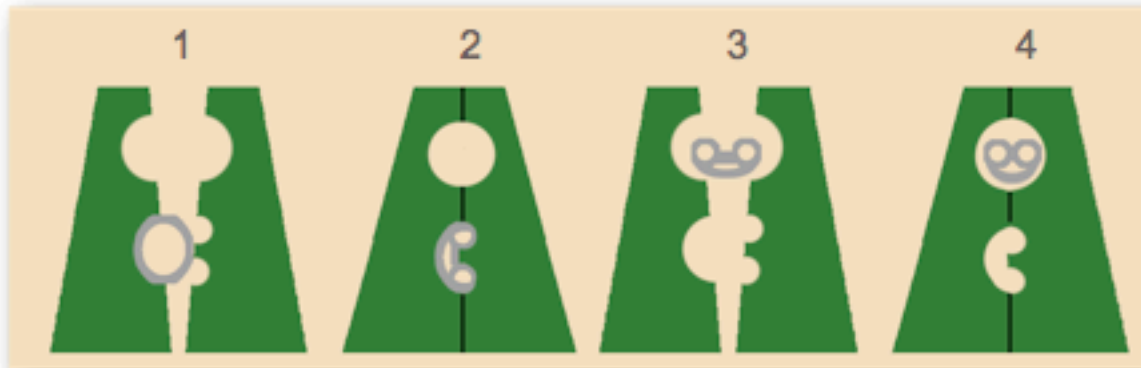
Crimp beads or tubes come in various sizes to accommodate different thickness in cord and wire and are designed to hold one or more strands of either. To use a crimp bead, slip the cording material into the bead, then through the end of a clasp, and back through the bead. The bead is then crimped.



crimp ends

The difference between a crimp end and a crimp bead is, the crimp end holds and conceals the raw edge of a cord or wire. It is "U" shape with a loop to which you can attach a clasp or jump ring. When using non metal cording material, place a dot of glue in the center, then position the cord on top. This will hold the cord from slipping while you secure the crimp with pliers by folding in one side, then the other.

How To Use A Double Crimper Tool



Step 1 - Place bead in bottom notch.

Step 2 - Squeeze handles so that the protrusion on the right, creates a crimp in the bead.

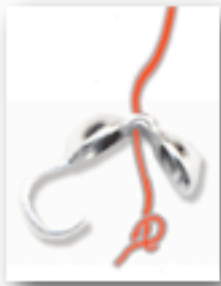
Step 3 - Place bead in top notch, rotated 90 degrees as shown.

Step 4 - Squeeze handles causing the bead to fold inward.

CLAM SHELLS

Clam shells are sometimes called bead tips. They consist of a two cups with a hook on one edge to attach to a clasp. It also has a small hole where the cups meet. The beading cord is knotted, then threaded into the hole so that the knot lies inside, and the cups are pressed together to enclose it. We recommend sealing the knot with [Krazy Glue](#) before enclosing it to prevent the cord end from eventually fraying and the knot slipping out.

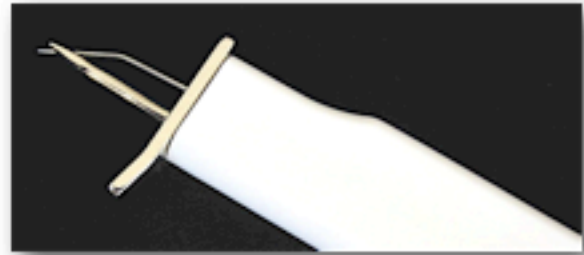
The knot at the start of the strand is always easy to make. But the one at the end of the strand can be a little trickier. When all the beads are on the strand, you pass the cord into the clam shell. At this point, you want to eliminate extra spacing between the clam shell and the beads, and at the same time, tie a knot inside the shell. Some recommendations we seen for accomplishing this, are to use a pin to slide the knot into position inside the shell, or use pointy nose pliers to help create the knot. Our recommendation is to use a knot tying tool. Instructions for using the tool are on the package. It's simple, effective, and works every time.



open clam shell



A closed clam shell looks like a silver bead.



knot tying tool

CORD, RINGS, CLASPS.....

CORD

The projects on our jewelry pages use Griffin #6 nylon cord which is a sturdy material with a needle attached. The needle makes it easy to thread through the beads. All the beads should be moved to the end of the cord without the needle, so that when you cut away your finished work, the needle will still be attached to some cord, available to thread the next project.

Nylon cord comes in different sizes. When working with clam shells, it's important to use heavier size cord like #6 because the knots in lighter cord will slip through the hole in the clam shell. Lighter weight cord like #4 or smaller may be needed with beads with very small openings, like some pearls.

The cord also comes in different colors. For a fluid look, find a cord color to complement the color of your beads.



RINGS

Jump rings are merely circles of metal that are not joined. Open a jump ring by holding one end stationary and pushing the other end away from you using pliers. It's not a good idea to pull at the two sides of a ring as that will change its perfect circular shape. To close the ring, use the same technique, only this time pull the end back toward you. It's important to have the two ends aligned with no space in between them especially if cord is attached to the ring. Cord can easily slip through a small opening.



CLASPS

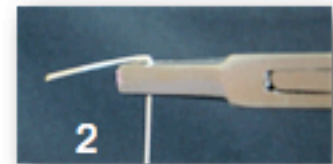
Clasps come in a huge variety of styles, sizes and materials. The toggle clasp has become extremely popular because it is so easy to use. It can serve as the closure for a necklace or bracelet and sometimes works as more than a clasp. Beads can be attached to the ring, creating a decorative focal point for a project.



Making Wire Loops/Eyes.....

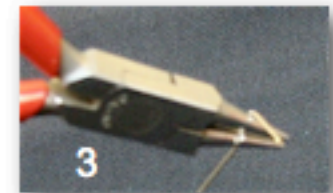
Use spooled wire or nail head pins to make wire loops that will link jewelry pieces together.

1. Using wire cutters, cut jewelry wire to measure about 3". Or remove the head from a nail head pin.

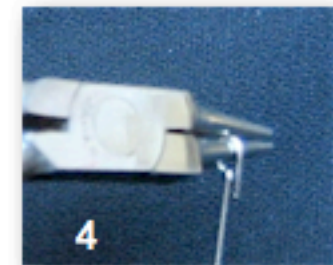


2. Grasp the wire about .75" from one end. Bend the wire into a 45 degree angle.

3. With the round nose pliers, grasp the wire firmly at the angle, with the wire's short end pointed to your left. With your free hand, wrap the wire's short end over the top of the pliers so it extends straight out, pointing to the right.

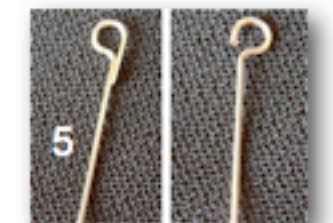


4. Remove the pliers and reposition them so they are seated in the curve you just created. With your free hand, bend the wire's short end so it's pointing straight down.



5. There should now be a tail that extends down past the 45 degree angle. With the wire cutters, clip the tail off slightly above the point of the angle. Slip a ring, clasp or other jewelry part onto the loop/eye now, before you close the gap in the next step.

6. With flat edge pliers, firmly grasp only the circle you've created. Do not include the bend of the 45 degree angle. Pull the straight wire toward the circle, closing the gap. This changes the 45 degree angle, closes the opening in the circle, and creates a perfectly round loop/eye at the end of the wire.





Making Wrapped Loops.....

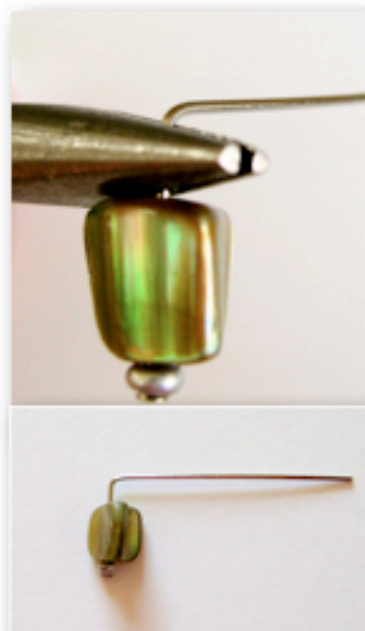
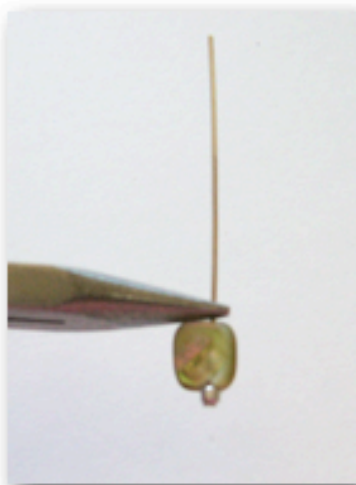
There are many situations where you might want to use wrapped loops instead of a plain loop. Sometimes a large wrapped loop attached to a beautiful pendant can make a lovely focal point for a necklace. With designs that call for small beads on nail head wires, you might want the bead to be snug against the nail head so it doesn't move on the wire. If the bead is not flush with the nailhead, the heads can catch on clothing. But getting the bead snug to the nailhead can be difficult to achieve. That's when a wrapped loop is ideal. We used this technique in our Mixed Shell Bracelet.



1. Using needle nose pliers, hold the wire firmly above the bead.

2. Create a 45 degree bend in the wire by pushing against the pliers with your finger.

3. With round nose pliers, grasp the wire inside the angle.



4. Bend the wire over the top of the round nose pliers using your hand. This will create one side of your loop.



5. Seat your pliers snugly into the curve you just created, grasping the top of the loop.



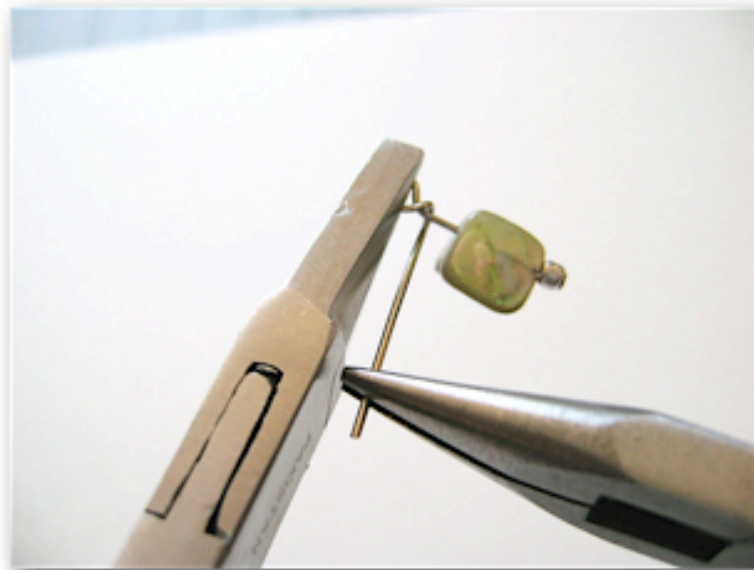
6. With your hand, bend the wire straight down to curve around the shape of the bottom pliers.



7. Pull the tail of the wire past the 45 degree angle.



8. Hold the loop securely with flat nose pliers. Use another pair of pliers to wrap the tail around the wire. For a better view, our photo shows the tip of the pliers at the end of the wire. But the ideal position is to place the broader part of the pliers close to the wrap to make it easier to work with. If you try to wrap as pictured here, you may end up with small bends in the wire. Also, don't try to wrap around in one motion. Move the needle nose pliers from one side to the other as necessary.



9. When the wrap is complete, you will have a wire tail that needs to be trimmed.



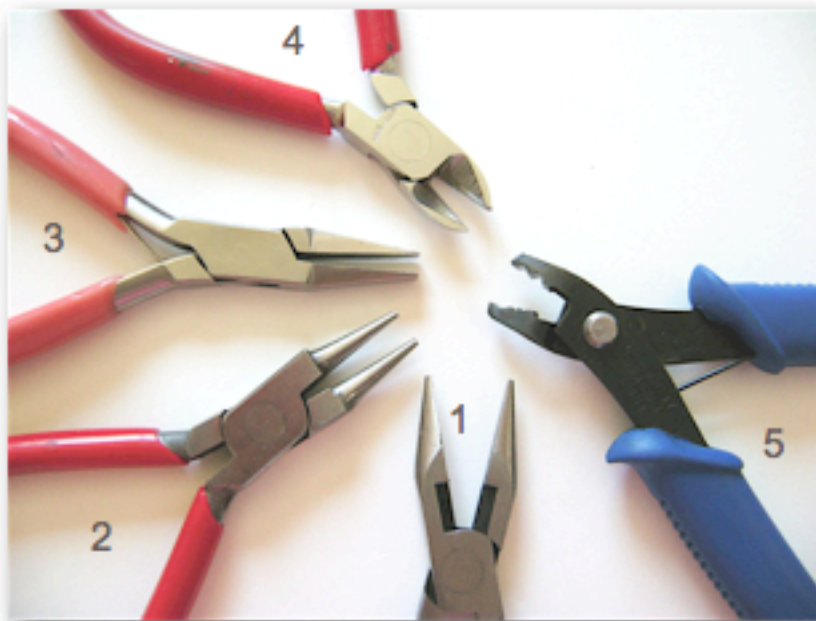
10. Use wire cutters to snip off the tail as close to the wrap as possible.



11. Use a crimp tool or needle pliers to flatten the cut end of wire to the wrap.



Jewelry Making Tools



1. Needle Nose Pliers
2. Round nose pliers.
3. Flat nose pliers.
4. Wire cutters.
5. Double crimp tool.

Necklace and Bracelet Sizes.....

If you're making jewelry for yourself, it's pretty easy to know how large to make it. But when you're making a piece for someone else you can use these measurements as a rough guide. Bracelets need to fit the wearer well so as not to easily slip off the hand.

Ladies Bracelet - 7" - 9". For very petite or small boned people 6 1/2" is more appropriate.

Ladies Ankle Bracelet - 10"

Necklace sizes can vary greatly, but here are some loose guidelines.

Ladies Necklace - Choker 16", Princess 18", Matinee Length 20-24

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