

African Helix

with Emily Miller



Time to learn a new stitch! Join Emily for another adventure to explore color and pattern with [African Helix](#). This self-supporting hollow stitch is different from many of the stitches you may have experienced, it is held in place by looping around thread, rather than passing through beads. Emily has also come up with a new way of attaching a clasp to seed bead weaving, you will love how smart it is and how refined it looks.

Ingredients

- 1 [Clasp](#)
- 1 Spool [KO Thread](#)
- 1 Spool [Soft Flex .014](#)
- 3-4 Tubes [11/0 Miyuki Seed Beads](#)
- 2 [Crimp Tubes](#)

Tools

- [Size 10 beading Needle](#)
- [Beading Surface](#)
- [Thread Snips](#)
- [Flush Cutter](#)
- [Crimping Plier](#)
- [Beeswax](#)
- Pencil or Chopstick

Step 1

Thread a needle with about 1.5 yards of thread. Longer threads tend to tangle and wear poorly, it is actually easier and faster to change threads as needed. Wax the thread heavily, drawing it over a beeswax block several times.

Step 2

Pick up 16 beads in this pattern: 3 main color and 1 accent bead repeated 4 times.

Tie in a circle with a secure knot. Leave a tail of thread to weave in later.

Step 3

Slide the circle of beads onto a pencil or chopstick. Pick up 5 beads on your needle and thread and slide your needle under the thread between the 4th and 5th beads. Stitch your needle from the outside of the ring to the inside. Pull the thread between the beads, and slide the beads down to the ring. Repeat around the circle, making loops of beads above the circle. This is the toughest part! Hold the beads **up** in the shape of the petals of a flower.

Step 4

For the next row, pick up 5 beads and stitch between the 3rd and 4th beads on each previous loop. After the 3rd or 4th row, the 'ribs' will begin to develop, beads 4 and 5 will form the ribs.

Step 5

When the desired length is reached make a final row using only 4 beads in each stitch, and pass the needle through the last row to stiffen and slightly cinch in the end of the tube.

Changing Threads

The easiest way without losing your place or tension is a two-needle thread change. Leave the old thread hanging with needle attached. Thread a new needle with a 1.5 yard length of thread, position the needle almost in the center and wax the thread. Thread the needle up the 'rib' several beads and tie a half hitch knot. Pass through a few more beads and tie another half hitch knot. Work the needle up around the beadwork and exit the same bead the old thread is exiting. Continue to stitch with the new thread. After an inch or two of new beading work the old thread into the new stitching and tie off with a couple of knots.

Adding a clasp

Feed a piece of Soft Flex through the center of the beadwork and add one half of your clasp with a crimp tube. For the second side, compress the tube of beadwork slightly, and add a crimp tube and the other half of the clasp. Lightly expand the beadwork to cover the crimp tube. [For more on Crimping, see our Skill Builder.](#)

