

## Chapter 1

# An Insider's Look at Jewelry Making and Beading

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Deciding whether jewelry-making is for you
  - ▶ Introducing jewelry-making techniques
  - ▶ Choosing your projects
  - ▶ Making more from your jewelry-making hobby
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**A**lthough I could spend time explaining how rewarding, creative, and fun jewelry making and beading are, I'll show you instead. Flip to the color photo section near the middle of this book, filled with beautiful, glossy photos of handmade jewelry pieces. Just flip through it, look at some of the projects there, and come on back to this chapter when you're ready. Go ahead, I'll wait.

Like what you see? I spend the rest of the book giving you details on how to make each and every piece you see in the color *and* black-and-white pages of this book.

In this chapter, I give you an overview of the topics, techniques, and projects that I cover in the book, and I help you start making jewelry on your own using a variety of techniques that you can apply to the 65 projects throughout this book. I also give you plenty of tips for taking these techniques and adapting them to create your own designs. And finally, I give you ideas for making money with your newfound hobby. While reading, feel free to take a break at any time, whip out your pliers and bead something.

## *Why Make Jewelry Yourself?*

The best reason to make jewelry yourself is pure enjoyment. Pure artistic, creative energy pouring into your creation is incredibly satisfying. But this creativity has a practical side, too: something to wear. You can make very simple quick pieces to wear today, or you can create complicated designs



that take hours, even days to complete. You're in charge and limited only by your imagination.

Here are a few of my other favorite reasons for making jewelry:

- ✔ You can create one-of-a-kind pieces that no one else has.
- ✔ You can make inexpensive, beautiful gifts for your family and friends.
- ✔ You want to spend hours culling through strings, strands, and bins or beautiful beads.
- ✔ You have tons of divided plastic containers and don't know what to do with them.
- ✔ You can't fathom giving Paris Hilton (heiress, model, reality TV star, actress, singer, and brand new jewelry designer) any more money.
- ✔ You can start a low-cost home-based business.
- ✔ You can always find a new technique, stitch, or pattern that you haven't tried before, which means you can't reach the end of everything there is to know about this hobby.

## ***Finding ways to inspire your creativity***

Where you go with your newfound hobby is entirely up to you. You choose where your interest lies, what techniques and pieces to develop, and what to do with your pieces when you're done. Let your creativity be your guide.

If you're still looking for ways to get the creative juices flowing, consider the following:



- ✔ **Go to your library or bookstore.** Look at any jewelry-making books you can find. Even if a particular book focuses on a technique you don't think you'll ever try, it's worth spending time looking at them. You can get countless ideas from just looking at what other people have done.

Check to see whether your local library has an online catalog at its Web site. Often, a library's catalog ties into other systems that let you borrow a book not available in your area through an interlibrary loan program. Some search terms for jewelry-making inspirations include: jewelry making, jewelry trends, bead, beading, bead making, embellish, bead weaving, fashion, jewelry design, design, home décor, and crafts.

Don't look only in the adult section (and I don't mean the smutty one!) at your library or bookstore. Check out the kid's craft areas, too, where you can find great resources that can provide inspiration.

- ✔ **Search the Internet.** Look up different styles of jewelry, search for ancient inspirations and the hottest trends, or look up specific terms like "bead weaving patterns" or "tin cup necklace" and you're sure to get some



inspiring pictures, techniques, and tutorials. Also take a look at celebrity “news” sites like [www.eonline.com](http://www.eonline.com) to see what the stars think is hot. And check out huge shopping sites like Amazon.com ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). Amazon doesn’t show you the cutting edge of jewelry design, but you can look at the current fashion trends.

- ✓ **Subscribe to a jewelry making or beading magazine.** A library is a great place to get a sampling of jewelry-making magazines. But getting your own copy in the mail on a regular basis is a boon to your creative energy.
- ✓ **Order a catalog from a large bead and jewelry supply house.** Catalogs are like carrying a bead store with you! My personal favorite is Fire Mountain Gems and Beads; I like its catalog because it has plenty of project ideas mixed with fantastic full-color photos throughout the catalog. Every time I pickup the catalog, I want to make several somethings. Visit Fire Mountain’s Web site at [www.firemountaingems.com](http://www.firemountaingems.com) and click on catalog request. Or call the customer service number (800-423-2319) to request a free 500+ page catalog. Check out the ad in the back of this book for a special offer just for you.
- ✓ **Spend a few hours in a bead store.** Ultimately, there’s no better way to get inspired right now than to walk into your local bead store. Feel the beads. Hold them in your hand. Walk around with them. Hold them next to other beads. Lay them out on a bead board. Some stores actually have tools to make your pieces right there in the store. Check out Chapter 3 for design tips and ideas on pairing beads together.

You’ll never spend just a short time in a bead store, so allow plenty of time to wander, explore, and create.



## *Deciding whether to set up a separate workspace*

Should you set up a separate jewelry-making workspace? In a word: probably. How’s that for definite? But seriously, setting up a workspace just for making jewelry has many benefits. Here are just a few of those benefits:

- ✓ **You control the noise level.** If you like to work to music, blare it. If you don’t, don’t even keep a radio in your space. By having your own workspace, you can also keep other people from making noise in your space when you want a quiet atmosphere.
- ✓ **You control the light level.** If you’re trying to make jewelry in the same area that someone else is trying to meditate, read, or do homework, your lighting needs may not take priority. In your own space, you’re the boss.
- ✓ **You control the activity level.** You may have difficulty being creative and satisfied when people are milling around, asking you questions, or if the phone is ringing. Or maybe for you, having activity around you isn’t



a problem. You can locate your workspace outside (or inside) the flow of everything else going on in your house.

- ✓ **You can leave a half-finished project on a bead board, covered of course, without being in anyone's way.** Because jewelry making is fun for everyone, you'll have no shortage of curious onlookers. Accidents can happen when they look, though, and a separate workspace keeps unfinished projects with loose beads away from prying eyes and exploring hands.
- ✓ **You can lock your door.** A little added security maybe just what you need to complete your masterpiece. You decide what you need in your space. Just having a door is helpful, but a lock is that much safer.

Are you sensing a pattern here?



Ultimately, having a separate studio or office for making jewelry is ideal. But don't let the fact that you don't or can't have one right now keep you from getting started. Check out Chapter 4 for tips on making the most out of whatever space you do have.

## Discovering Jewelry-Making Designs and Techniques

I intersperse design tips and tricks throughout this book. For many of the projects, I give you ideas for making the project your own. When appropriate, I also give you patterns to follow and always provide illustrations.

The following sections briefly explain simple jewelry-making techniques. You can get the lowdown on each in Part II.

### *Stringing and knotting*

*Stringing*, threading beads onto a cord or thread, is the first technique most jewelry makers start with. In fact, you can get started with stringing in this very chapter in Project 1-1 in the last section of this chapter. Techniques for stringing beads and connecting jewelry findings are used in some way or another in just about every single piece of jewelry.

*Knotting*, tying knots between beads, is traditionally used to separate fine gemstones, like pearls, on simple elegant strands. But trendy pieces like the Tin Cup Necklace (see Chapter 5) can be made with this technique as well.



## *Bead weaving*

*Bead weaving* is sort of like stringing and knotting together. Using a needle and thread, you string beads, and then tie knots through beads and through threads connecting beads to reveal elaborate, often delicate designs. For the full story, take a look at Chapter 6.

## *Wire wrapping*

*Wire wrapping* is twisting and bending wire into shapes or around beads. This technique is exciting because you can do just about anything with it. Create delicate chains, beautiful wrapped beads, or easy dangle earrings. Look to Chapter 7 for exciting and easy designs using this technique.

## *Putting a few techniques to use*

Project 1-1, a Celtic Knot Pendant on Leather Cord, gives you a chance to try some simple jewelry-making techniques.

### *Project 1-1: Celtic Knot Pendant on Leather Cord*

You use a simple sterling silver Celtic knot pendant in this design. If you have a different favorite pendant (like a wolf, bear, arrowhead, or cross, for example), feel free to substitute. And if leather isn't your thing, a hemp or silk cord can also display a beautiful single pendant. Take a look at Chapter 2 if you need help with any of the tools or supplies. Check out Figure 1-3 to see the finished project.

### *Tools and Materials*

*Round nosed pliers*

*Celtic pendant, sterling silver*

*2 feet black leather cord, 2mm round*

*2 coil-end lobster claw clasp*

#### **1. String the pendant onto the cord.**

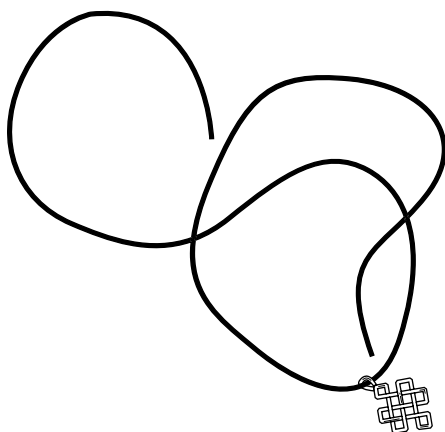
Yours should look something like Figure 1-1.

#### **2. Holding your cord (with pendant attached) in one hand, take the clasp in the other. Insert the end of your cord into one coil end of your clasp.**

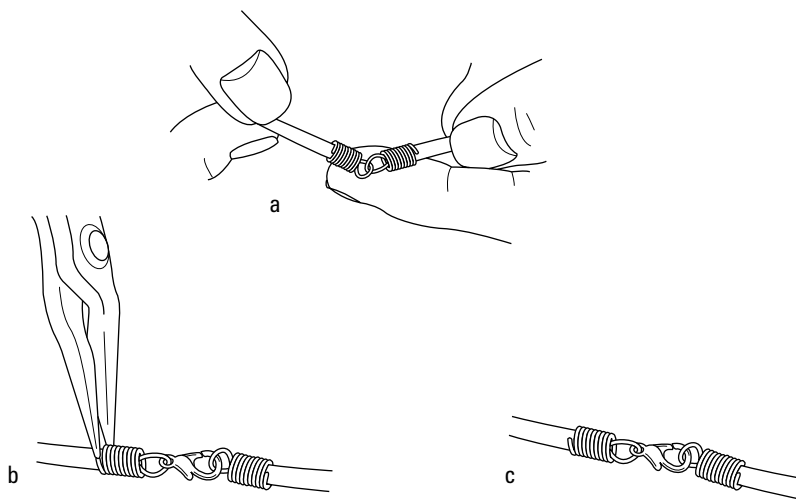
Take a look at Figure 1-2a.



**Figure 1-1:**  
Sliding the  
pendant  
onto your  
cord.



**Figure 1-2:**  
Attaching  
the coil-end  
clasp.



3. Using the round-nose pliers, pinch the coil end around your leather cord, as shown in Figure 1-2b.

Use your pliers to bend the last coil in the clasp, instead of trying to mash the entire end of the clasp flat.

4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 to finish the other side of your clasp.

The finished clasp should look like Figure 1-2c.





**Figure 1-3:**  
Celtic Knot  
Pendant on  
Leather  
Cord.

## *From Antique to Funky: Creating Innovative Jewelry*

Jewelry isn't just for special occasions. Whatever your style and interest, with more than 70 projects in this book, you can make pieces that you can wear or use everyday. The tough part is deciding which projects to make first.

Here are a few suggestions for how to prioritize your project list:

- ✓ **Stretchy beaded bracelets:** Bracelets created without a clasp on a continuous elastic band are extremely popular right now. You can find several bracelets with different bead combinations in Chapter 5 (Project 5-1), Chapter 8 (Project 8-6), and Chapter 9 (Project 9-10). Take a look at Figure 1-4 to see each project.
- ✓ **Y-necklaces:** A Y-necklace takes its name from the distinctive Y-shape made by the necklace and dangle. Take your pick from Projects 8-5 and 10-1, in Chapter 8 and 9, respectively. You can see each project in Figure 1-5.

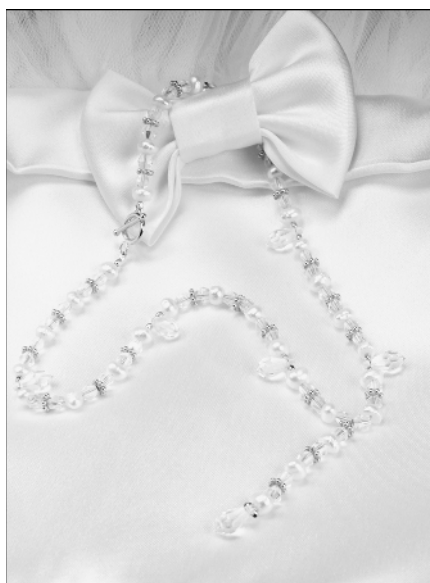




**Figure 1-4:**  
Stretchy  
bracelets.



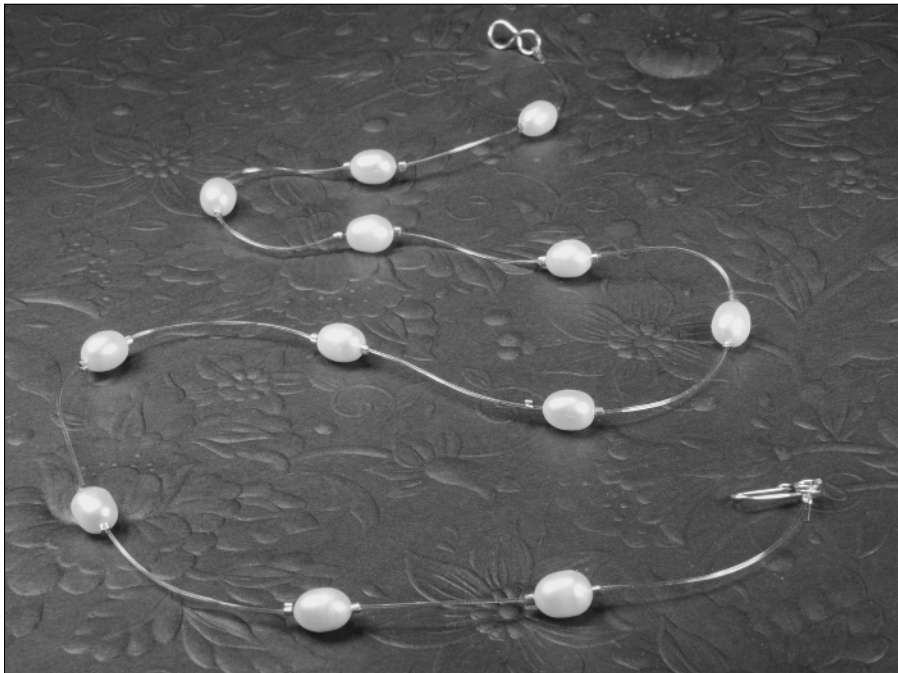
**Figure 1-5:**  
Y-necklaces.





- ✓ **Illusion necklace:** Illusion necklaces are those sparsely beaded necklaces strung on invisible thread that give the illusion that the beads are floating on your neck by themselves. You can find a version in Chapter 2 (Project 2-1). Check out Figure 1-6 to see it up close.
- ✓ **Hip, simple earrings:** Try the Psimple Psychedelic Earrings in Chapter 11 (Project 11-5) or the Wrapped Beaded Earrings in Chapter 7 (Project 7-3), both shown in Figure 1-7. And of course, I put a whole slew of earring projects in their very own section in Chapter 8.
- ✓ **Asian inspired necklace and earring set:** Get some good karma with this Asian-influenced jewelry set. Take a look at Figure 1-8 and get the full instructions and helpful illustrations in Chapter 10 (Project 10-3).

Don't miss the themed chapters in Part III, where you find, among other things, a chapter on completing retro-inspired projects (see Chapter 11). Also check out Chapter 12 in Part IV, in which you create home décor accents that utilize jewelry-making techniques and beading.



**Figure 1-6:**  
Illusion  
Necklace.



**Figure 1-7:**  
Simple  
earrings.



**Figure 1-8:**  
Asian  
Inspired  
Good-Luck  
Necklace  
and  
Earrings.



## *Taking Your Hobby to the Next Level*

When do you know you're addicted to jewelry making and beading? When you just can't help but share it with everyone else. It's hard to resist when people compliment you on your pieces or your kids (and their friends) want to get into your bead bins.



You can involve other people (assuming you want to) in your hobby in many ways. Here are a few favorites:

- ✔ **Try a new technique with a friend.** If she's a wire wrapper and you're an experienced bead stringer, take a bead-making class together. Often, the most interesting and innovative pieces of jewelry employed several jewelry-making techniques. Part II introduces all the techniques used in this book.
- ✔ **Host a jewelry-making party for your friends.** I show you how to set it up, whom to invite, and how to organize a great party. Check out Chapter 14 for details.
- ✔ **Make jewelry with kids.** In Chapter 13, I give you step-by-step support for choosing the best projects for each age group, keeping everyone interested and on task. Your kids will complete beautiful projects everyone can be proud of.
- ✔ **Sell your pieces and your expertise.** You can make money selling your jewelry and your talent. Whether you're sitting at your own booth at an art show or posting your pieces on the Internet, you can find a market for your pieces. In Chapter 15, I help you work through the legal and logistical issues to find a way to make it work for you including finding classes that you can teach and shows where you can exhibit.



