Working With Stranded Beading Wire

If you want to thread heavy beads, beads with sharp edges around the holes or make a design that will get lots of wear and tear it's good to consider using a stranded beading wire. These threads can also be used for the lightest floating designs, simple weaving and more outlandish designs - you just have to choose the right one for your purpose.
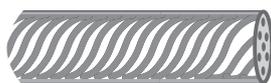
Premium Threads

There are several premium quality stranded beading wires on the market - Soft Flex, Beadalon etc

These branded threads offer advantages for some projects - extra flexibilty, extra strength and some are extra fine.

Stranded beading wire is made from a rope twist of fine wires which run down the centre of a plastic sleeve. The strength and flexibility of the thread depends on the number of individual wires (or cores) and the diameter of each of these core wires.

Thicker core wires give you more strength but less flexibility.

More cores of thinner wire give you more flexibility but less strength.

On premium threads you will see the number of strands & the wire diameter quoted on the reel.
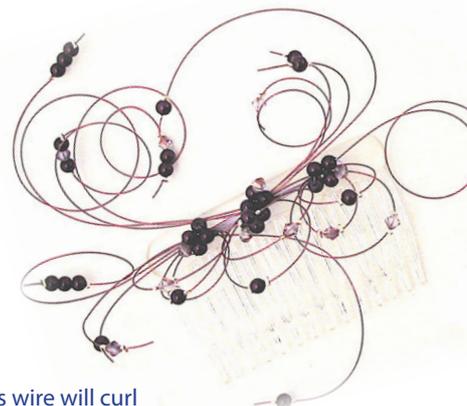
Basic Threads

Non-branded 7 - strand is a good basic thread for most straightforward threading projects and simple floating designs

The plastic coating can be dyed which gives you a huge range of colours to choose from.

Non-premium stranded beading wire has a tendency to kink so it must be treated with care whilst you are threading.

This wire will curl like curling ribbon if you run your fingernail down the length which makes it great for hair fascinators.

Choosing a Premium Thread from the Spellbound Range

Soft Flex
21 strand 0.014 (BT401)
49 strand 0.019 (BT410)
49 strands 0.024 (BT425)

The 49 strand 0.019 wire is the best substitute for the 7 strand tigertail if you want to upgrade for a special project.
The 49 strand 0.024 wire thread is extremely strong and resilient - use it for heavy beads.

Soft Touch
7 strand 0.010 (BT450)
21 strand 0.014 (BT451)
49 strand 0.019 (BT452)

Soft Touch is a premium threading wire with maximum softness and drape. The finest 7 strand wire will fit through the smallest freshwater pearls and can be knotted between beads if necessary.
The thicker wires are stronger but retain the excellent drape with even the smallest beads. Use for small (up to 6mm) semi-precious beads and small glass beads.
The 7-strand can also be used for simple seed and small bead weaving if you need the extra strength of a beading wire rather than a beading thread.

Soft Flex Extreme
(BT460 - BT462)

A bright silver plated core instead of plain stainless steel make this a wire to be used where a high quality shiny finish is required.
Available in the same thicknesses as Soft Flex

French Crimps

French crimps are used to secure the stranded wire beading thread. They are small, specialised beads made from soft metal tape. They are designed to be crushed flat onto the beading wire holding it firmly in place. You can use them to secure a loop or make a stopper. They are available in several sizes but 2mm (FN061) is the most useful for standard threaded designs.

Securing French Crimps

Using Flat Pliers & Crimping Pliers

You can squash crimps flat with a pair of flat or chain nosed pliers and this is a very satisfactory method of finishing a crimp onto the wire thread. However, specialist 'crimping pliers' (TL016) are available. These pliers crease the crimp and then fold the crimp in half to make a smaller stopper than just the flattened crimp which you get from the plain pliers. Crimping pliers come in different sizes and you must match the pliers to the correct size of crimp. Our standard crimp (FN062) matches the crimping pliers TL016.
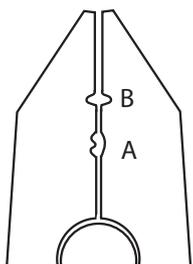
Crimping Pliers - Before you use the crimping pliers on your finished work practice a little first - ten or so practice crimps will do the job.

Thread a crimp onto a piece of beading wire and push your thumb nail up against it so that it sits square on the thread. Using the smile shaped hole (A) on the crimping pliers squeeze the crimp gently to put a crease into the crimp. Your thumb nail should keep the crimp square on the wire as you crimp - if the crimp twists it will not crease neatly.

Turn the crimp through 90° and place it in the round hole on the pliers (B). Push your nail up close to the crimp and gently squeeze down with the pliers so the crease becomes a fold.

The crimp will now be holding firmly onto the wire.

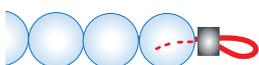## Making a Loop on Stranded Beading Wire

fig 1

fig 2

Thread one French crimp onto the end and fold the end of the wire back through the crimp to make a loop (fig 1).

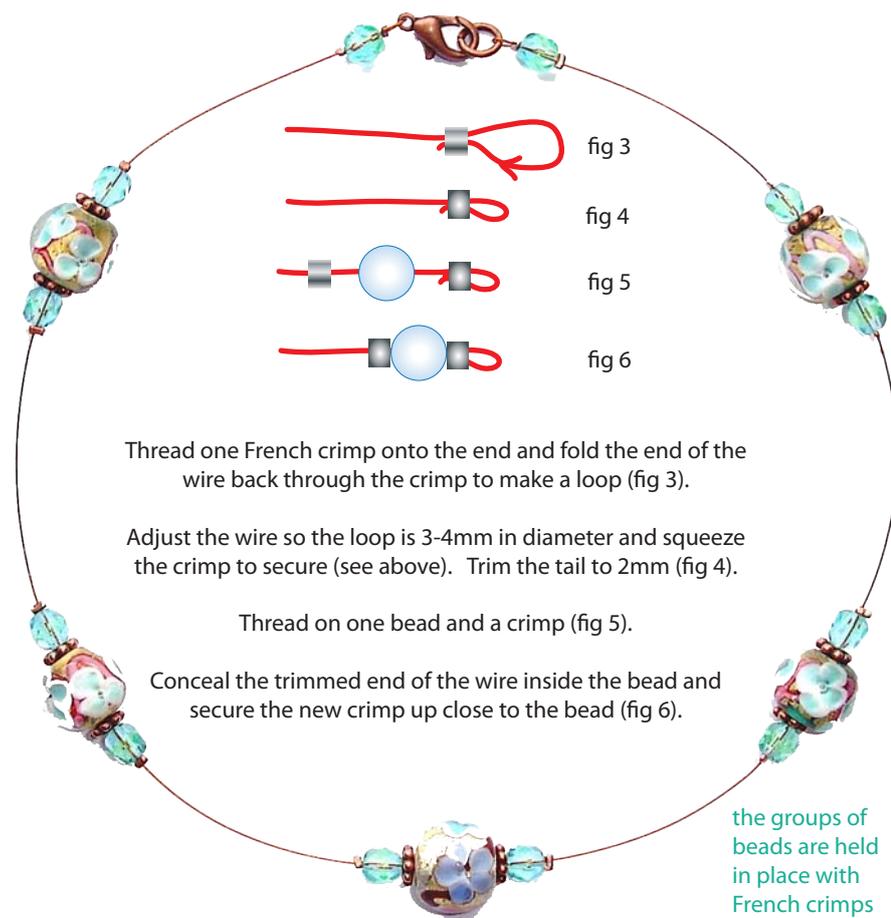Adjust the wire so the loop is 3-4mm in diameter and squeeze the crimp to secure (see above).

Thread on the beads concealing the tail of the wire inside the first bead (fig 2).

Repeat at the other end of the design making the loop up close to the last bead for a professional finish.

Add a clasp with jump rings

Making a Loop on Stranded Beading Wire for a Floating Design

fig 3

fig 4

fig 5

fig 6

Thread one French crimp onto the end and fold the end of the wire back through the crimp to make a loop (fig 3).

Adjust the wire so the loop is 3-4mm in diameter and squeeze the crimp to secure (see above). Trim the tail to 2mm (fig 4).

Thread on one bead and a crimp (fig 5).

Conceal the trimmed end of the wire inside the bead and secure the new crimp up close to the bead (fig 6).

the groups of beads are held in place with French crimps

Making a Loop on a Multiple Row Design

fig 8

fig 9

fig 10

fig 11

fig 12

Thread all of the rows through a crimp and secure the crimp (fig 7).

Trim all but one end to 2-3mm (fig 8).

Thread on a bead and a crimp concealing the cut ends inside the bead (fig 9).

Fold the remaining long end back through the crimp and the bead to form the loop - pull on the end where it emerges from the bead to adjust the loop size (fig 10).

Secure the last crimp and trim the excess wire thread away very carefully (fig 11).

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A Neat Finish

You can use crimp covers to conceal the squashed French crimps. They are available in 2.5mm, 3mm and 4mm slip them over the crimp and you close them down with your pliers to look like little metallic round beads at the end of your design - very professional !