



# Making Bullion Wire for Stringing

with Emily Miller

A bit about bullion: also known as French wire or gimp, bullion wire is a coil of fine gauge wire that is used to cover thread. In stringing, it is used for protecting the thread where it passes through the metal of a clasp or other component. It provides a sleek look and is cut to fit for each piece of jewelry.

Ready made bullion is available in a few sizes and materials, but to make any creation really custom, you can make your own! These techniques are especially useful when working with larger stringing materials or in non-traditional situations.

Making your own bullion isn't hard but this is a time where using the appropriate wire gauges, hardnesses, and tools will help a bunch!

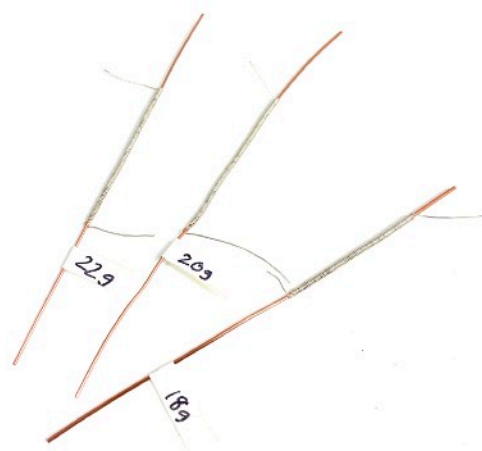
**Gauges 28-22** are the most useful for making the coil of bullion, heavier than 22g can be hard to wind with bare hands, but similar to making your own jump rings using a mandrel in a drill or other winding tool would help this process.

**Gauges 22-14** use with mandrels (the core to wind around) to coil the smaller gauges around. Some other items like small sizes of metal knitting needles can also be used.

**Dead Soft Wire** for winding the coil is perfect, soft, and easy to control. It won't spring back when the coil is made. The winding will work harden the coiling wire, making it sturdy for use.

**Half-Hard** wire works best for mandrels, make any wire stiffer and harder by vigorous straightening with nylon jaw pliers.

**Wire Materials** Any type of wire will work for making bullion: sterling, gold-filled, copper, or plated wires.








Use your trusty tools for making bullion, and remember that the traditional way to use bullion wire is when knotting between beads. The thread will have to pass through a few beads twice at each end, so some of the beads may need a slightly larger hole to accommodate the extra thread. A **Bead Reamer** with a tapered diamond bit will help enlarge holes in almost any natural material. Pearls or semi precious stone tend to have small holes so using the bead reamer can help.

**Nylon Jaw Pliers**- great for taking the big curls out of smaller wires, or straightening mandrel wires.

**Flush Cutters**- use to trim wire and cutting the coil to use. A heavier pair will be useful to cut 18g and larger.

**Bead Reamer**- We recommend one with diamond bits. A great tool, use it to enlarge holes and even tidy up irregular holes on almost any bead.

**Make-it-yourself Bullion**- Best used when ready made bullion isn't large enough or sturdy enough, think for larger threads or leather. Use larger gauges of wire, knitting needles, or any non tapered metal rod.

<b>Mandrel wire →</b>	24g, 22g, 20g	22g, 20g	20g, 18g	16g, 14g Metal Knitting Needles Sizes 0,1,2
<b>Wire Gauge or mm for coil →</b>	28g .32mm	26g .4mm	24g .51mm	22g .64mm
Silk Thread Sizes 6-10				
C-Lon - Micro and Fine				
C-Lon- Regular Waxed Linen				
Leather- 0.5mm, 1.0mm, 1.5mm				