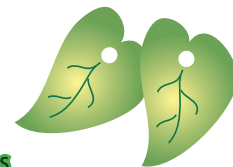


Wirework - Wrapped Loops & Bails



Wrapped Loops

Wrapped loops are a great way to add strength and style to your designs. Instead of trimming the wire to length before rolling the loop, the excess wire is left in place as you roll a loop a few millimetres from the top of the bead. The tail of the wire then wraps around the stem between the loop and the bead to form a neat and very secure finish. Ideal for charm bracelets and heavy beads in all linked designs.

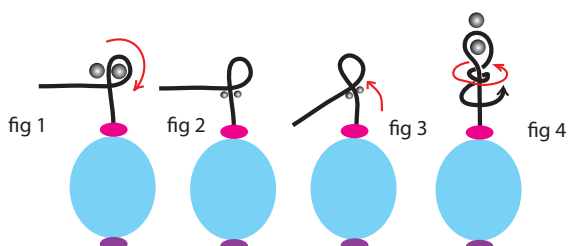
Bails

Bails are used to create a connecting loop at the top of a cross-hole bead. The bail should allow the bead to swing freely. It is very important that the bail is secure. Pinch bails (bails that push into either side of the bead hole) need to be exactly the right size for that particular bead and good quality to hold the bead securely - alternatively you can make your own 'closed bail' from wire.



Using a Headpin to Make a Wrapped Loop

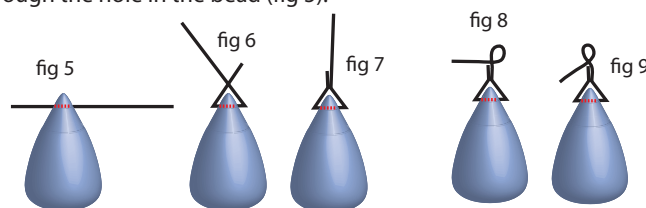
Thread on your bead selection. The head on the pin may be too small to support your choice of main bead so you may need to start with a seed bead or similar stopper bead. 8 - 9mm above the top bead grip the wire with your round nosed pliers about 3mm from the tips of the pliers. Wrap the end of the wire around the pliers until it crosses the straight wire coming up out of the beads to make a circle of wire (fig 1).



Use the tips of the pliers to grip the wire at the junction between the straight wire from the bead and the start of the circle (fig 2). Tip the pliers backwards a quarter of a turn to make the circle sit up on top of the straight wire (fig 3). Push one side of the plier nose right into the loop and grip quite firmly. Hold the end of the wire in your other hand and make a tight wrap around the stem of the wire immediately below the loop (fig 4). Continue to wrap carefully down the stem making even turns of the wire until you reach the top of the seed bead. Trim the excess wire away as close to the top of the bead as you can. If you are left with a little burr of wire you will need to push it into place with your chain nosed pliers - VERY CAREFULLY squeeze the end of the wrap into place making sure that you do not catch the beads in the squeeze as they can shatter.

Make a Wrapped Loop / Bail on a Cross-hole Bead

To make this type of hanger you will need a length of wire rather than a headpin, use 0.6mm wire for all but the largest beads. Use the wire as a 30cm length to reduce wastage. Push the end 12mm of the wire through the hole in the bead (fig 5).



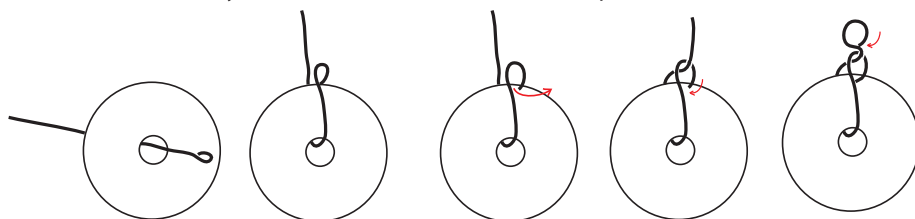
With your fingers bend the two sides of the wire up to cross over above the bead (fig 6). With the tips of the pliers hold each piece of wire in turn at the crossover point and make a small bend to point the ends of the wire up vertically from the top of the bead (fig 7). If necessary trim the shorter end of the wire down to 2mm from this last bend. Grip the longer wire 3mm from the bend with the round nosed pliers and wrap the wire around the pliers to make a loop (fig 8). Grip the loop at the base and tip back to centre the shape (fig 9).

Push the pliers right into the loop and grip firmly. Hold the long end of the wire in your other hand and begin to wrap down the stem towards the bead. The wraps will have to cover both thicknesses of wire which can take a little practice to get neat (fig 10). When you reach the position where the wire bends above the bead, trim away the excess wrapping wire and use your chain nose pliers just to squash the end of the wire into place so it cannot scratch the skin.



Making a Closed Bail with Wire

This shows the bail being created for a donut shaped bead (instead of a cross-hole bead) so you can see how versatile this technique can be.



Make a small loop at the end of a length of 0.6mm wire. Pass the looped end through the hole in the bead

Bend the looped end of the wire up so the loop sits 2mm above the edge of the bead. Bend the other side of the wire up to touch the top of the loop. Twist the loop open away from the bead surface.

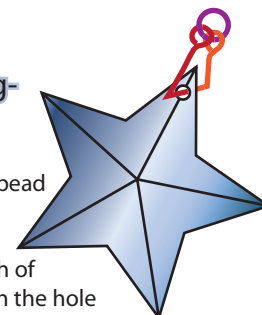
Hook the long end of the wire through the loop and close the loop firmly. Trim the long end of the wire and make a loop.

If you use a large plain, donut shape think about bending a few wiggles and curves into the wire that wraps around the donut for more design value from the same technique.

A Note Of Caution - be very careful when using pliers or bending wire close to the top of glass crystal beads. Crystal is very brittle and can break easily if not treated with care. Wear suitable eye protection and if a breakage does occur clean up all of the tiny shards carefully.

Making a Sling-Style Bail

This is ideal for a delicate cross-hole bead (like crystal drop).



Thread a 5cm length of 0.6mm wire through the hole in the bead until the bead sits halfway along the wire. Carefully bend the two ends of the wire up to cross-over 8mm above the top of the bead. Roll each end of the wire into a loop - the loops need to be in the same plane as the ends of the hole through the bead. Pass a jump ring through both loops to complete the bail.