

# The Bead Shop™

## Tassel Centerpiece

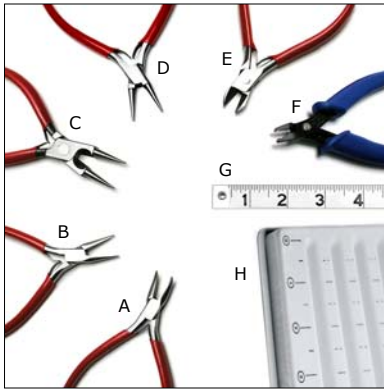
By Janice Parsons



Skill Level: Intermediate  
Project Time: 4-5 hours

Designing around a focal bead or pendant is both fun and rewarding. Today we will take infinite care to maintain the integrity of your centerpiece and embellish the message it brings visually and artistically. We will also gain experience in building a tassel and improving our finishing techniques. I hope you enjoy this class and that the door to new projects is opened.

## Ingredients for the Tassel Centerpiece



### TOOLS NEEDED

- A. Bent-nose chain pliers
- B. Needle-nose chain pliers
- C. Rosary or
- D. Round-nose pliers
- E. Wire cutters
- F. Crimping pliers
- G. Tape measure
- H. Multi-strand straight channel design board
- ☺ Scotch tape, paper, pencil (not pictured)

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

#### Part 1

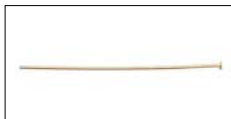
- 18 Easy steps to making a Tassel Centerpiece
- Design Ideas

#### Part 2—Technique Review

- Wire-Wrapping Using a Head Pin
- Learning to Crimp Using Crimping Pliers



1 spool .014 Soft Flex



6-8 Sterling silver or gold-filled, 24-gauge head pins



1 pkg. French bullion (French wire), medium in gold or silver tone



Assortment of very small beads: seed beads, 3mm crystals, 2-3mm metal beads, 2-3mm gemstones and glass



Assortment of 4-8mm beads in various shapes: sterling silver, gold-filled, gemstone, crystal, glass, wood, bone, etc.



Assortment of 8-16mm beads including a centerpiece: wood, bone, gemstone, glass, etc.\*



10+ Pairs of bead caps



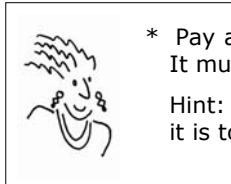
10+ Sterling silver or gold-filled crimp beads



1 Lobster claw clasp



2-3" Chain that the clasp can hook into.



\* Pay attention that the hole in your centerpiece bead(s) is larger than normal. It must be able to accept 4 strands of .014 Soft Flex.

Hint: When selecting larger beads, the flatter the bead is, the more adaptable it is to using it

## Step-by-Step Instructions



### Step 1 Telling the Story

Every centerpiece has a story to tell. Your job is to listen carefully to hear the "voice" in the bead or pendant. You want to bring out the best in your centerpiece without overpowering it with too much background noise.



### Step 2

Think of your centerpiece as an opera singer. You want to make it the most important person on stage. Begin to select beads which enhance -not fight- with it. Do not try and bring out every color in it.



Experiment with just using one or two colors. If your centerpiece is monochromatic, your challenge may be focusing on the texture and adding colors that are not present.



### Step 3 Defining the Structure

Once you have narrowed down your bead selection to what you like, we are now going to build the structure. Look at your centerpiece in a mirror and decide where it should hang on you. Measure from the center of the back of your neck to the top of the centerpiece.



### Step 4

Visualize how far down from the center the tassels should fall. Take the tape measure and calculate this length. Add these two lengths together. This will be your "One Side Length".



### Tip

Decide how many strands your tassel will be. This is often predicated on the size of your centerpiece. It is, in some respects, a marriage. You may not be able to fully answer this until you have started building the tassel, but keep it in mind.



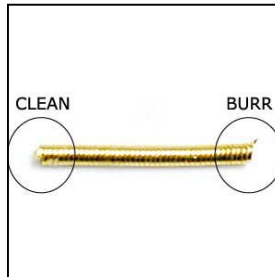
### Step 5 Building from the bottom up

Begin building your necklace from the bottom of the tassel going up. Select 4 (or 6) charm units which will hang at the end of your tassel. They should measure approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Your charm units can be single beads or a combination of several beads. Be mindful you want to make them special. Try adding a spacer bead or cap at the top of each unit to add extra visual delight.



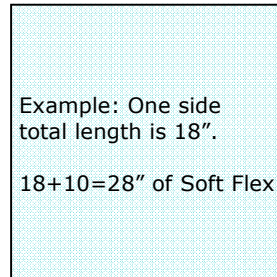
### Step 6

Wire-wrap each charm unit. Try to keep the loop size small and the wrapping as delicate as possible.



### Step 7

Use wire cutters to carefully cut 4 or 6 small pieces of bullion to approx.  $\frac{3}{8}$ " in length. You need to make sure your bullion is cut clean with no burrs at the ends.



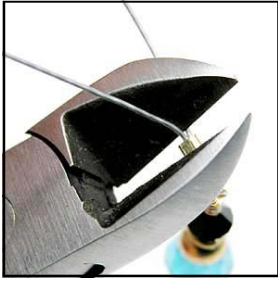
### Step 8

Cut 4 (or 6) pieces of Soft Flex the length of your One Side length **plus 10"**. Remember, One Side Length=Full Length from clasp to bottom of tassel.



### Step 9

String a crimp bead onto one piece of Soft Flex and then carefully string on a piece of your bullion. String through the loop of one of your charm units and then back through the crimp bead. Do not try to string through the bullion twice!

**Step 10**

Using your crimping pliers, carefully close the crimp bead above the bullion. Take your wire cutters and cut the tail of the Soft Flex just below the crimp bead (as shown here).

**Step 11**

Create 4-6 tassel lengths. They can all mirror each other or they can each be different. Be sure to end each one with 1-2 very small beads.

**Step 12**

Bring them together into one or two beads before stringing into the centerpiece. Narrowing down is something you will also be doing as you design up each side. Take a few minutes to really work out the most pleasing way to graduate multiple strands.

**Step 13**

On the other side of the centerpiece, separate your strands and begin stringing up each side. Take care in what you put here. The first 3" is going to set the tone for the rest of your design. Work on one side at a time. Tape off the other. You can choose to mirror what you do on the other side or do something completely different.

**Step 14**

Weaving your strands in and out of bead units as you go up enhances the interest and complexity to your design. Be sure to experiment with incorporating bead caps.

**Tip**

Keep measuring as you go. The design board helps to keep you on track. You don't want to overshoot your desired finished length.

**Step 15**

As you near the back, graduate the strands down in size to fit into one crimp bead. Check the length and when you like what you have done, put tape over the just-strung side and string the other side.

**Step 16****Closing off at the Back**

You are now ready to finish your creation! Cut 2 pieces of bullion approx. 3/8" each. String on a crimp bead and a piece of bullion. It is best to stagger the ends of the Soft Flex as you guide them through the bullion. Loop through your clasp and back through the crimp bead.

**Step 17**

It is possible to fit 3 strands of .014 Soft Flex into one 2x2mm crimp bead. I recommend flat crimping with needle-nose pliers when you have 3 strands.

If you have a 2 strand necklace, go ahead and close off crimping using your crimping pliers. Repeat crimping technique on second side except this time add your chain.

**Step 18**

Wire-wrap a bead or charm drop to the end of the chain for that very finished look. Viola! You're done!!!!

## Design Ideas



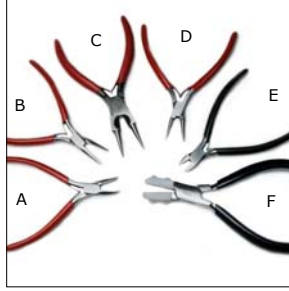
I hope you enjoyed this Tassel Centerpiece handout. I am happy to answer any questions or help you solve a stringing challenge. Please contact me by email.

Happy Beading!

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## WIRE-WRAPPING USING A HEAD PIN TECHNIQUE REVIEW

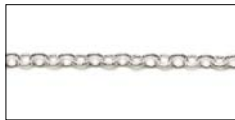


### TOOLS NEEDED

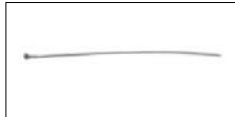
- A. Bent-nose chain pliers
- B. Needle-nose chain pliers
- C. Rosary or
- D. Round-nose pliers
- E. Wire cutters
- F. Wire straightener



1 Pair of sterling silver ear wire or equivalent (to make earrings)



A length of chain if you are wire-wrapping to chain (optional)



2" Sterling silver head pins with silver balls at the end or equivalent



12mm Faceted coin gemstones or equivalent



10mm Faceted oval gemstones or equivalent

### FORMING THE HEAD OF THE WIRE-WRAP



Imagine the wire-wrapped loop is the head of a little person and the wrap is a scarf. The head and scarf sit on the shoulders of the bead. The first thing you have to do is form the head!



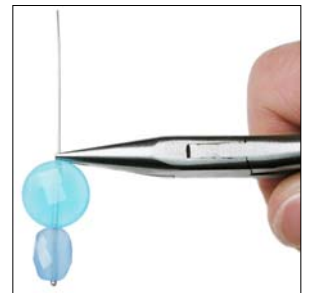
**Step 1**  
**To stiffen and straighten the head pin** place it inside the nylon jaws of the wire straightener.



**Step 2**  
a) Pinch the head pin.  
b) Run the closed wire straightener down the length of the head pin.



**Step 3**  
a) Slide a 10mm gemstone onto the head pin.  
b) Follow it with a 12mm gemstone.



**Step 4**  
Use the needle-nose chain pliers to grab the head pin just above the gemstones.

**Step 5**

- a) Use your finger to push the wire over and make a 90 degree angle.
- b) Note that the plier legs are side-by-side.

**Step 6**

- a) Switch to the rosary or round-nose pliers.
- b) Place the tips of the pliers above and below the longer wire, at the right angle.

**Step 7**

Bend the wire over the top plier tip.

**Step 8**

Rotate the bottom plier tip to the top of the loop.



**Make sure** that you see the neck 'cause I'll need it for the scarf!

**Step 9**

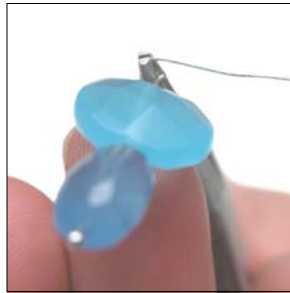
Continue bending the wire around the bottom plier tip.

**Step 10**

When the loop's circle is complete you have finished the head.

**Step 11**

Now its time to hook me up to the ear wire, and wrap the scarf around my neck!

**Step 12**

To open the loop, lift it out of its plane. Do not pull the loop open sideways or you will distort its round shape.

**Step 13**

Slide the ear wire or chain into the loop.

**Step 14**

Use the needle-nose chain pliers to close the loop.

**WRAPPING THE SCARF AROUND THE NECK****Step 15**

- a) Use the bent-nose chain pliers to hold the loop (or head) securely.
- b) Grip the end of the wire with the needle-nose chain pliers.

**Step 16**

Wrap the scarf around the neck down to the shoulders of the gemstone.

**Step 17**

Use the wire cutters to clip off excess wire.

**Step 18**

Use the bent-nose pliers to tuck in the sharp wire end. Use caution! You can damage the bead with too much force.



We hope you enjoyed this project. I certainly enjoyed teaching you how wire-wrap using a head pin.

## LEARNING TO CRIMP USING CRIMPING PLIERS TECHNIQUE REVIEW



**To practice this link, you will need:**

- Crimping pliers
- Needle-nose chain pliers
- Wire cutters

**For supplies gather:**

- 5" Soft Flex
- 2 Crimp beads
- 1 Lobster clasp



We recommend making a few practice crimps in order to perfect your crimping technique.

Take a look at the crimping pliers. Note that it has two channels in the jaws. The channel closest to the handle is shaped like a pair of lips. This is the channel that makes the first crimp. The second channel is shaped like an oval. This is the channel that rounds the crimp.



**Step 1**  
a) String a crimp bead onto the Soft Flex.  
b) String the Soft Flex through your clasp.



**Step 2**  
String the Soft Flex back through the crimp bead.



**Step 3**  
Slide crimp bead up towards the clasp leaving a small loop that is large enough to allow movement of the clasp.



**Step 4**  
Enter the crimp bead in the first channel of the crimping pliers and crimp firmly.



**Step 5**  
The result should be a slightly rounded crimp with a dip running down the center.



**Step 6**  
Now turn the pliers 1/4 turn and center the crimp bead in the second channel of the crimping pliers. Gently crimp the bead to round it in on itself.



**Step 7**  
The finished result should be a rounded compact crimp.



**Step 8**  
Complete technique using a pair of needle-nose pliers. Squeeze down on crimp bead with your pliers for added security.