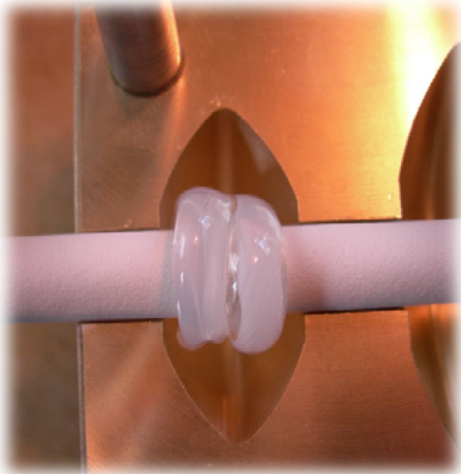


Making a Disk Bead



We are using the Large hole press so that you can see better what is going on. However, the process is the same for all the disks. Each step is a little less pronounced in the small beads, since there is less glass, but the concept is the same.

Lay your footprint. You want the glass to be slightly shorter, about 1mm on each side, than the press is wide.



Add glass evenly until you fill in the part of the press that has straight sides, before it starts to taper.

Then add glass only to the center, forming a disk shape.



Heat and press. You want to be sure when heating that you do not get the glass hot enough that it starts to widen along the mandrel groove. This happens because the glass near the mandrel and the glass further from the mandrel both get to the melting point, causing both parts of the bead to want to merge together. At this point the glass is trying to form into a ball, which you do not want. So keep the glass near the mandrel warm, while the outer glass is getting hot. Then press.



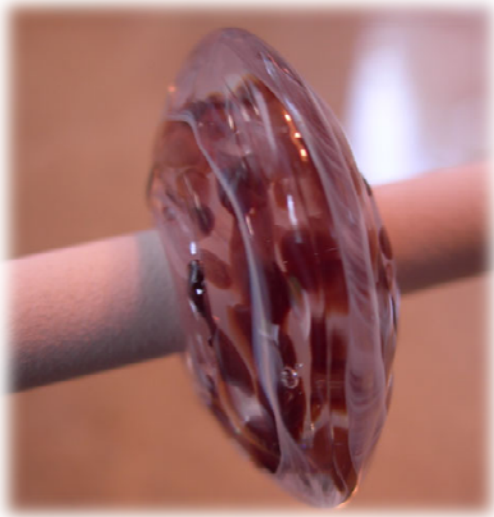
After your initial press, you will add glass along the narrow edge, only. Add there, even if you are missing glass along the edges. The reason to add only in the center is that when it's heated and pressed, the glass be pushed down and out into the press, which will fill in wherever the glass is needed. If you add where you think it's lacking, you will need to fight to keep the glass in the press.



After you've add the glass, you will want to set the bead into the mold, remove, turn mandrel $\frac{1}{4}$ ", set in mold, repeat until you've pressed it into the mold all the way around. The reason for this is that if have the amount of glass you need to fill the press, and simply press, the glass near where the mold comes together will just ooze out upon pressing. By sort of hand forming, you are getting the glass in position. Heat again, after the hand pressing, and then press.



If your surface isn't smooth, fire polish (heat lightly the surface glass only) and repress.



Once you have a filled press and nice shape, you do not want the whole bead to get hot again, or you will not be able to fit it in the press, because the glass from the outer edge will start to merge with the glass around the mandrel. I mentioned that in an earlier step. That is why, at this stage, it is important to maintain good heat control and only fire polish the surface.



You will want to clean the bead hole very well. I find that Foster Fire Smooth and Tough is an excellent release for this press. It is tough enough to hand the pressing on a large hole mandrel, and it releases and cleans easily. You can also carefully brush the inside of the hole with floor polish to help it shine up, since reaming generally leaves the glass dull.

If you made a bead that would etch well, you could etch the bead, which would even out the surface of the hole with the surface of the bead.

This shape is also fabulous for lining with Sterling silver!

Beautiful!