



Leaves by Janice Parsons

Designing Through Storytelling

Creating artisan jewelry is not about following the crowd, but reflecting your unique point of view. It's about mixing favorite colors, textures and patterns in relaxed yet cohesive ways. Your design style will speak through when you reference memories and impressions with confidence and attitude. This class is about exploring and refining jewelry techniques and pushing yourself to share your authentic story. Although the necklace may look deceptively simple, it combines multiple techniques we think Intermediate Designers are ready to master.

Here is a class that combines many different styles and will challenge you to switch gears...you will go from wire-wrapping to no-frills knotting, to silk wrapping and a few tricks in between.

Designing Through Storytelling

In this intermediate level class, I explain my “design think.” I am sometimes asked to unravel how I build a piece of jewelry. So, in this project I try to detail creative decisions as I move forward to solutions. Everyone works in their own, unique way....this is just my way. I hope you enjoy and take away helpful ideas.

“Leaves” uses a variety of techniques which are outlined in steps or demonstrated in short videos. Links to all are included below as well as in the portion of the project where it is relevant. It is really helpful to read the handout completely before beginning. The takeaway, hopefully, is you can use the techniques in a number of projects and my “design think” gets you pushing yourself (in a good way) to share your personal story.

I enjoyed making “Leaves” as diagramming it step-by-step gave me further insights into my own process. Along with Leaves, Nicole Anderson and Brittany Ketcham’s unique interpretations using similar materials are included on the last pages of the handout. Thank you to these two talented artists for their contributions and assistance with videos, photography, design and much, much more. Where would I be without them? Thank you!
Xoxo janice

Techniques Used in this Project:

Wire Wrapping a Bead on a Head Pin
Wire Wrapping Bead Units to Each Other
Wire Wrapping a Briolette
Silk Wrapping 1-2-3
How to Open and Close Jump Rings
Another Recommended Handout: Trade Route

Project Level: Intermediate
Time to Complete: 6+ Hours



Ingredients:

- 1 spool C Lon in Sage (base thread)
- 1 spool C Lon in Olive (accent thread)
- 1 strand 6mm Stone Beads in Prehnite
- 1 pkg 5-6mm Gemstone cubes in Moonstone
- 1 pkg 3-4mm Gemstone Rondelles in Apatite
- 1 pkg 10x12mm Faceted Gems in Green Amethyst
- 1 pkg 10x12mm Faceted Gems in Rose Quartz
- 1 pkg Nuggets in Aquamarine
- 1 pkg Keishi Pearls in Mint
- 1 pkg Keishi Pearls in Peach
- 1 Sterling Bead: “Beautiful Abundance”
- 2 pkgs Metal Beads: “Pebbles”
- 1 pkg Metal Beads: “Stepping Stones”
- 1 pkg Small Hex in Sterling
- 1 pkg 2mm Round Beads in Sterling
- 1 Tube Tila Beads
- 1 Pair Silvertone Pinch Ends
- 1 Hook and Eye Clasp
- 2 Leaf Charms
- 2 Matching Tube Beads in Curve Appeal
- 1 pkg 4mm Round or Oval Jump Rings Sterling
- 2 feet 26 Gauge Sterling Dead Soft Wire
- 2 Feet 24 Gauge Sterling Dead Soft Wire
- 1 pkg 24 Gauge Head Pins in Sterling 1.5-2 inches
- 1 Foot 3mm Rolo Chain in Silver

Color Palleting and Material Selection

In this 42 inch necklace, I was inspired to create a design around my memories of leaves. Building a long necklace allowed me to play out many themes and repeat patterns for continuity and impact; something more challenging to do in a short necklace. I've lived on both coasts and loved trees both bare in winter and heavy with fruit in summer. I never grow weary of photographing and sketching close-ups of trees, branches and, of course, leaves.



Leaves remind me that life is both predictable and constantly changing. In some ways, I design jewelry as a botanist would diagram a leaf; I first see the parts and then the whole. My bead and charm selection was grounded in the glorious seasons with colors and shapes changing throughout the year. Changing seasonal colors were reflected in gems and pearls in greens, peach and pink. I added just two falling leaves on the dark grey deer hide to mirror bare, winter trees with their passing finery. Later on, the side-by-side curved beads reminded me of wind gently blowing tree bows in harmony.

When you can bring a visual to life in your jewelry, your designs are often more authentic and poetic. Take what captivates you and translate it as literally or loosely as you want when selecting beads, stringing materials and components. Think about your story as you cull through options. Use your inspiration to begin the project. You may change course, waiver from the original idea, but that's the beauty of the process.

Starting with Wire Wraps

- A. Some designers like to create by starting in the center of their necklace, others like to start in the back where the clasp is. I have learned I can start anywhere, especially when the overall concept is unstructured and eclectic. I think it's about learning to trust and believe in your instincts. It took me a while before I was able to do this, but now it is like I have an 8 foot swimming pool and I can jump in anywhere and it's safe. I try not to start with a clasp because that can limit my creativity. In the case of this necklace, I wasn't sure where the chain would rest or even how long the necklace would be. I just knew I wanted to start with 3-4 inches of chain. I went with my instincts. Using silver metal seemed the most authentic choice for me. I was thinking of mixing metals and that would have worked well too. Somehow I just stayed with silver, but I did mix the finishes from shiny to matte and antiqued. They all work.



- B. From there, I just knew I wanted to wire wrap some beads. As I look back and try to retrace my thinking, the theory is that I probably wanted to continue the theme of metal. To introduce beads, I strung them on wire and wire wrapped them. I used both 26 and 24 gauge wire, depending on the hole sizes and connected a few beads to the chain. **Technique Review: How to Wire Wrap a Bead Unit.** Connect your first loop to the section of chain, complete 3 wraps around the pin and then add your bead. Make another complete loop at the bottom of the bead. Cut off any excess wire you don't need and press the end of the wire into itself using your bent chain nose pliers. Continue wire-wrapping as many beads as you "feel" like.
- C. In my last wire-wrap, I connected it to a pinch end before wire-wrapping the rose quartz gem securely. I cut a piece of deer hide lacing almost 12" in length and folded it in half. I inserted the fold into the pinch end and then gently pressed each petal of the end down to secure it inside. If your cording is really smooth, add some Hypo-tube cement inside the pinch end before you push your cord inside. This will help keep it in place. With the open ends, insert them evenly into another pinch end and repeat crimping. Allow them to dry before you gently pull to make sure they are secure.

No-Frills Knotting

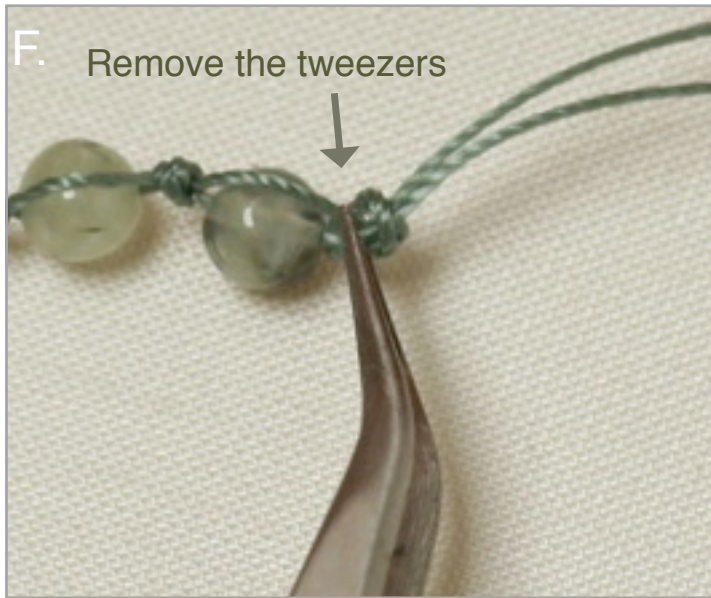
Bringing only one thread through the bead and allowing the other to be visible, is more a macramé-style knot than a mirror of pearl knotting. To call it something, I've knick-named it "No-Frills Knotting." It is simply bringing one cord through the bead, leaving the other on the outside and then knotting both cords together after the hole. I use this technique a lot in **Trade Route Necklace.**

- D. To begin, cut about 60" of C-Lon or Tuff #3 and string it through the ring on your pinch end. Even the two sides of cord and make an overhand knot. String a bead on one of the cords. The other thread will rest on the outside of the bead. I chose these green 6mm Prehnite beads because their mottling reminds me of veining on leaves. My thread color is Sage, a neutral green color I felt would enhance the greens of my design without introducing too much attitude. Pick a color you love.



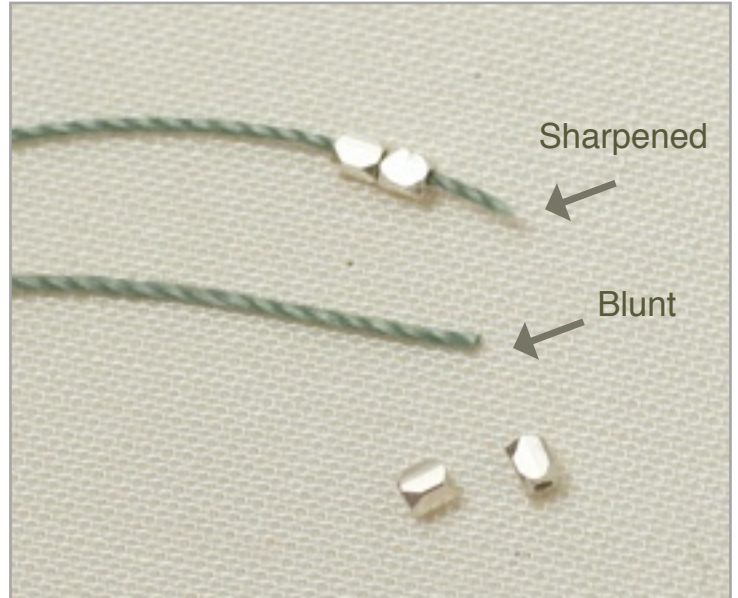
- E. Bring both cords together after the bead and make a loose overhand knot. Using fine tweezers, insert one tip into the loop and carefully pull it closer to the bead. This takes a bit of practice, but loose is okay and the C-lon or Tuff Cord is very forgiving. It is supposed to have a primitive look. It doesn't have to be pearl knotting perfect. Relax!

F. Once the knot is close to the bead, remove the tweezers, separate your cords and gently pull on them to tighten the knot and bring it closer to the bead.

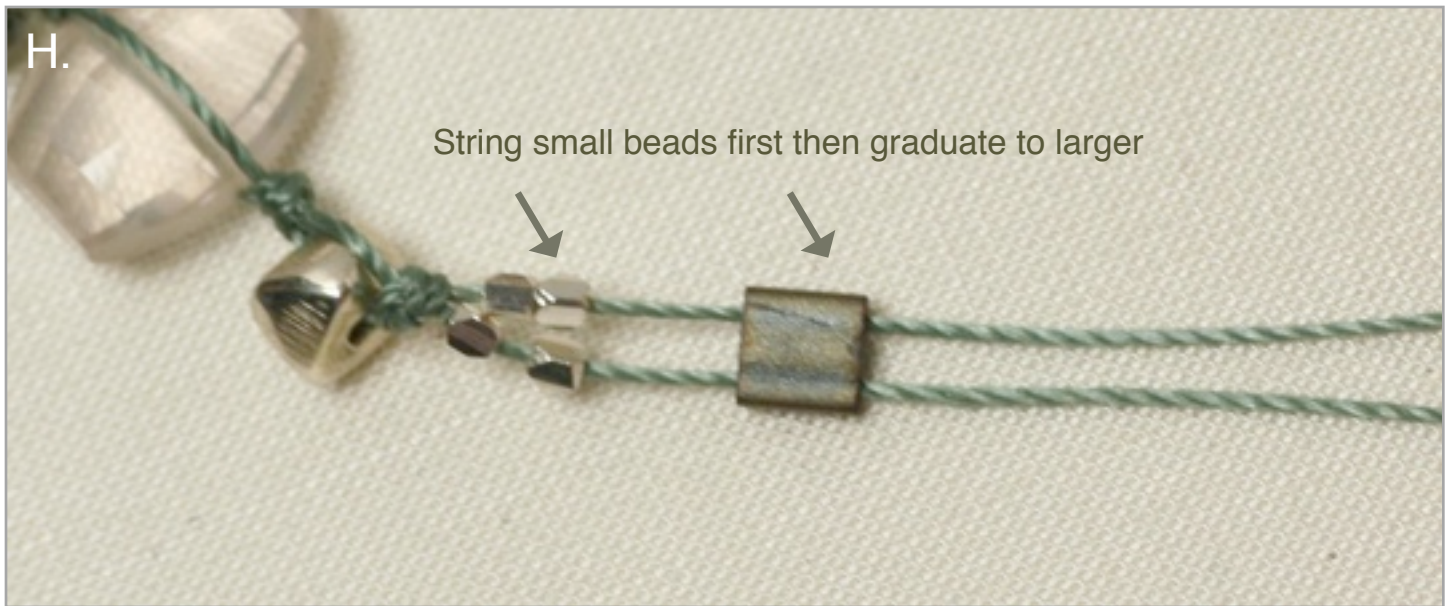


Stringing Along

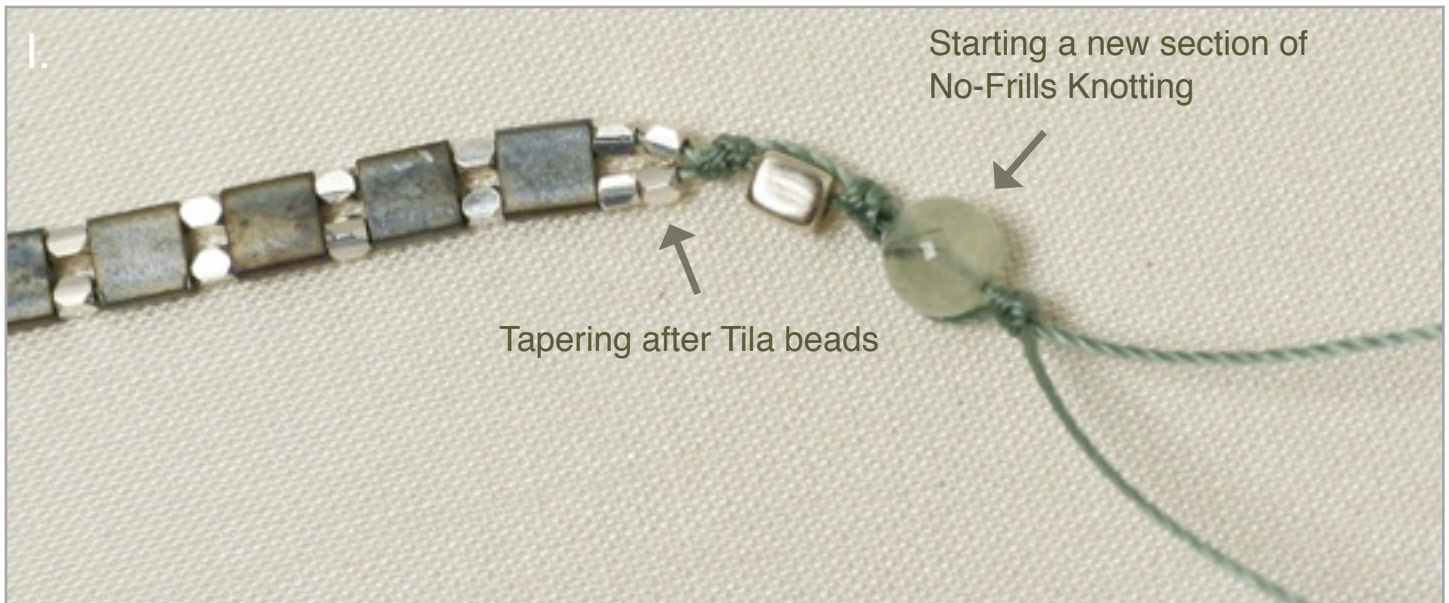
G. Using the end of a cord or thread as its own needle usually requires a bit of preparation. To feed it into small bead holes, it often needs to be stiffened with beeswax. A hot thread burner applied to the end of a nylon cord will also melt and join the fibers. Once the cord is dry or cool, use very sharp wire cutters to sharpen the blunt end of the cord to a point. This may have to be repeated as the self-needle wears down.



H. When you're ready to start branching out and stringing double drilled Tila beads, I recommend tapering to the larger bead by starting with some small, 2-3mm beads. This creates a pathway and lessens bulge as you transition from one grouping to another. I used little hex beads, but you could also use rounds, seed beads or small crystals. The color Tila Bead I selected reinforced my memory of leaves and tree trunks in late winter: dark, burnt umber and saturated. The color and matte finish gave the design more depth and because they were two holed and flat, they added a new element of interest to my composition.



I. I also like shiny metal next to matte glass. The Tila Beads look even more moody and "deep" because they are offset by the shiny and bright silver. They create contrast which heightens my visual experience. To transition to my next grouping, I taper down to smaller beads first. I added the two rows of small beads before coming together again. By starting this section with the small beads and ending with them, the look was "bookmarked" at both ends which allows the eye to feel completion...A moment to rest.



J. Without mapping out my next "move" too much, I knotted an assortment of beads until I decided to separate my threads and add the two curved beads side-by-side. After knotting on the other side of the curved beads, I repeated the same pattern of knotted beads. Again, it is one way I bookmark a pattern. I didn't know where this section would be positioned in the finished piece, but I liked the mirroring effect. I think it lends harmony to a design. All this stringing and knotting is still on the original 60" of C-Lon.

K. When using elongated beads (with curves or not), allow extra room on your cord (or stringing wire, for that matter) for the beads to breathe and “turn the corner.” If the thread is too tight, the edges of the beads will rub the thread raw and cut through it.



Ready to Switch Gears...Time to **Silk Wrap**

L. In order to transition from thread to chain (I just felt ready for a change!) I had to attach my threads securely to a new section of chain. After looping the cords through the chain (about 3 inches in length), I taped the cords back onto themselves. My hands were now free to silk wrap. Please watch the 4 minute video on **Silk Wrapping 1-2-3**. It's essential! This method is not only secure, but it looks so polished. The Silk Wrapping technique described in the video works great with C-Lon. I cut a 20-24 inch of Olive C-Lon to have a contrasting color of cord for a more custom look.





I Felt Moved to Silk Wrap Some More!

- M. After I finished securing the cords to the new section of chain with a silk wrap, I just didn't feel sure about my next forward move. I backtracked to the deer hide section I had done earlier to complete "unfinished" business; I had had earlier hesitations about the longish length of deer hide with nothing keeping the two laces together. So I decided to silk wrapped them. I was moved by their closeness and the story I created for them. Using sturdy jump rings, I added both charms near the silk wrap. If you need tips on securing jump rings, please review [How to open and close jump rings](#).

This backtracking to silk wrap then led me to adding the leaves which then led me to knowing I wanted to drape gems and pearls on the new section of chain. If I hadn't gone back, I wouldn't have gone forward the way I did. I hope this makes sense!

The Look Coming Together

- N. Once I saw the leaves hanging from the deer hide, the notion of draping more leaf-like gems and pearls from the newest section of chain became clear as my next step. I knew I wanted to embellish this section of chain. I selected a combination of gems and pearls that mimicked falling leaves. Some, like the aquamarine, were long drilled and needed to be wire-wrapped on head pins. I added a 2mm bead on both sides to give them a polished look. Each one was individually wire-wrapped but not attached to the chain yet. If needed, please review [How to Wire Wrap Head Pins](#).
- O. Some of my bead choices were top drilled, like the keishi pearls, and needed briolette wrapping. If needed, please review [How to Briolette Wrap a Bead](#). After I had a selection of 9-10 wrapped units, I chose their placement and then attached each one onto the chain with a jump ring.
- P. I felt like it was all coming together now. When I held it up, the "leaves" were falling and it played so nicely with earlier sections of the design. The metal and soft greens (of threads and beads) both pulled the divergent themes into one, cohesive look.

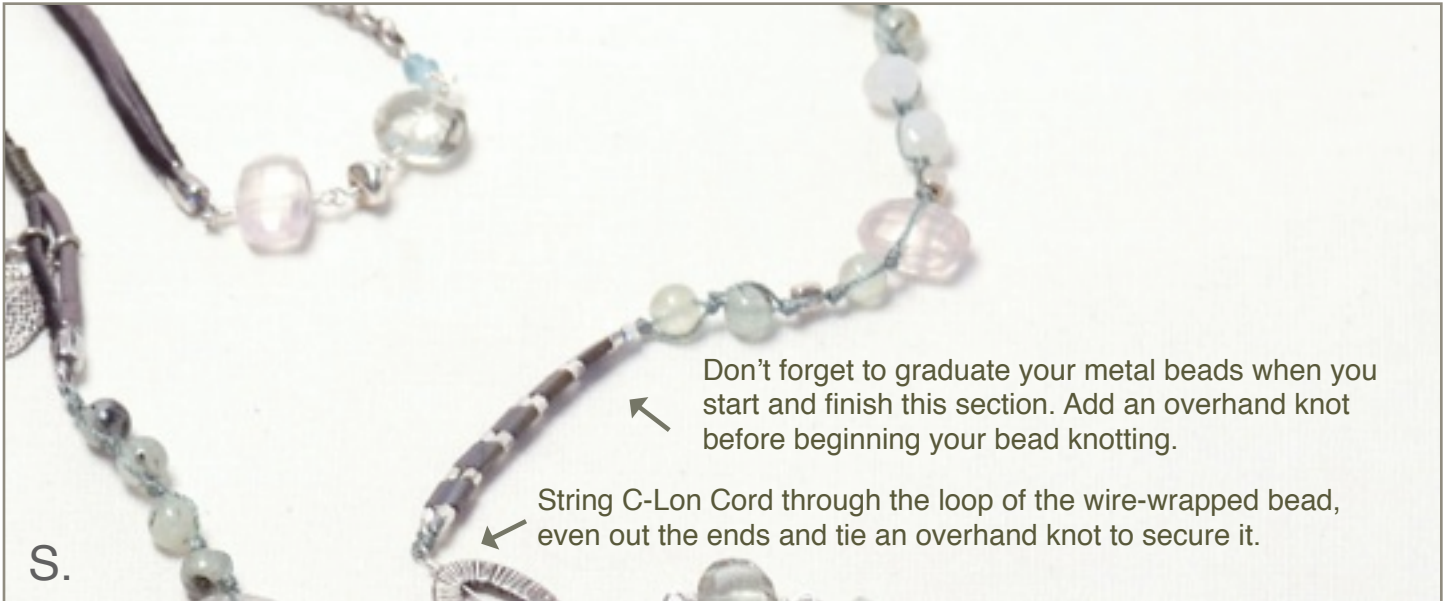


The Look Coming Together

- Q. After completing the draping of the gems and pearls from the chain, it felt right to start repeating some of the beads I had used earlier. I wrapped a few bead units together transitioning the chain to the next section of Tila beads.
- R. I felt I needed an attraction to create a break in the patterns. I found a bead (Beautiful Abundance) that reminded me of tree bark on an ageing oak tree. It was perfect. It helped me transition to the next section of Tilas and Hex beads.

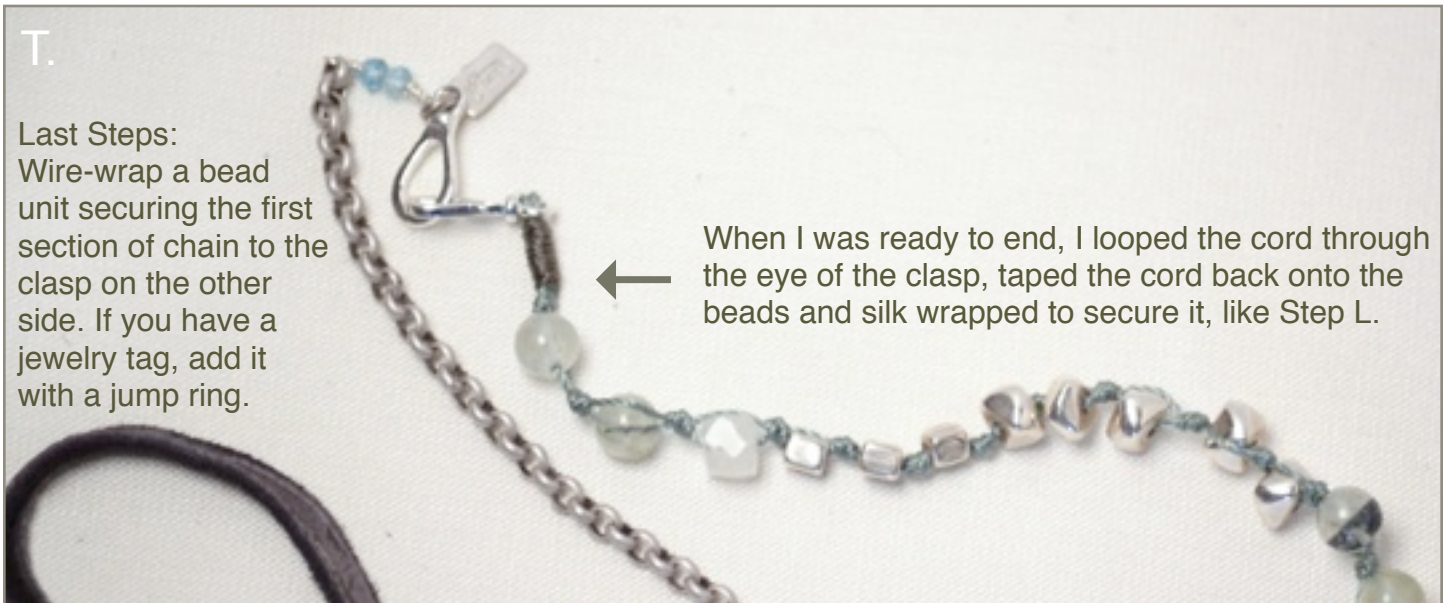


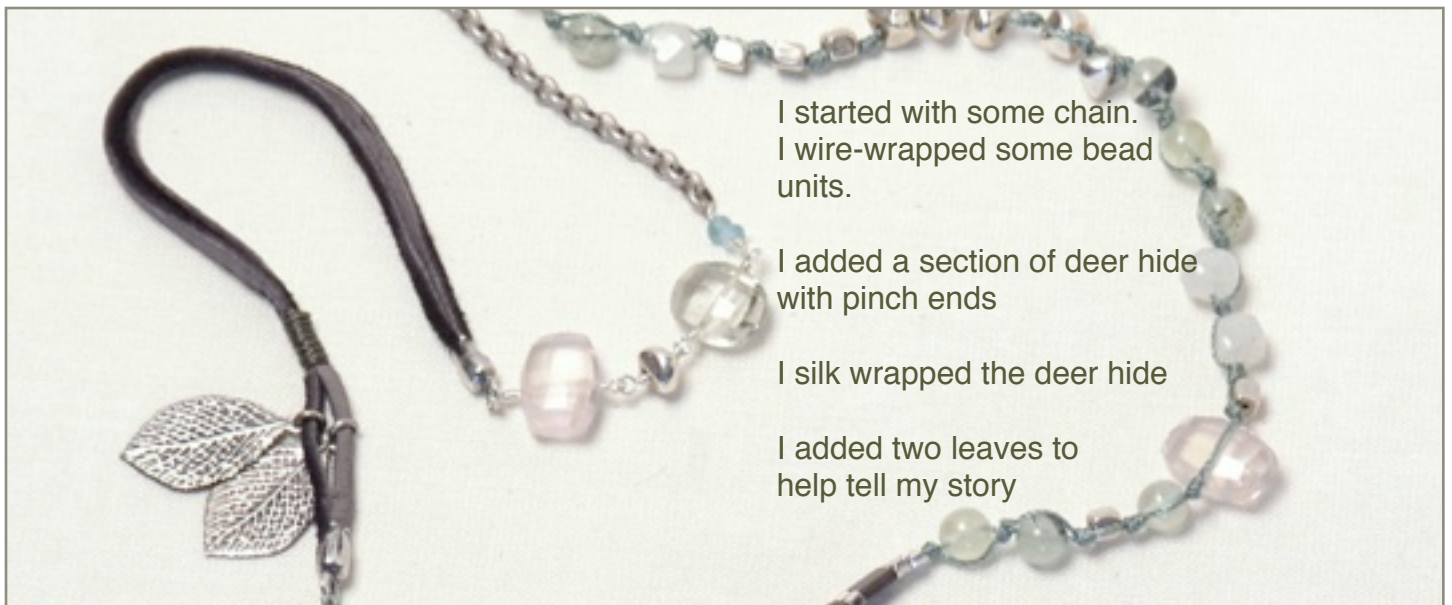
S. I am getting close to the end. It's really important at this point to not lose focus and have the tendency to just slap some things together to be done..... No! Imagine your necklace in a museum on display...every part needs to be pitch perfect. So, take your time! Think of your pauses as opportunities for the conductor to get the orchestra ready for the next movement.



You are very near the end. You have added the clasp and maybe even a tag or charm at the end; your signature. Are you done? Take a step back. Take a break. Try it on. Even wear it for a day. Does it need more to balance? Does it feel complete to you?

T. Sometimes you know when you're done and other moments it is still a work in progress. If you have used this project to tell a story, my hunch is it will resonate with you and those viewing it. People will take notice and remark on its elements. Isn't that what art us all about?





I started with some chain.
I wire-wrapped some bead units.

I added a section of deer hide with pinch ends

I silk wrapped the deer hide

I added two leaves to help tell my story

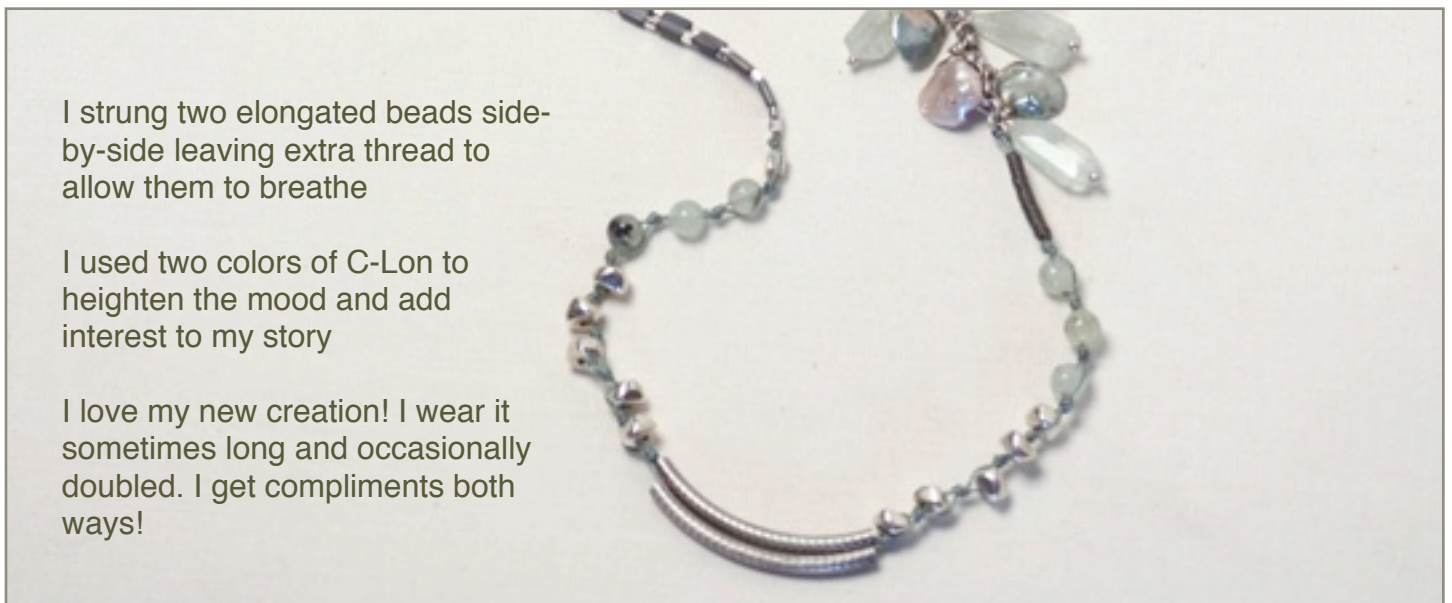


I knotted beads using the no-frills method

I graduated to Tila Beads with smaller metal beads

I silk wrapped in several places

I wire-wrapped beads using 3 styles:
bead units,
head pin style and briolette



I strung two elongated beads side-by-side leaving extra thread to allow them to breathe

I used two colors of C-Lon to heighten the mood and add interest to my story

I love my new creation! I wear it sometimes long and occasionally doubled. I get compliments both ways!



High Country by Nicole Anderson

Using the techniques of Wire-wrapping, No-frills Knotting, Silk Wrapping and still keeping it short and sweet, Nicole made a casual necklace that pays tribute to her love of nature and ties in back with a bow. She wanted to create a relaxed, yet upscale look that would go with jeans and boots, or a full length skirt and sandals. She chose to mix metals because, like nature that gifts us with diversity, she liked the variety. The finishing touches of the deer hide laces helped tell the story and give it a slight bohemian edge.

Nicole's necklace is 18-20 inches and with the adjustable deer hide bow, it can lengthen to 28+ inches

Project Level: Beginner Intermediate Time to Complete: 4+ Hours

Ingredients, Tools and Essentials:

- 4ft Deer Hide Lacing in Tan
- Fern C-Lon (Base thread)
- Wheat C-Lon (Accent)
- 24 G Bronze Craft Wire
- 8mm Green Jade
- Pure Poetry in Rose Quartz
- Metallic Gold Tila Beads
- 2mm Silver Rounds: 24
- Pebbles: 2 pkgs
- Stepping Stones: 1 pkg
- 5mm 18g sterling silver jump rings: 1 pkg
- Coastal Treasures
- Luminescence Moonstone cubes
- small pyrite rounds
- “Run Along” bronze chain 1 ft
- 2 Curve appeal tubes
- Tradewinds
- In good Spirits
- GS Hypo Cement
- Thread Burner (optional)



Desert by Brittany Ketcham

At a generous 50 inches in length, “Desert” was created with definite southwestern attitude, Brittany took full advantage of the materials and incorporated a unique twig connector as one of the focal points. The beauty of her design is how it is meant to be wrapped and worn a number of different ways. Using all three Wire-wrapping techniques, No-frills Knotting, Silk Wrapping, Brittany made something that reflects her love of coral, turquoise and pearls. “A big part of my story is the materials I use. I love stones, especially the combination of blues and oranges....They remind me of the desert sunsets and I never seem to grow tired of them. And pearls? They just remind me of the white clouds against the clear blue skies I grew up with in the high desert.”

Project Level: Intermediate Time to Complete: 6+ Hours

Ingredients, Tools and Essentials:

- Latte C-Lon (Base Thread)
- Black Current C-Lon (Accent)
- 3 Copper Pinch Ends
- 2 brass pinch ends
- Supple as Silk in Mahogany
- Supple as Silk in Espresso
- 1 ft “Run Along”
- 1 Rebecca’s Twig Connector
- Courage 6mm
- Del Sol: 1 pkg
- Pebbles: 1 pkg
- Stepping Stones: 1 pkg
- Poetry in Green Amethyst
- Poetry in Labradorite
- 1 pkg 2mm sterling silver rounds
- 24 G Bronze Craft Wire
- 1 tube Tila Beads Garnet
- 1 tube Tila Beads Matte Metallic Green Iris
- Reflections: 1 pkg
- White Keishi Pearls: 1pkg
- GS Hypo Cement
- Thread Burner