

Pliers and Other Tools for Making Beaded Designs

This is a brief guide to the pliers and tools that you can buy to make beaded jewellery and accessories. When you are starting out there are just a few simple pieces of equipment that are **essential** to get a professional finish to your work - **these are indicated in red in the list**. The other items are very useful and can make the job in hand a pleasure rather than a chore.

Spellbound catalogue numbers are alongside any product mentioned so you can refer to the website for more information if you wish.

Pliers for Making Loops, Cutting and Crimping

This is a general guide to tools, there are other downloads available for techniques and projects

All of these tools are available with standard size handles.



Round Nosed Pliers (TL001)

Tapered cylindrical noses to make completely circular loops in the end of head-pins, eyepins and wire lengths. Essential for earring making and linking. Available in fine for very tiny loops and medium for general jewellery purposes.



Wire Cutters (TL003)

For trimming wires, pins and wire beading threads. Side cutting pliers (shown) are the easiest to use. Do not use for cutting memory wire.



Chain or Snipe Nosed Pliers (TL010)

For gripping, squashing and crimping. Flat and smooth on the inside but fine at the tips to get into tight spaces. Team these with a pair of flat nosed or bent nosed pliers to make opening and closing jump rings a little easier



Bent Nosed Pliers (TL013)

Great for holding things steady - prop your elbow on the table and hold the component in the pliers.



Crimping Pliers (TL016)

Designed to fold a french crimp in half for a neater look. Takes a bit of practice to get used to them but the result looks good. Different sizes for different sizes of crimp



Flat Nosed Pliers (TL002)

For gripping squashing and crimping. Like the chain nosed pliers flat and smooth on the inside but blunt at the tips and a little chunkier for a stronger grip - great for lace ends.



Nylon Jaw Pliers (TL006 and TL005)

When you are making more complex wire shapes (especially with coloured wire) you need to make sure that the pliers do not mark the wire surface. These pliers with flat or round nylon coated noses protect the wire from harm. Inexpensive replacement jaws are available as they can wear with use.



Split Ring Tweezers (TL018)

A great little innovation. Split rings are very useful on the end of a fine thread or vulnerable necklace end. These tweezers enable you to gently open the split ring without distorting the shape and affecting the strength of the ring.

Pliers are also available in mini sizes which are ideal if all you need to do is the occasional repair or make two or three pairs of earrings - they are not suitable for using all day long as you will get hand fatigue. Conversely if you opt for ERGO pliers (TL015) you get a plier with a comfortable easy grip handle which are a pleasure to use hour after hour after hour.

Other Tools For Wire

Wire Bending Jigs

These are extremely useful if you want to produce the same wire shape over and over again or to make complicated wire filigrees. The WIGJIG brand has different patterns of holes drilled through a solid and heavy block of perspex. Being transparent it is easy to see your required design through the block and this makes it very simple to place the pegs in the correct places for the bends. The less expensive Thing-A-Ma-Jig brand has a transparent beginners jig (WJ005) but is not as chunky as the WIGJIG versions. Use 0.8mm wire for small filigrees (up to 35mm across) and 1.0mm for slightly bigger filigrees up to 55mm in diameter. You can use 1.2mm on the WIGJIG brands for larger shapes but it becomes very hard to bend intricate shapes in this gauge of wire



Wire Bead Makers

These make speedy coiled tubes of wire that can be formed into beads. Using different colours and gauges of wire you can make interesting earrings by spiraling one coil over the top of another

Tools and Equipment For Bead Threading

Refer to the 'Working With Beading Thread' downloads for techniques for starting and finishing off threads requiring a needle and information about choosing the correct thread for the project you want to make. See also the 'Looms and Looming' download.

Needles

Beading needles are especially fine to fit through the tiny holes that you find in the smallest of beads. They are available in different sizes - **Size 10 (BN002)** for most beading uses and for seed beads down to size 13/0

Size 13 (BN003) for size 11/0 to size 15/0 seed beads where the thread has to pass two or three times through each bead

Size 15 (BN004) for size 13/0 to size 15/0 seed beads where the thread takes a complicated thread path

Specialist Needles are also available -

Wire needles (BN005 and BN006) are made from twisted wire. They have a large collapsible eye that goes flat when pulled through the first bead. These are used for threading larger beads with small holes such as semi-precious beads or freshwater pearls where a strong thread needs to fit through a very tiny hole indeed.

Big Eye Needles (BN007) - these are two fine needles stuck together to leave a very large eye for the thread down the centre. These are ideal if you have difficulty threading the tiny eye on a standard beading needle but they will not fit through very small beads when weaving.

Extra Long Needles (BN008 and BN009) are useful for bead looming as they can reach across the whole width of the loom in one giant stitch making looming much quicker and potentially a lot neater.

Thread Conditioners

These help to prevent the thread from tangling, help the thread to run smoothly through the beads and can help you to pull harder on the thread where you need to get a degree of tension in the work. Place the thread against the conditioner and apply a little pressure with your finger as you pull the thread across the surface.

Beeswax (MS002) helps to prevent tangles and gives you a better grip on the thread for pulling up the tension.

Thread Heaven (MS001) smoothes away the kinks and curls as the thread comes off the reel, is superb at preventing tangles and helps the thread to run through the same bead over and over again.



Other Useful Accessories

Beadmat (BM001)

You can just use a folded teatowel but the beadmat has a fleecy texture that will hold the beads still as you work. Place the mat on a tray so your work can be put aside without disturbing the design in progress.

Bead Stopper (TL025)

An ingenious gadget that secures the loose end of the thread whilst you are working at the other end. Simply slip the thread (Nymo, Superlon, Fireline, Tigertail, Soft Flex etc) between the coils of the spring and the stopper grips on tight without damaging the thread surface. 'Hold On' (TL021) is a removable sticky putty that does the same job. Both are neat, easy to use and a good solution for a common problem that causes a lot of threading mishaps.

TL025

