



Monet Water Lily Necklace

Learn to Make a 2-Loop Button Closure Necklace

By Janice Parsons

Buttons are available throughout the world and have been adapted ingeniously by indigenous tribes for clasps on their jewelry primarily due to their abundance. Creating a necklace or bracelet with a button-loop closure instead of a clasp can also extend your design beyond “the edge of your canvas” and marry the closure with the necklace in a very creative way.

Having a double loop is even better than a single, because like fish, people don’t come in one size! With two loops, you have two lengths for the wearer. And for those allergic to metal, this button and loop can be adapted to any non-metal material like glass or wood.

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Skill Level: Intermediate

Time To complete: 3-4 hours taking your time



The colors and mood of this necklace project are inspired by a painting by Claude Monet from his Water Lily series; his outdoor color palette of misty lavenders and glowing greens seems to shine from within and are as timeless today as the moment he put brush to canvas in 1916 in his garden in Giverny, France.

Just as nature doesn't plan to be color-coordinated, nothing in this necklace project is meant to match perfectly. The 'trick' of adding random color here and there will just naturally make your creation unique and completely authentic.

Your goal is to make art, not manufactured accessories!

To learn more about the life and art of Claude Monet, go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Monet

Recipe for Success: Ingredients and Tools

Ingredients

20 focal beads
20 faceted nuggets
Assortment of crystals and glass 4-8mm
3mm fire polish or 8/0 seed beads
1 pair of long-neck cones
1 button with a loop shank
2 round metal beads 2mm in size
Beadalon or Softflex wire
Crimp Beads
Crimp Covers

Tools

Tape Measure
Scotch Tape
Wire Cutters
Chain Nose Pliers
Crimping Pliers
Hypo-Tube Cement

Step One: Selecting beads Intuitively



I began by selecting my focal beads, which are *round* lampwork coins and dichroic *squares*. I then looked for beads that were opposites in both shape and appearance but similar in size. I gravitated to some faceted rock crystal *nuggets* leftover from a project I did ages ago. I liked the way they were so different in texture, opacity and mood. They were like opposites attracting each other.

To that I added 3-8mm crystals and glass in assorted colors and shapes which picked up blends of colors in the focal beads. I also selected beads 4-8mm that didn't seem to match anything at all! I was curious to see if adding truly random beads would enhance my design. I wouldn't really know until I finished stringing; it was a gamble. I learned when I was done how much they added to the richness and artistry of my creation.

I also needed to choose a small bead for the loops of the button closure. I chose 3mm fire polish in bronze, but a seed bead could also be used. I sprinkled this little bead throughout the design. It became the glue that brought the design together and it was close in color to the metal of the button and cones. I think matching the metal added a professional finish to my creation.

Step Two: Stringing through “Brain Freeze”



Cut 3 lengths of stringing wire 25” long. Grab all three strands together and make one overhand knot approximately 2” from the end. Pull it firmly tight. Tape the end down on a tabletop or counter. First test to make sure the tape won’t remove the finish on your table! Taping your project to a surface gives you greater control as you string.

Begin stringing your first strand with 3-6 small beads 3-4mm in size. As you thread your beads, don’t over-think what you string. Just add a mix of some little beads and a few big beads until you reach a point where you don’t know what to string next. This “brain freeze” can happen after you string on just a few beads or it can happen “down the road”; we don’t have any control over when it hits! It just comes in like fog. **JUST STOP STRINGING!** Fold a piece of scotch tape over the stringing wire next to the last bead you strung.

It will look like a flag. Take a second piece of tape and secure the unfinished end of stringing wire taut to the table surface.

Start Strand Two with a few small beads and this time as you add beads, keep an eye on what you did on Strand One. String beads as if the two strands are talking to each other. Again, string until you get “brain freeze” and stop. Repeat the taping process you did for Strand One. Now, you are either going to want to go back and add to your stringing on Strand One or you’ll feel more energized about starting Strand Three. Either way, your creative brain is starting to warm up. Just stay with the process! Pulling the tape off a partially finished strand is easy; keep one hand holding tight to the stringing wire where the beads end and just pull the tape with your other hand.

By this time, no matter how stuck you might have been on your first, second or even third strand, you are probably able to go back and continue stringing on one or more of the strands with renewed enjoyment. Your design brain has created some solutions while you were focused on stringing. Remove and add tape from strands and continue stringing until you have strung approximately 14-15” per strand. End each strand with several small beads like you did on the first side.

Step Three: Tying Up Loose Ends

Once you have your strands strung to about 15” in length, secure tape flags on each of the three strands so the beads won’t slide around on the wire. Then tape all three unfinished strands *together* and look at your design on you in front of a mirror. You might be making this for someone else, but checking and assessing bead placement now before you close is critical. Allow for an additional 3+ inches at the back of your neck for the length of the cones and button loop closure. Is your necklace the length you want it? Are there any beads near the center that should be shifted around? Now is the time to revise. Note: Since you cut your wires to a generous length of 25”, if you want to add beads on your first side, you can cut the knot you originally made, add the beads you want and then reknit.

When you are done stringing your beads, knot Strands One, Two and Three on the second side into an overhand knot. Pull them tight. Add a drop of Hypo Tube Cement on *both* knots. Allow 15 minutes for the glue to set then cut the wires to 3/8” on both sides above the knot. It will look like you gave them a crew cut!

Step Three: Tying Up Loose Ends Continued



Cut 2 pieces of stringing wire 10" in length. For our photograph, we used an alternate color of wire, but they can all be the same. Loop one end of the wire in between the legs of your strands. Leave short one end of wire to within an inch. String a crimp bead over both wires.

Slide the crimp bead up close to the knot. Leave just enough space in the loop for the wires to move freely. Using the chain nose pliers, flatten the crimp bead. **DO NOT USE THE CRIMPING PLIERS.** Pull on each wire individually above the crimp bead. Is your crimp bead secure? If not, gently flatten further being careful not to break the plastic coating on the wire. If you need to remove the crimp bead and start this step again, you can usually remove a flattened crimp bead by applying the outer jaws of your crimping plier to turn the flat crimp bead back into a round one. Then just slide it off. The crimp bead is not reusable.

Once the crimp bead is secure, cut the shortest end of wire to 1/4". Pull on the wire again to double-check it's secure. Repeat flat crimping on second side.

Step Four: Sliding in to Home Base



On one side, string one cone up the wire to the beads. Make sure the cut wires hide securely inside your cone. If you have to, trim more of the excess wire. Add a 2mm round metal bead then a crimp bead *before* looping your wire through the shank of your button.



Go back through just the crimp bead and crimp* using your crimping pliers. Check that your crimp bead is securely fastened before using wire cutters to remove the excess wire. Be brave and cut the wire as short as you can! Add a crimp cover*.

*To review crimping and crimp cover techniques, go to www.beadshop.com and click on "Free Tips and Techniques."

Step Five: Here We Go Loop-de-Loop



As you did on the button side, add a 2mm round bead and a crimp bead. String on several of the 3mm fire polish beads which will begin to form the first circle of your double loop closure.

Figuring the number of beads you need to make a loop is not difficult; it just takes a little time and patience. You begin by calculating the number of beads you need to go across the top of your button. Double that amount and add two more beads. How many is that? (You need the two extra beads to compensate for the thickness of the button and the depth of the shank.)

The formula is:

of beads to cover top of button x 2 = Length

Length+ 2 beads= total # of beads to make a loop (Round up or down to an even number)

String that number of beads on to the wire and *temporarily* thread back through your crimp bead. Test that the loop size will fit the button.

Is it too small? Is it too big? How many beads is just right? The *total* number of beads you need per loop must be an even number *when* you are doing a double loop closure. For a single loop, it's not necessary. When deciding how many beads you need, the loop should always be generous enough it doesn't strain the wire, but not so oversized the button will come out easily. Once you have the right quantity of beads to form a loop, *undo* the temporary stringing through the crimp bead. Remove half of the beads from the stringing wire and set them aside.

Pick a small bead to add that is different from the fire polish bead. We chose a bi-cone crystal. Your stringing wire needs to be able to loop back through whatever bead you select. This bead is what we call a "station bead." It points you back to the place you want to land between each loop.



Step Six: All Buttoned Up:



After stringing back through your bead station, string on the remaining fire polish to complete the first loop.

Now you are ready to finish off. String back through the crimp bead and repeat crimping, wire cutting and crimp cover techniques as done on first side. You're ready to gloat!



You have made something really extraordinary. Take a moment to review what thoughts came to you while you were stringing. Look closely at the patterns and/or randomness and how really well it all works. Even if the critic in you sees flaws, let that wash over you. Don't dwell on the negative....reinforce what you did right and want to remember for next time. Trust that your creative brain is busy storing it all away and your design sensibilities are just growing with each project you complete.

And be sure to enjoy your creation; wear it with pleasure or, if you can find the strength and generosity to do it, give it away or sell it!

Whatever you decide, you just made a work of art!

If you have questions and comments, please email me at janiceparsons@yahoo.com
And I'd love to post your finished project in our artist gallery!