

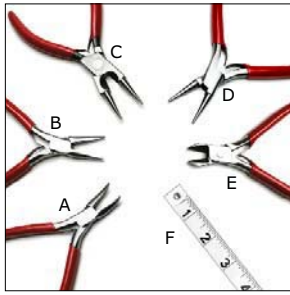
The Bead Shop™



Advanced Tricks of the Trade

by Janice Parsons

After teaching Tricks of the Trade for 10+ years, I realized I needed a challenge. I am ready to delve deeper into the world of color with my students. Additionally, bringing new techniques and viewpoints to beads and jewelry is very refreshing. So, let's begin!



TOOLS NEEDED

- A. Bent-nose chain pliers
- B. Needle-nose chain pliers
- C. Rosary OR
- D. Round-nose pliers
- E. Wire Cutters
- F. Ruler

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

- Finding a Source
- Be an Artist
- Diagramming Your Design
- Selecting your Materials
- Stringing Color
- Weaving Strands
- Finishing the Body of the Necklace
- Wire-wrapping Organically
- Connecting it All Together
- The Finishing Touch



1 Spool — .010 Beadalon, Softtouch, or Jewelry Wire



1 Spool — 28-gauge sterling silver or gold-filled wire
1' — 20-gauge sterling silver or gold-filled wire



1 — Approximately 2" - 3" flat pendant or bead to use as a focal point



½ Yard — Suede, organza, or ribbon of choice



2x2 Sterling Silver or gold-filled crimp beads



1-10 packages - size 11 seed beads in Clear, Clear AB, Transparent Grey & light, medium and dark seed beads in whatever color you're working in.



3mm and 4mm bicone crystals in a variety of colors including Clear and Clear AB
Assorted shapes, sizes and colors of crystals to match your palette



10 — Assorted styles, colors and shapes of fresh water pearls, approximately ½ strand of each ranging between 2mm and 9mm, plus coin and biwa



3-6 — Strands of gemstones in various shapes and sizes, including a strand in almost clear (i.e. quartz crystal, pale, transparent aquamarine, citrine etc.)



36" — Assorted beads in your palette, in a range of shapes, textures and sizes. These can be glass, wood, metal, bone, stone, shell, or anything that catches your eye



Finding a Source

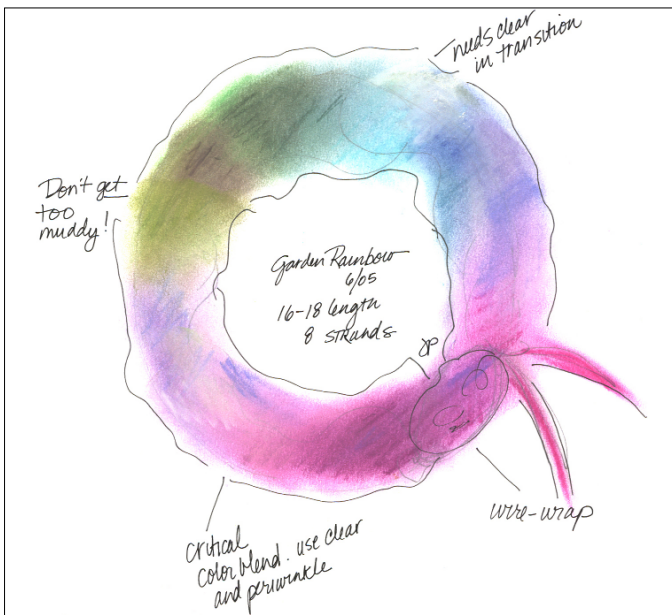
Just like we did in Tricks of the Trade, find something to inspire you. This time, if possible, use organic materials, i.e. flowers, shells and fruit. We will never be able to do justice to colorations the way nature can. But, we're going to try! You can also use a pendant, special bead, fabric swatch, painting, etc. Remember, all colors go together. You may want instead to use just one color for your entire project and develop a range of hues and shades of color within a color.



Be an Artist

Before beginning your bead selection, you are going to pull out the colors you see using pastels, colored pencils and the color wheel. Don't be afraid to put "pen to paper". You are not going to draw anything; you are just laying down color, more like mindful scribbling. Look really closely for all the colors present. Sometimes the background color(s) become invisible. Draw your colors going from a light shade to dark. Notice the different personalities a color takes in its various shades. Go ahead and scribble!

I find it fun and a great release putting color on paper. After you have found the colors in your source, you are going to want to create a rainbow on paper. Melt one color into the next.



Diagramming Your Design

Take a pencil and draw some tentative designs your project can take. You will be using a focal bead so construct your ideas around that, even if you don't have your main bead selected yet. Xeroxing your sketches can be helpful because you will have more than one copy to experiment with color blocking.

How long is your project going to measure? Decide on a length and factor that in. I recommend one color or shade for every 3-4 inches of length. Sketch your color blocking ideas on your drawings. Be experimental and try different ways of putting down your color. Keep all of them handy and then decide on the one you like the best.



Selecting your Materials

Tape very white paper on a table large enough to do a beaded color wheel. The area of paper should be about 16x22". I use copier paper taped one next to the other. I also use two sheets of thickness to achieve a more opaque, bright white. Find a work table that you can leave undisturbed for the duration of the project. If this isn't realistic, pack up your project in small quantities color by color. Then, label the bags in the order they go.

Create an inner color wheel of beads in various sizes. Leave out all seed beads and beads 3mm or smaller. Take your time creating this wheel. It's going to play an important role in your design. Refer to your color sketching to remind you of the shades and transitioning.



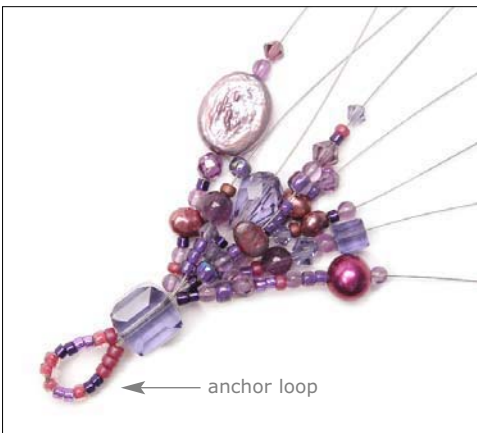
Once you have completed the inner color wheel, begin to select your seed beads and very small beads and create an outer ring of color. When you are done, you should feel pretty excited and ready to start stringing. My reaction is usually I just want to wear it the way it is!



Stringing Color

You have decided on your finished length. Cut 6-8 strands of stringing wire, each strand 3 times the finished length. String on enough seed beads to create a loop large enough for your suede ribbon or organza to fit through comfortably. Resist the temptation to make this loop large. This loop should be at the middle of the strands.

String all the strands through one bead. Check that the seed bead loop will accommodate the suede or organza you plan on using. You can always make the loop smaller later by cracking off unneeded seed beads with your needle-nose pliers, but you can't make it bigger! So, check the size before you proceed.



Using tape, anchor your project to the paper. Begin stringing each strand with a seed bead or a 3mm round or bi-cone. Transitioning to larger beads at this point is a gradual process. You will want to be mindful of the placement of beads next to each other on the strands. Also, just string far enough until you can't think about what you want to put on next.



Your color wheel of beads is in front of you to help you select the beads you want to go on next. To transition from one shade to the next, be ready to add clear or dark grey beads with what you are using. This helps either dilute or intensify the color. When going from one color to the next, as you do more than one strand, the visual transition becomes easier to read. Don't expect to get it all on one strand. It takes multiple strands to read the color change.



I like to begin my new color an inch or two back from where I want it to really start. I introduce it in seed beads of varying shades, so that when I am really ready to string the new color, it has already been mixing with the old color.



Weaving Strands

Tape down each strand as you go, so as not to lose the beads. When you have a couple of strands 3" in length, check the beads are equal in length and then take a bead you can string them both through. Make sure you have pushed the beads down completely to the loop and that the two strands measure the same length. When you weave the strands together, check that stringing wire isn't creating a gap below the bead. If it does, it means the strands may not have the same length of beads.



Add a few more beads to the doubled strand and then be ready to separate them and string them individually again. Remember to start the separated strands first with a few seed beads or 2-3mm beads.

I recommend you don't go further than 5" on any strand until you have all the strands strung at least 3". This will give you a good idea of how your color blocking is going vis-à-vis your diagram. You can choose to weave strands as you go. A strand from one side can join a strand later that was grouped with another. You can bring 3 strands together. Your project can be as woven or unwoven as you choose. Just be mindful the length of each strand woven with another is pretty equal in length.



Finishing the Body of the Necklace

Continue stringing until you have 12" completed. Make sure all strands are taped together and then hold them up to you in front of a mirror. You may be ready to wind down and finish stringing the body of the necklace. Take a minute and do the math:

of inches already strung: _____
 Length of focal bead: _____
 Plus 2": + _____2*
 = _____
 Total length of project: _____
 # of inches left to string: _____

*The 2" is for added length required for wrapping at each end of the focal bead, transition bead and space taken by suede or ribbon knot.



Continue stringing what you need to finish the body of the design. You want all your strands to be very similar in length and end tapered like you started. Take time to check that the stringing wire has been all pulled up. This can take several minutes. String on a transition bead. Check again the strands are equal length and then flat crimp a crimp bead above the bead. All 6-8 strands should fit through one 2x2 crimp bead. Double check they are all secure. You can set this aside now.



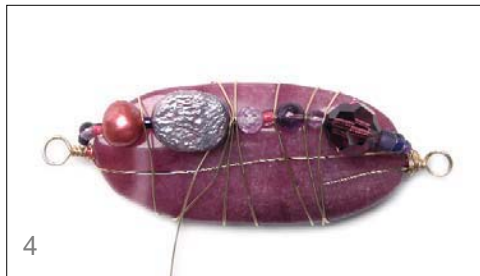
Wire-wrapping Organically

The beauty of this kind of wire-wrapping is that it is very forgiving. It is going to take multiple passes around and under to get the desired look. It begins with wire-wrapping a loop on each end. Use the heaviest gauge wire you can put through the hole. I would not recommend anything thinner than 22 gauge.

(1) Cut 20" of thinner gauge wire. I usually use 28 gauge to start my first pass. I wrap several times around one of the loops at the end. Then I string on enough beads to go the length of the bead and finish then wrap around the other loop. The wire against the bead should be pretty tight. It is going to form the base for the wraps.



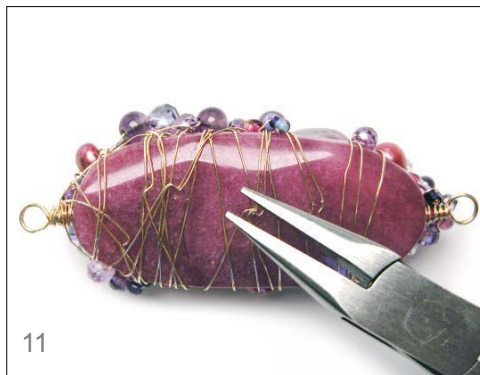
(2) Once you have anchored the first pass, add a few beads and wrap diagonally around the back and then come up to the front. (3) Pull your wire between two of the beads on the first pass and wrap all the way around again (4) several times until you feel you have solid "footing". (5) As you come up to the front again, add a couple beads and fit your wire between two beads as you wrap around to the back. Continue this until you have 3" left of wire. You are now going to end this wire by wrapping it around 3-4 times the original wire 4 times pulling it tight. Check it's secure and then cut the wire 1/4" away from the end. This tail of wire will be covered eventually. (6-7) Start a second strand of wire (also 20" in length) by securing it around another wire or around one of the end loops. Keep adding beads and wrapping. (8) You can also feed your wire under beads on the front side without going around the back. You will start and end each strand the same way. As you weave, you will sometimes add just one bead and then weave your wire under a group of beads and pull the wire through using your finger or the pliers.





(9) This process of wire-wrapping requires patience and the complete faith that when you are done, it is going to look fabulous! It also uses up a gigantic quantity of beads...enough to string an entire necklace! Keep in mind as you wrap, you want to have more beads and less wire showing when you are finished. Fill in empty spaces with beads and as you go. It's like building a layer cake. You can't put the decorations on top until the entire cake is built!

(10) When you feel you have done enough wire-wrapping, end your last strand and turn your bead over to the back. (11-12) Because you have used fine wire to wrap, this next technique must be done gently so as not to snap the wire. Take your needle-nose or bent nose pliers and tighten the wire by putting a "Thunderbolt" along the wire in various places. This quarter-turn twist tightens the wire up so there is not play on either side of the bead. This technique may also be incorporated on the front side of the bead if you have any loose wire. Just be gentle!



Connecting it All Together

(13-14) Divide your strands into 2 groups and crimp each to the focal bead. You want to flat crimp them. These crimp beads are going to be covered with more organic wrapping! Connect your transition bead to your focal bead.

Because you used very fine gauge stringing wire, you can crimp 4 strands into one crimp bead. So, go ahead and crimp to the wire-wrapped loop of your interesting bead. Check that the crimps are really secure and then cut off your excess wire.





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(15) Cut a piece of fine wire 20" in length and wrap around the loop of the focal bead and start adding seed beads and small beads. Work the wrap up over the transition bead and continue wrapping around the loop and over the crimp beads. (16) You can take the wire through the strands and around. Finish the wire as you did on the focal bead wrapping it around a strand of beads. Check that it is secure. Add thunderbolts on the transition bead as needed. Do so gently!

(17-18) You can do this organic wrapping as far up the strands as you want. You can also add it into your design anywhere you like. Just make sure the wire is secure and when you are done, there are no rough wire ends to catch or irritate.



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The Finishing Touch

(19) Now, the last and final step: Cut a piece of suede or organza long enough to tie or make a bow. This ribbon will have to be replaced on occasion, so have some extra on hand.

(20) When you are ready to wear it, try wearing it inside for a few hours to make sure the knot or bow you used is secure. This is especially important if you are giving it as a gift or reselling it.

Give instructions on knot. I use a square knot and replace the suede when it gets ratty looking.

I hope you have enjoyed this project as much as I have. And, I hope you have grown and challenged yourself to new levels as much as I have. If you have questions or need help finishing or starting another project, please contact me.

Thank you!
janice



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