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Wide Button Cuff

by Janice Parsons

Video by Sam Applegate and Karen Marshall

I fell in love with bead looming when Sam Applegate was shooting her video, *Tricks to Looming & Bead Weaving*. Not gifted with patience to follow bead patterns, looming became something I avoided in the course of my career both as a jewelry designer and bead shop owner. Sam came along and with no effort (but years and years of fiber looming and expertise) transformed a design tray into a loom. All of a sudden the idea of bead looming became easy to understand and implement and I fell in love....

When I let go of having to follow a pattern, the world of bead weaving opened up the flood gates of my creativity. This tutorial covers my journey AFTER learning to loom Sam's way. This is how I adapted bead weaving and Sam's project to a wider bracelet with a button cuff closure. Please watch our video to learn how to make your own loom, and bead weave beads and then try these next-level techniques.

I think of this handout as a second story to the house Sam built.

Background into My First Button Cuff...



When I made my first beaded cuff, I ended it like Sam shows us in the video with the adjustable micro-fiber suede cord and two metal beads which slide to close.

I modified her design template to add a wider cuff and less beads. by adding a wider ultra suede cuff. This was more to my style because I felt my pebbled design really needed a wider frame to set off all the busyness of the beading.

In this sample, because my wrist measures just under 7 inches, the beaded section is 4-3/4" inches in length and the cuff is two bands 1-1/4 inches each (which adds up to 7 inches). To simplify published measurements in this handout, I rounded up to 5 inches of beading and 2 inches of cuff.



After wearing this bracelet every day for more than a month, I found the Compassion Suede cord stretched and my metal sliding beads became too loose to keep the bracelet snug around my wrist. I re-crimped the beads to make a tighter fit, but after another month of wearing it every day, it still would not stay secure. I decided I had to remodel it so I could continue wearing it every day...no other option!

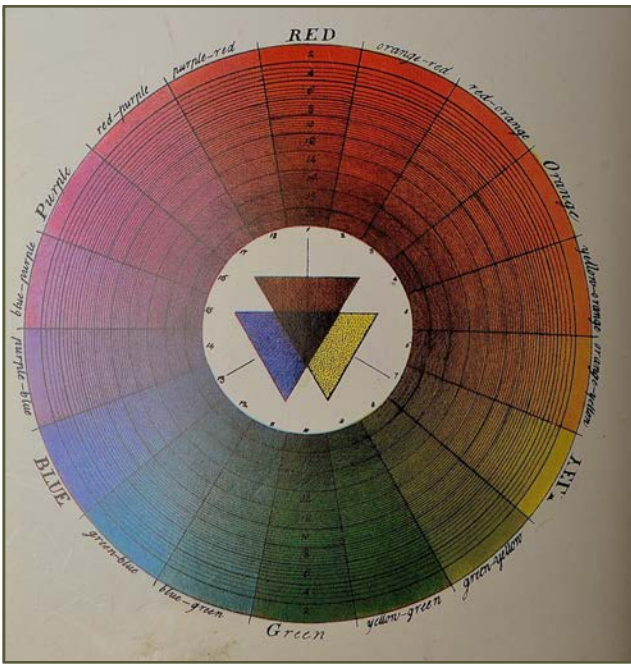
This motivated me to add a button. I began by cutting off the suede ties on ONE side with sharp wire cutters. Using KO thread and a heavy sewing needle (or a glover's needle), I sewed the button into the center of the cuff on the side I cut off the cords.

On the other side of the band, I took the two remaining cords and tied an overhand knot, so the two open strings will now become a button loop. I have been wearing this bracelet now every day and it holds up really well. I love my bracelet!

The Seed Beads Used in this Bracelet are:

Matte Transparent (8-131FR), Ivory Pearl Ceylon (8-592), Matte Opaque Cream (8-2021), Pearl Ceylon (8-591), Duracoat Galvanized Gold (8-4204) Picasso Opaque Chartreuse (8-4515), Picasso Opaque Brown (8-4517), Matte Transparent Root Beer (8-135F), Matte Transparent Grey AB (8-152FR), Picasso Seafoam Green (8-4514), Matte Transparent Light Topaz AB (8-132FR), Matte Metallic Khaki Iris (8-2025).

Note: The more shading you do, the more colors you need!



First color wheel ever recorded was made by Moses Harris, an engraver in *The Natural System of Colours*, printed in 1776.

Random Pebbling

It is almost impossible to make “bad” bead choices using this method of random beading I call “pebbling”...any combination of colors will work. My suggestion for choosing beads for your first pebble project is to choose one color group, like purples to reds or yellows to greens. There is no choice that is going to look bad!

Using a color wheel to help inspire your bead choice is a wonderful beginning. Sometimes having a guide like this will help you narrow your choices.



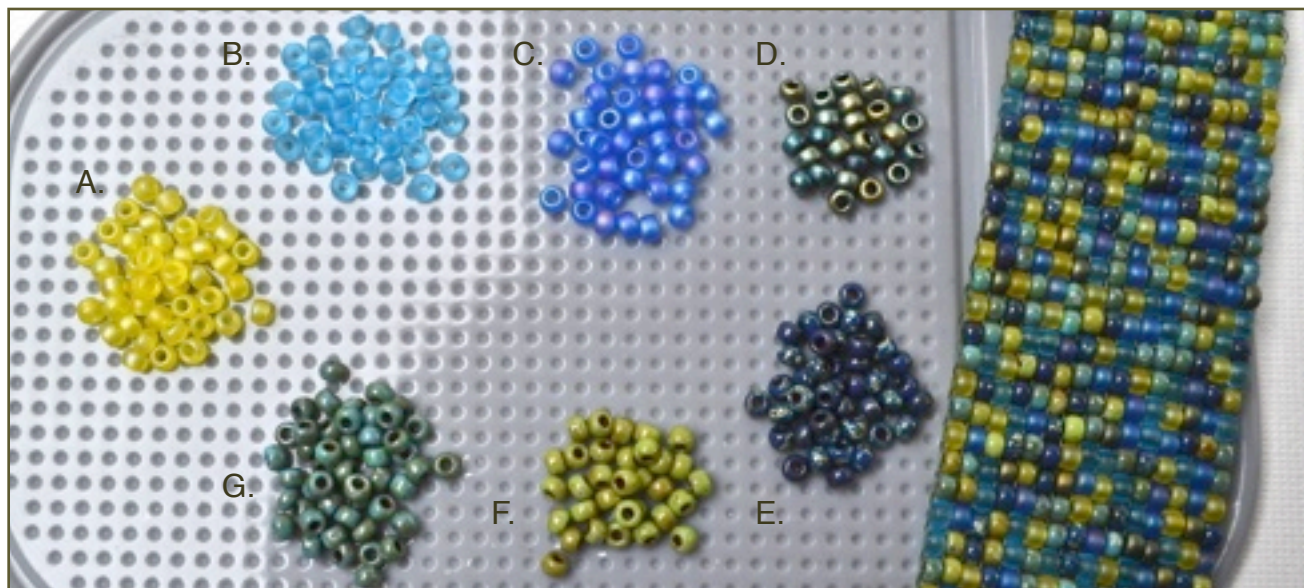
Working from a photograph, painting or textile can also inspire your color choices. Nature isn’t afraid to mix and match colors and textures, why should we?

Select beads that have different coatings. Using beads with AB or Iris finishes give you a rainbow of colors within one tube. This will add even more interest to your pattern. Also incorporating Picasso-finish, Duracoat Galvanized, Scarabe and half-coated beads into your bead selection will all add extra zing.



Although there are no patterns to follow for random pebbling, try out these tips to help free you to go patternless;

- a. Don't string two of the same bead in a row. So, if you just added an aqua bead, add something else next.
- b. Start and end each row with a different bead than what started and ended the previous row. The eye naturally goes to the edges of a bracelet. Your design will look more random if the beads on the edges vary.
- c. Pebbling can be effective with only 4-7 different colors of beads. The next three samples prove that.



The Seed beads pictured above are:

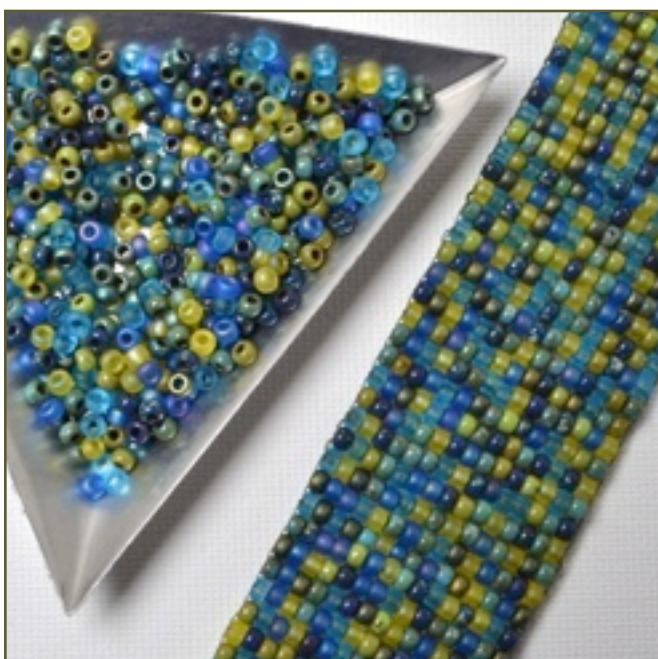
- A.** Matte Transparent Yellow AB (8-136FR) **B.** Matte Transparent Aqua 8-148F)
C. Matte Transparent Sapphire AB (8-150FR) **D.** Matte Teal AB (8-92008) **E.** Picasso Montana Matte (8-4516)
F. Picasso Chartreuse Matte (8-4514) **G.** Picasso Seafoam Green (8-4514)

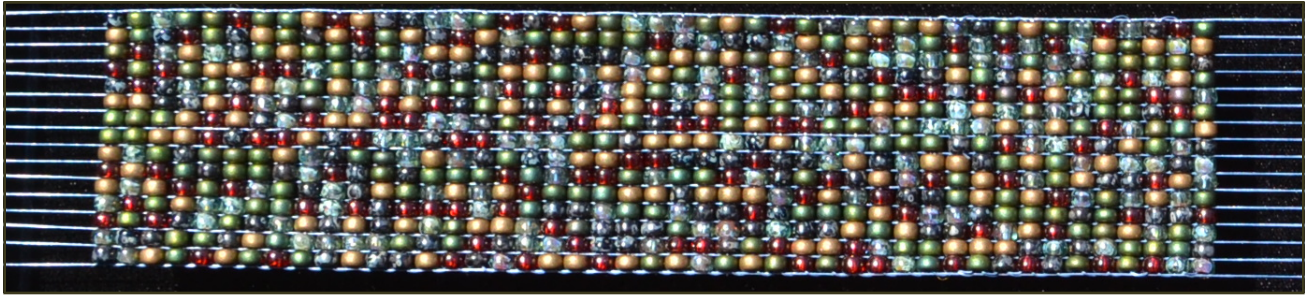
Triangles come in so handy for holding, sorting and scooping your beads.

With 8/0 seed beads, the tubes hold a large quantity of beads so parceling out beads to ensure you have enough at the end is really not much of a problem.

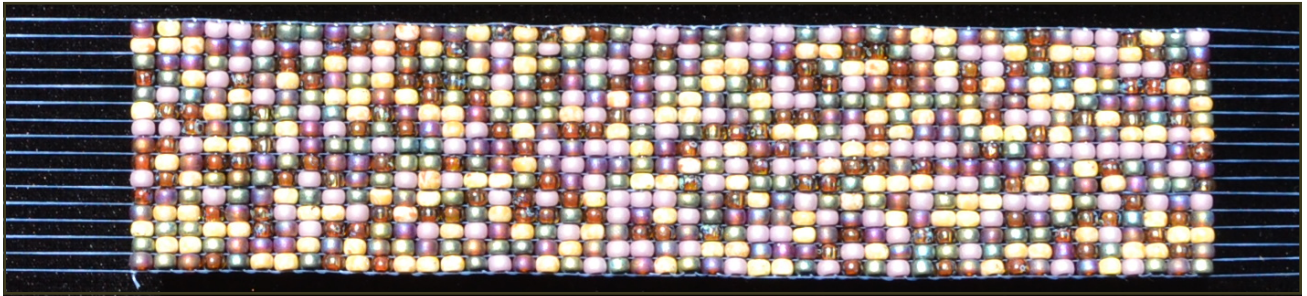
However, if you do use something in your project that is limited (like a strand of pearls), divide it into 3 piles: beginning, middle and end. Add more of that particular bead to your sticky mat or triangle as you reach the middle and end. That way you won't run out too early. I have learned this the hard way!

On the top of the next page are two samples done by Sam of random pebbling. They both look like they use a lot of beads, but in fact they are limited to less than five colors each.





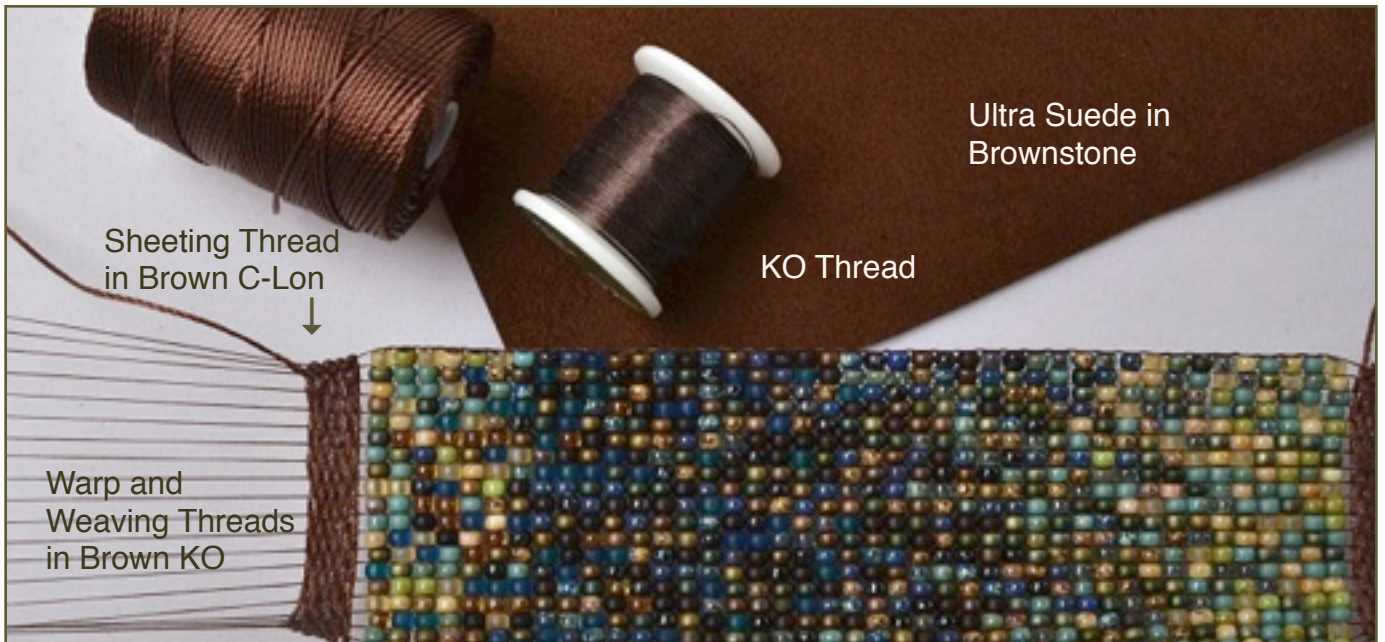
The Seed Beads used in this sample are: Garnet Gold Luster (8-304), Matte Mettalic Khaki Iris (8-2035), Picasso Olivine Transparent (8-4506) and Picasso Smokey Matte Black (8-4511). Sample by Sam Applegate.



The Seed Beads used in this sample are: Matte Opaque Mauve AB(8-3410FR), Matte Transparent Smokey Amythest (8-142FR), Picasso Canary Yellow Matte (8-4512), Picasso Transparent Saffron (8-4501) and Matte Transparent Grey AB (8-152FR). Sample by Sam Applegate.

Choosing your Fibers Colors

Once you have your beads selected, it's time to pick your fibers. I experimented with thread and fiber colors; I tried light and dark KO thread for the warp and bead weaving. In the end, I found I prefer all my fibers to match...my warp thread to harmonize with my beads, my sheeting cord to match my Ultra Suede. In the event the Ultra Suede moves around over time and the sheeting threads show underneath, it is less noticeable if the C-Lon matches the Ultra Suede.



The Seed Beads used in this bracelet are listed later in this project.

Shading

So, now we get to my favorite part.....blending from light to dark and back to light...or visa versa...or even just light to dark. However your mood strikes you! This is where a bead mat comes in really handy to display your colors....and you're going to need LOTS of colors. I used 13 in this very wide cuff (19 rows). To begin, you will start with your warp of 20 threads. A little tip, take a quick snap (on your smart phone or draw out a diagram of the colors you choose) on your bead mat. Sometimes, like me, you use the last bead of a color and can't remember which you used; this photo/drawing is helpful when referring back to your colors.

For the wider cuff, you will be going through many more beads and you have a larger "canvas" to paint your color story.

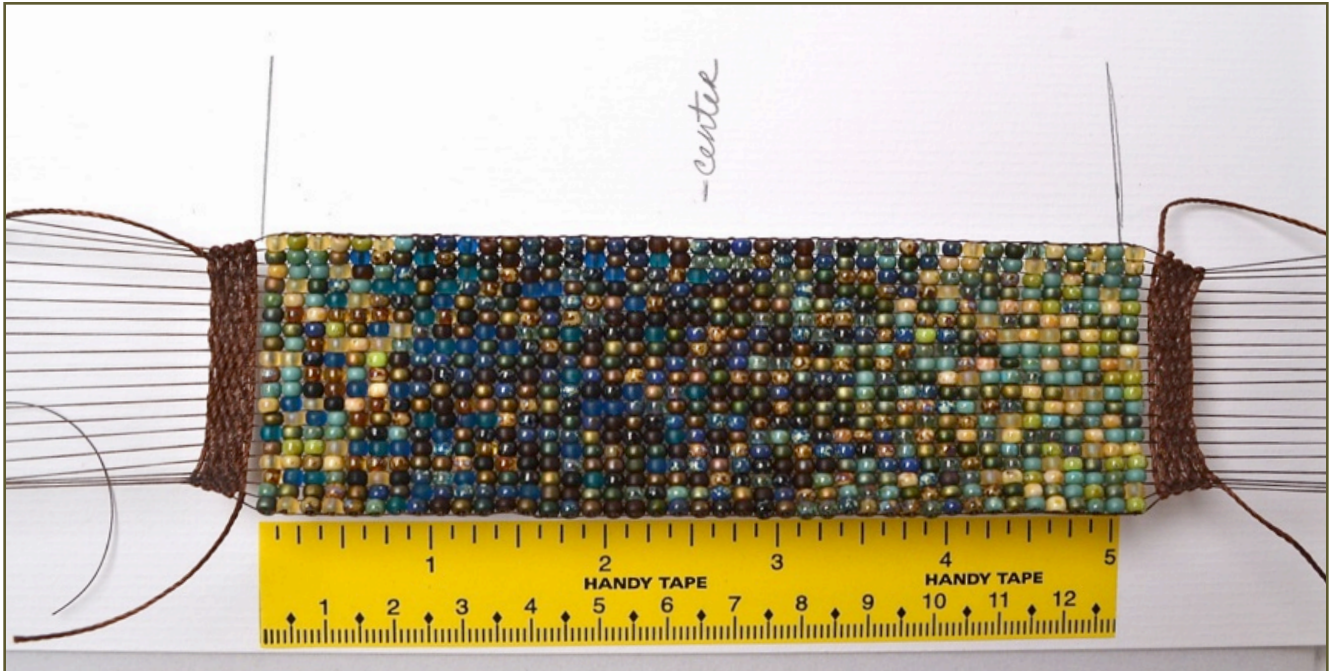


The Seed beads pictured above are:

- A. Matte Turquoise (8-2028) B. Matte Transparent Light Topaz AB (8-132FR)
- C. Picasso Canary Yellow Matte (8-4512) D. Picasso Saffron Transparent (8-4501)
- E. Picasso Chartreuse Matte (8-4515) F. Picasso Seafoam Green (8-4514)
- G. Picasso Olivine Transparent (8-4506) H. Matte Transparent Root Beer (8-135F)
- I. Opaque Khaki AB (8-2035) J. Picasso Opaque Brown (8-4517) K. Picasso Montana Matte (8-4516)
- L. Matte Transparent Capri Blue (8-149F) M. Picasso Smoky Black Matte (8-4511)

Project Measurements

A wider cuff takes just more of everything. More beads, more thread, more time. I think it's well worth it but it requires just a bit of planning. For my 7 inch wrist, I have 5 inches of length for beadwork because I like a 1 inch or more suede band on each end. It is very important to keep track of each section of your project so you don't bead long past your due date, so to speak! You can easily keep track with Handy Tape to your board or using measurements on paper taped to your tray. But do not leave measuring out....trust me, you will keep beading beyond the length you want to go! If you look closely, I went over my measurement by a row!



When you are ready to move on to your sheeting, be sure to leave just a bit of air between the beadwork and where you start your sheeting with C-Lon. Like anything on straight line, when you are ready to bend the beadwork to wrap around your wrist, the beads take up more thread to make a circle. If you don't leave the extra air, when you go to wear it, the beadwork can have a clumped look.

Coat the sheeting with a layer of Zap Glue and let it dry. Be sure to glue the start and end thread of your sheeting. Once dry, you're ready to cut the beadwork off the loom and add an Ultra Suede cuff with a button and loop.

Cut your warp threads to about 1/4 inch above the sheeting (see video) using scissors or flush cutters.

Making a Button Cuff

1. Now that your bracelet is no longer secured to the loom, you can try it on again to make sure you are still on track with your measurements...sometimes the beading is a bit longer (or shorter) than you remember you wanted. Now is the time to check this!
2. Remeasure your wrist...You want it to sit snugly on your wrist. Unfortunately, this is not a great design for adjustable lengths, so I would recommend you measure the recipient's wrist as the average wrist size for a woman can range from 6-8 inches. And men can easily vary from 7-10 inches.
3. Take the total length of your beading and subtract that from your wrist measurement. That will leave you with the width for your two Ultra Suede bands. Once you know the measurements of your bands, use scissors to cut out two pieces of ultra suede with nice straight edges and right angles. Follow Sam's instructions in the video for measuring and cutting accurately with a ruler, pencil and sharp scissors.



On one band, find the center and inside. Mark that spot with a pen. Cut a small piece of Ultra Suede you can sew on the inside to reinforce your sewing through the fabric. Thread a heavy sewing or glover's needle with a length of KO (about 24 inches). Double it over and tie an overhand knot at the ends. Sew your button on securely in the center where the spot is marked.

Choosing a button which has a shank helps in holding the finished loop in place. Select a button that "speaks" to your design and the colors you are working with. It is an important design element in your project.



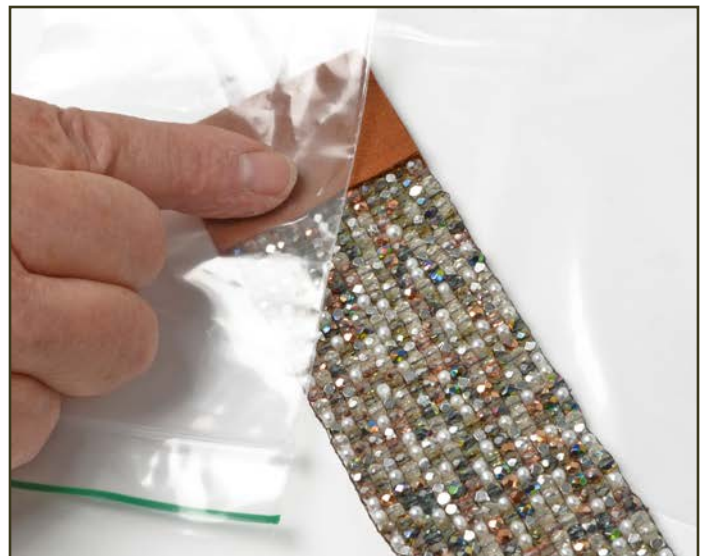


Gluing

When it comes to gluing, the right glue and a couple of props can really make a difference. We use Zap Glue because it dries quickly and adheres to leather and fabric quite nicely. If you have another quick-drying glue for leather and suede, you can use that too. I also like to have a few plastic baggies handy to put underneath my project and to apply pressure to spread the glue. Here are views of gluing using a different bracelet, but the concept is the same. Your goal is to get a secure seal and not leave excess glue or spots on your Ultra Suede.



Start by applying your glue all over the inside of the Ultra Suede, making sure to keep the glue dribble a bit away from the edges. The glue will travel once you fold it over and start pushing down on it.



Line up your bead work with the fabric and fold the Ultra Suede over at the half-way mark. Use another plastic baggie on top to push the Ultra Suede together. If you need to add more glue, you can stick the syringe into the opening and squeeze out a bit more. Allow everything to dry before moving on.

Tying Off

You are now ready to tie a knot in your Micro Fiber Suede that just fits around the button. Check that the bracelet fits you before you cut anything. Once everything looks right, snip off the excess Micro Fiber Suede using flush cutters or scissors. Success! You have a fabulous, shaded pebble wide cuff. What could be better?

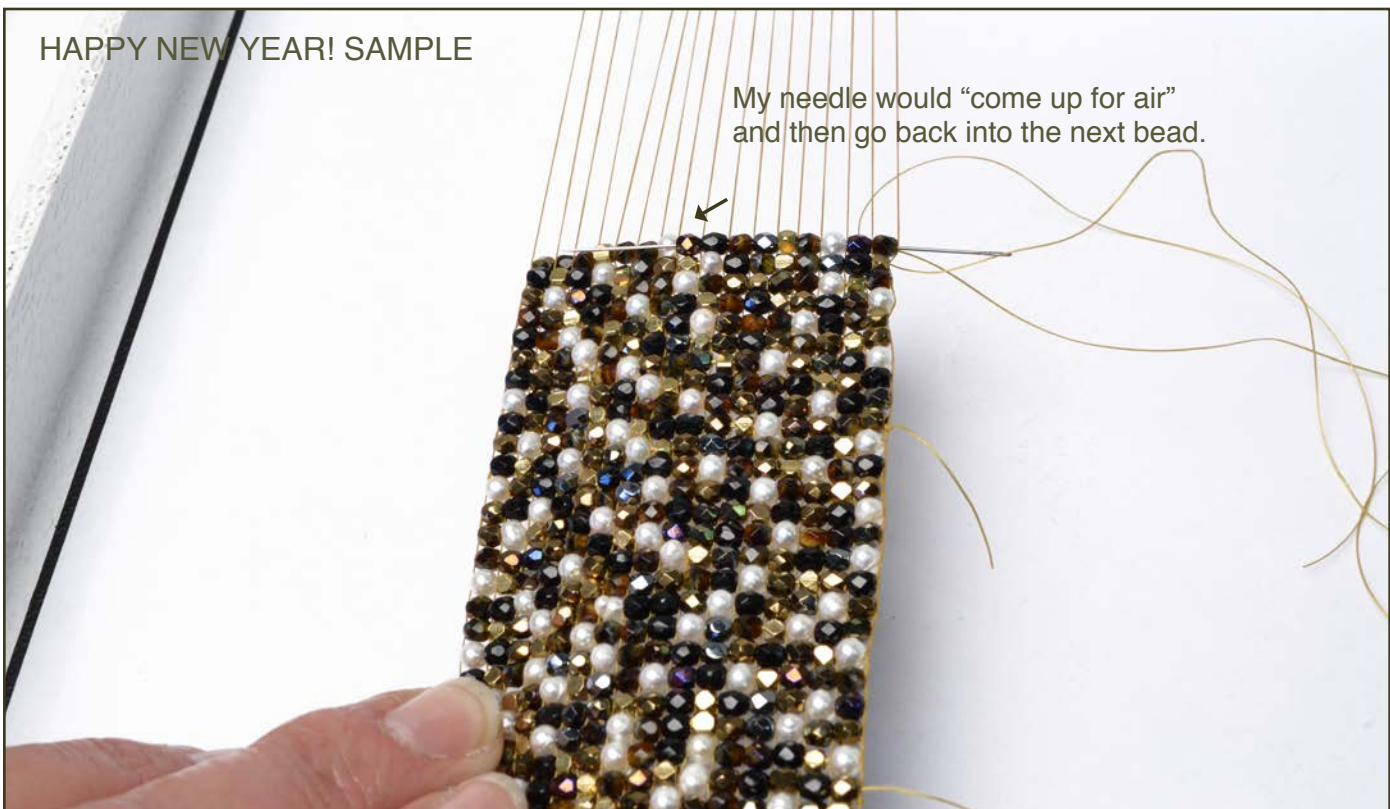
GRAND CANYON SAMPLE



Looming with Other Beads

I love looming and bead weaving so much, I thought, “Why not use other beads and go wider yet?” I challenged myself with freshwater pearls, metal hex beads and 3mm Czech Fire Polish. I love the results! There are a few challenges with going wider. A larger cuff uses more beads, more thread and takes more time. If you have plenty of all on hand, there are no limits! I do suggest, if you go wide, you will have to adapt your needle skills to accept the new length you have to thread your needle through. I did this by often bringing my needle up in the middle of a row, tightening my thread to that point and then diving back down through to finish the row.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! SAMPLE



The Beads used in this sample are: 3mm Fire Polish in Jet, Bronze Iris, Cat's Eye. 2-2.5mm Freshwater Pearls, Little Shadows in Bright Gold. Also used were: KO Thread in Gold, C-Lon in Black Ultra Suede in Black, Micro Fiber Suede in Black and Holly Button.



Because this bracelet is so wide, I went through KO thread more quickly. However, that doesn't mean I would work with extra long lengths. When I was getting low on KO, I would weave my needle back through through several rows. I would bring the needle up into the middle of a row (about 3-4 rows back) and then cut my needle and thread off. Sam demonstrates this in the video.

I would start with a fresh length of KO on my needle. I would start a new row right next to the last row I had completed. Before moving on to a second new row, I would weave my needle back through the last row before it. Then go through my new row one more time before adding an additional row. This way I am reinforcing and able to add new thread as needed.

Be aware that some of your beads (like freshwater pearls) have smaller holes and may only be threaded through 2-3 times. Best to check several bead holes before saying yes to them as a whole group. Check by testing several passes with your needle and thread through holes.

CLEAR LAKE SAMPLE



The Beads used in this sample are: 3mm Fire Polish in Jonquil Luster, Rose Gold Crystal, Smokey Sage, Montana Vitrail. 2-2.5mm Freshwater Pearls, Little Shadows in Silver. Also used were: KO Thread in Brown, C-Lon in Nutmeg, Ultra Suede in Clove, Micro Fiber Suede in Grey and Secret Garden Button.



Leaving space between the last row of beads and the sheeting made of C-Lon is important to allow your beads to breathe on the thread as they curve to your wrist. Although it looks like I didn't leave any air, there is more space on the side of the bracelet not in the photograph. This will allow the beads to move a bit...this is good! Be sure your Ultra Suede Band is positioned a bit away from the beads so you don't lose that space you created.

Mixing and matching Ultra Suede and Micro Fiber Cord can add interest to your design. I would just recommend you keep your sheeting thread (C-Lon) and your Ultra Suede in the same color family just in case the cuff suede shifts a bit after wearing and your C-Lon ends up showing. Just in case!

Also using beads of different materials and slightly different sizes means the rows are not completely even. This adds a nubby, textured feeling to your design rather than a uniform, smooth look. Just keep in mind the hole sizes must accommodate several passes of thread in order to weave. We cannot recommend gemstones for weaving. Semi-precious stones will work; they have holes similar to glass, but gemstone holes are usually too small and make weaving this way a real head ache. Trust me, we tried!

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