Loops - a Professional Touch

It takes a little practice to be able to make round, secure loops with round nosed pliers, but it's worth the effort, because once you can make loops successfully a whole world of design possibilities opens up. These tips will help you to create links, tassels and chains that hang straight and smooth.

There are two basic shapes of round loop - centred and un-centred.

A centred loop is required wherever you want to link onto another part of the design (another loop or a finding). The top of the loop should be directly above the main stem of the wire (fig 1).

An un-centred loop (fig 2) is usually reserved for decorative purposes. You can use them at the end of a tassel strand (fig 3) or as part of a filigree arrangement.

If you try to link onto an un-centred loop the link will kink to the side and will not lie straight.

fig 3
un-centred loops turned into scrolls at the end of a decorative dangle

See the Twist and Curl Filigree Earrings pdf under the Projects Tab for how to make these shapes

Best Side Forward

A loop has a back and a front. The back is the side with the cut end of the wire. The front is where the wire bends out into the loop shape and over the top (fig 4).

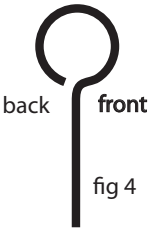

fig 4

If you are threading on a bead and making a loop close up to the bead (no gap between the bead and loop) it does not matter which side of the loop shows to the front of the design as the cut end is tucked away close to the bead.

If you are making a loop on a longer stem where the full shape of the loop is seen you need to make sure that, if possible, the front of the loop shows to the front of the design - this is especially important if you are making a fringe (fig 5) or making a row of dangles.

fig 5

Having Problems With Loop Making?

Have a look at our technique sheet 'Loops & Linking'.

Everyone needs to practice when they first start - you would be a very unusual individual if it worked right first time!

Take a 30cm length of 0.6mm or 0.8mm wire and make a loop at the end; cut it off and make another loop. Repeat. By the time you get halfway along the length the loops should be getting quite good - keep going and when you get to the end of the length you will be ready to add a professional finish to your work.

Making Loops Work Together

When you make a loop at both ends of a wire length you need to make sure that the loops are in the same plane as one another (fig 6).

When you link up to the next component the join will be smoother. If you are making a chain of links this is especially important to get a good 'fall' and fluid movement along the length.

fig 8

fig 7

Small lengths and small beads can link together loop to loop (fig 7) but longer links and larger beads will need a jump ring in-between the pairs of loops (fig 8).

Making the Loops in the Same Plane

Make the loop at one end of the wire and thread on any beads you require. Trim the wire if necessary. Hold the wire directly in front of yourself with the cut end of the wire vertical and the loop at the bottom of the pin in the opposite plane to your body. Place the pliers on the wire and roll the loop away from yourself.

If you need to adjust the plane hold across both loops with two pairs of pliers - when the handles on the pliers line up (fig 9) the loops are in the same plane.

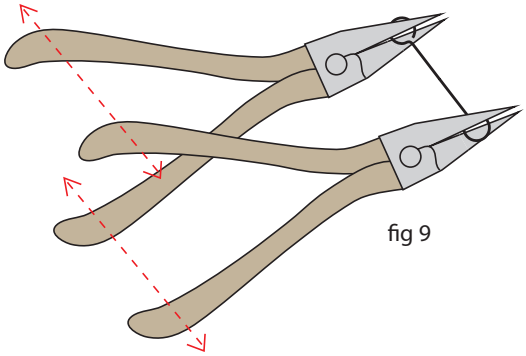

fig 9