



Working With Fine Beading Threads & Calotte Crimps

Fine beading threads can be used for creating intricately woven netted patterns, firm panels of closely-stitched beads or simple strings to form necklaces, bracelets and tassels. This guide will help you to choose the correct needle, the right amount of thread for your project and how to start and finish a simple string of beads neatly.

Choose a Needle

Beading needles are especially fine to fit through the holes in even the smallest of beads.

They are available in several sizes - the higher the number: the finer the needle will be.

Size 10 (BN002) for most beading projects and weaving with Delicas and seed beads down to size 11/0.

Size 13 (BN003) for weaving with multiple thread passes through Delicas and size 10/0 to 13/0 seed beads.

Size 15 (BN004) for weaving seed beads sizes 13/0 to 15/0 where the thread weaves through the holes many times.

Specialist needles are also available -

Wire needles (BN006 & BN010) are made from very fine twisted wire. They have a large eye which collapses when you pull the thread through the first bead. They are used for threading larger beads with very small holes such as semi-precious beads and freshwater pearls where a strong thread has to fit through a very tiny hole.

Big Eye Needles (BN007) - these are two very fine needles stuck together to leave a very large hole for the thread down the centre. These are ideal if you have difficulty threading a normal beading needle but 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 the work much faster and potentially a lot neater too.

For more getting started tips for beadweaving see the [TECHNIQUES](#) download

Beadwork Basics

for starting & finishing threads, following a pattern and lots more



Getting the Thread Correct

There are several types of beading thread available - see the [TECHNIQUES](#) download '[Choosing Beading Threads](#)' - make sure you have the right one before you start.

What thread colour do I use? - In general choose a colour that tones with the darkest shade in your bead selection. Exceptions to the basic rule are - if another colour in the palette forms all of the edges of a woven design choose a colour to match that or, if you are using a high proportion of transparent beads you need to think more carefully about how the bead colours might be affected. Transparent beading thread is not available but a neutral shade such as ash or grey can be very useful.

Single or double? - If you are straight-stringing a length of beads use a double thread - a double thread will hold a 1m string of mixed small beads and seed beads or a 45cm (18") string of 6mm glass beads very nicely. If the beads are bigger, or the string longer, consider using two double threads or a heavier duty stranded beading wire or knotting thread. For most beadweaving projects a single thread is both strong enough and much easier to work with. If you make a mistake it is easier to pull out and it is much less likely to get caught up into knots.

What length do I need? - If you are straight-stringing you need the thread to be long enough to complete the whole row - you don't want to make a join in the length. Allow at least 15cm (6") extra at each end to finish off. If you are weaving with a single thread 1.2m - 1.5m is a good starting length; 2-3m if you are going to use the thread double.

Clasps & Crimps



A bolt ring clasp is ideal for a light-weight design.



A small lobster clasp can also be a very good choice.



Or try a simple box clasp or torpedo screw-fastener.

You need to make sure that the ends of your work are secure and to attach a clasp if necessary. There are two easy methods to finish a threaded necklace or bracelet -

If a necklace length is long enough to slip over the head you can tie the two sides together with a secure double knot to make a simple loop. Before you trim the thread ends pass them through a few beads to either side of the knot - this will neaten the finish. Trim very closely. To make the knot more secure dab it with a little clear drying nail polish or glue.

OR

You can add calotte crimps to conceal the knot at the end of the thread and add a clasp - this is an easy way to make your work look professional - see next page.



You will need a tag or a jump ring/split ring for the clasp to latch onto at the other side of the design.



Calotte Crimps - the two hinged cups close over the knot. The hook connects to the clasp (with a jump ring if necessary).

Using Calotte Crimps

The two cups on a calotte crimp close together to conceal the knot at the end of the thread. If you examine the hinge between the cups you will see the hole for the thread. The hole is much larger than any knot you can easily make with a doubled length of beading thread so you need to cheat - this is the cheat's guide to using calotte crimps.



You Will Need

One beading needle
A length of beading thread
A pair of calotte crimps



One clasp with a tag or split ring if required
Two size 10/0 seed beads to use as stoppers inside the calotte crimps
Your selection of beads for the design

1 Cut enough double thread for your project adding 15cm to each end for the knots. Thread the needle. Bring the two cut ends together to make a double thread but do NOT tie a knot (fig 1).



fig 1

2 Thread one size 10/0 (or smaller) seed bead onto one of the thread ends (fig 2) - this will act as your stopper. Bring the two ends of the thread together again and tie in one overhand knot 6-8cm from the ends (fig 3).



fig 2



fig 3

3 Pick up the first calotte crimp. Pass the needle through the hole from the cupped side of the calotte (fig 4) pulling the bead to sit snugly between the cups.



fig 4

4 Thread on your bead design to the required length (fig 5) - REMEMBER that threading on the other calotte crimp and the clasp will add about 2cm to the finished length of the design.

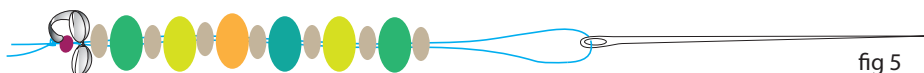


fig 5

5 Pick up the second calotte. Thread the needle through the hole in the calotte from the outside of the cups to the inside of the cups (fig 6).



fig 6

6 Cut off the needle leaving two long threads coming from the calotte. Separate the threads and thread one seed bead (stopper bead) onto one of the threads (fig 7).

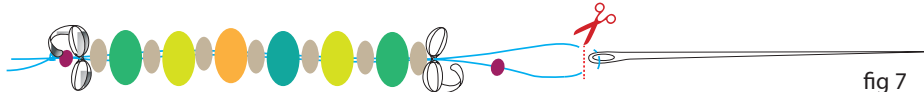


fig 7

7 Knot the two threads together as if you were tying shoelaces pushing the seed bead down snugly inside the calotte (fig 8). Make two or three more knots in a similar fashion to secure.



fig 8

8 Use clear nail polish to seal the knots inside both calottes. Leave to dry for a moment and trim the thread ends neatly (fig 9).

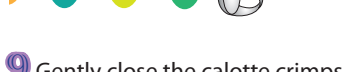


fig 9

9 Gently close the calotte crimps over the knots (they should look like a small metallic bead when closed). Bend the hooks of each calotte to attach the clasp set.

Making a Double Row Design



Prepare the needle with enough double thread to make the two rows of your design. Don't forget to add the 15cm to the ends for finishing off.

Follow stages 1 - 5 from the 'Using Calotte Crimps' instructions.

The needle will have just passed through to the inside of the second calotte crimp.

Thread on a seed bead and pass back through the hole in calotte crimp in the opposite direction (fig 10).

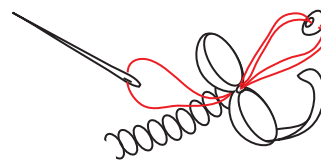


fig 10

Thread on the second row of your design.

Pass through the hole in the first calotte to emerge next to the first knot.

Now tie the needle end of the thread to the two thread tails from the first row with a knot as in fig 8.

Finish the necklace as in steps 8 and 9.

If you want more information about basic threading and bead jewellery techniques take a look at the beginners book **BK600 - Starting to Make Bead Jewellery** it shows you all the basics for just £2.50.