

chapter

1

Introduction to Beadwork

Have you admired intricately woven, colorful beadwork, but assumed that you could never make it yourself? Perhaps you were intimidated by the tiny dimensions and sheer number of the beads, or maybe you felt overwhelmed by the complex project instructions in a book or magazine. Put your worries aside, and allow this book to guide you, step by step, through the most popular contemporary beadwork techniques. You will discover that bead weaving is not overly difficult, and that it is more rewarding than you may have imagined.



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How to Use This Book

Bead weaving is the process of stitching beads together using a needle and thread. With *off-loom bead weaving*, you stitch beads while holding the beaded fabric—called *beadwork*—in your hands, rather than using a loom to support it. You can use off-loom bead-weaving techniques to create jewelry, artwork, and items of décor for your home.

This book covers introductory off-loom bead weaving for beginners, but it also includes some intermediate techniques that you can learn over time as your skills develop. As you progress, remember that successful bead weaving takes lots of practice, and your initial swatches and projects will not be perfect. Be patient, and enjoy the process of watching your skills improve. Below is an overview of how this book is organized and how you can use it to get started.



Learn the Basics of Bead Weaving

Begin by reading the sections on beads, needles, thread, tools, and supplies in this chapter. They contain important terminology that is used in bead-weaving project instructions and will help you set up a work area stocked with essential materials.

After you finish Chapter 1, look over all of the sections in Chapter 2. They explain the basic techniques required to start and complete most bead-weaving projects. Pay especially close attention to the final section, which defines essential terms that are used throughout the rest of the book. Keep in mind that you can return to Chapter 2 anytime, and you do not need to learn all of the techniques covered there at once.

EXPERIMENT WITH OFF-LOOM STITCHES

Chapters 3 through 8 demonstrate how to perform the most popular off-loom bead-weaving *stitches*, which are ways that you can weave beads together. Each stitch has a unique name and produces beadwork with a distinct look and feel. You can use most stitches to create beadwork that is flat, tubular, or circular in shape.

Many new beaders begin with peyote stitch, featured in Chapter 3, but you are free to try any stitch that interests you. To learn a new stitch, begin with its flat version and make a practice swatch: Prepare an initial length of thread (see Chapter 2), and then follow the steps for that stitch until you have a length of beadwork. You can use practice swatches to improve your overall skills, and to test alternative methods for beginning and ending thread. Once you feel comfortable with the flat version of a stitch, you can move on to its tubular or circular version, or you can try a flat-beadwork project (see the next section). Later, you can return to that stitch's chapter to learn how to add shape and dimension to your beadwork using increases and decreases.

TRY THE EXAMPLE PROJECTS

Once you feel comfortable performing a stitch in swatches, you can make one of the beginner-level projects in Chapter 10 that uses that stitch. When you're ready to attempt more complex projects, try those in Chapter 11. Both chapters give you an opportunity to practice following project instructions, reading patterns, using stitches in interesting ways, and adding the decorative details and clasps that are covered in Chapter 9.

Beads Used for Bead Weaving

Introduction to Beadwork

chapter 1

Small, glass beads called *seed beads* are most commonly used for bead weaving. They are available in many sizes and shapes, and in hundreds of colors and finishes.



Varieties of Seed Beads

TRUE SEED BEADS

True seed beads (sometimes called *rocailles*, *E-beads*, *round seed beads*, or simply “seed beads”) are tiny, slightly cylindrical glass beads that have rounded edges, like doughnuts. The highest-quality modern seed beads are made in Japan, the Czech Republic, and France. Many beaders use only Japanese beads, which tend to be very consistent in size. You can also find *vintage seed beads* in some bead shops and on the Internet. These are typically extra-small beads that were once made in Europe, but are no longer manufactured.

You can use true seed beads for any type of bead-weaving stitch. They produce a textural, flowing style of beaded fabric.



FAQ

My local bead shop sells beads labeled “Rocaille,” which seem different from regular seed beads, and I have some project instructions that call for “E-beads,” but they do not specify a shape or size. Do these terms refer to special kinds of seed beads?

Yes, in these instances, “rocaille” and “E-bead” have more specific meanings than the general term “seed bead.” The Miyuki company of Japan adopted the name Rocaille for its specialty line of tiny (size 15/0), very evenly shaped, rounded seed beads. “E-beads” sometimes refer specifically to large (size 5/0 or 6/0) seed beads. (To learn about sizing, see “Bead Sizes” on page 8.) When your project instructions or patterns call for E-beads, without providing any other size information, you can normally use seed beads that are either size 5/0 or size 6/0.

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Beads Used for Bead Weaving (continued)

CYLINDER BEADS

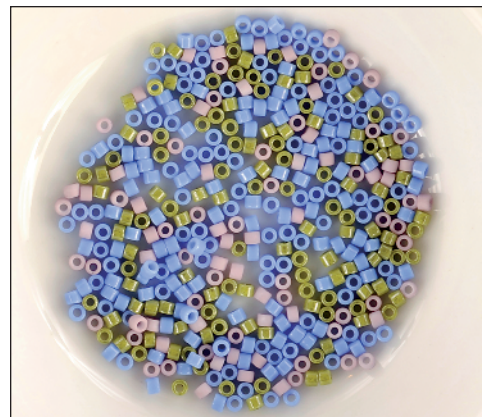
Cylinder beads are small glass beads made exclusively in Japan. They are manufactured by a special process that gives them a pronounced cylindrical, or tubular, shape with straight edges (unlike true seed beads, which are only slightly cylindrical and have rounded edges). Cylinder beads are extremely uniform in size and shape, and they have especially large holes to accommodate multiple passes with a needle and thread. Currently, most cylinder beads are produced by two Japanese companies, Miyuki and Toho. You may find these beads for sale under the brand names Delica, Treasure, and Aiko.

Use cylinder beads when you want your beadwork to have a very dense look and smooth feel. They work best with flat or tubular peyote, brick, and square stitches; and they are rarely recommended for loosely woven, or *open*, stitches, such as right-angle weave, netting, and circular stitches.

BUGLE BEADS

Bugle beads are narrow glass tubes that are longer and less uniform than cylinder beads. Standard bugle beads are straight, but you can also find ornate *twisted bugle beads*.

Some bugle beads have unpolished, jagged edges that can cut through thread and damage your beadwork. Look for high-quality, Japanese versions of these beads (which may have polished ends), or “buffer” them by stringing a smooth bead immediately in front of and behind each one, as shown on the far right.



TIP

Purchasing Seed Beads by the Unit

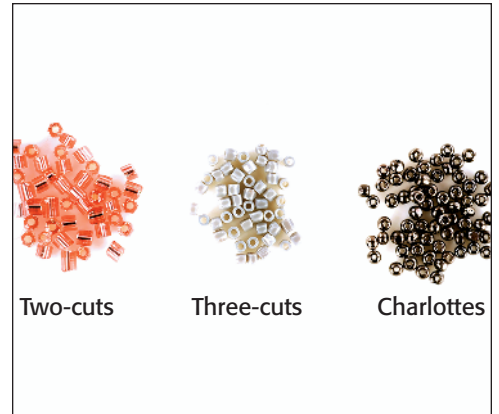
Seed beads are usually sold in bulk units rather than by the number of beads in a container or bag. Sometimes these are units of weight. For example, most Japanese seed beads and all cylinder beads are sold by the gram, and French seed beads are usually sold by the ounce. In contrast, many Czech seed beads are sold per 10- to 20-inch strand, or by the *hank*, which is a bundle of between 8 and 14 strands. Project instructions normally indicate how many grams, ounces, strands, or hanks of beads are required, and over time you should develop a feel for how many beads it takes to complete a given type of design. See the online Appendix (www.wiley.com/go/tyvbeadwork) for some typical beads-per-gram, beads-per-ounce, and beads-per-hank estimates.



CUT SEED BEADS

Cut seed beads are seed beads with one or more flat edges, which create *facets*. Here are the three most common types:

- *Two-cuts* (also called *hex-cuts*) are similar to very short bugle beads, but have six relatively even facets that run lengthwise.
- *Three-cuts* are two-cuts with extra facets at the ends.
- *Charlottes* (also called *one-cuts*) are true seed beads with a single facet.



SHAPED SEED BEADS

Shaped seed beads are manufactured in different shapes than true seed beads. Here are the most popular:

- *Triangle beads* have three equal sides and ends that are shaped like triangles.
- *Drop beads* (also called *fringe beads*) are tiny, broad, teardrop-shaped beads used to create texture or to accent the ends of fringe. (These include *Magatamas*, which are manufactured by the Toho company.)
- *Cube beads* (also called *square beads*) have four equal sides and ends that are shaped like squares.



TIP

Using Larger Beads for Bead Weaving

You can use larger glass beads as accents with many bead-weaving stitches. *Czech fire-polished beads* and *Austrian crystal beads* are two popular varieties. With beads made from other materials, check to ensure that the holes are large enough to accommodate multiple passes with a needle and thread—and that they are free from sharp edges that may damage thread—before using those beads in a project.



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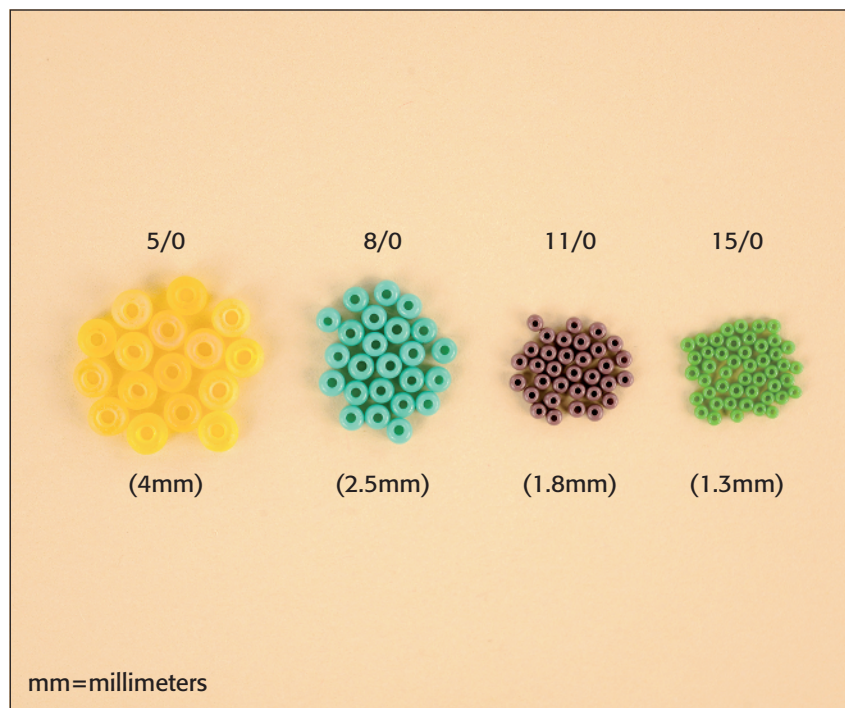
Beads Used for Bead Weaving (continued)

Bead Sizes

The sizes of true seed beads, cylinder beads, charlottes, two-cuts, three-cuts, and some triangle beads are denoted by numbers called *aight sizes*. Historically, aught sizes may have corresponded to the number of beads that made up 1 inch of beads stacked side by side (not strung end to end). Accordingly, a larger aught number refers to a smaller bead, and a smaller aught number to a larger bead. (See the online Appendix, at www.wiley.com/go/tyvbeadwork, for a chart that compares aught sizes with their approximate lengths in millimeters.)

Note: Because bead size standards have changed over time, aught sizes are not a good indicator of how many beads make up 1 inch of side-by-side beads in your beadwork. To determine that number accurately, create a test swatch (see page 49 in Chapter 2).

An aught size may be written as a fraction (11/0), as a number followed by a degree symbol (11°), or simply as a number (11). Seed beads range in size from about 24/0 (smallest) to about 5/0 (largest). Originally, cylinder beads were only manufactured in size 11/0, but some are now produced in sizes 15/0, 10/0, and 8/0. Be aware that different manufacturers may size their beads slightly differently. For example, a size 8/0 Czech seed bead may not have exactly the same dimensions as a size 8/0 Japanese bead. For this reason, it's a good idea to use beads from a single manufacturer for a given project.

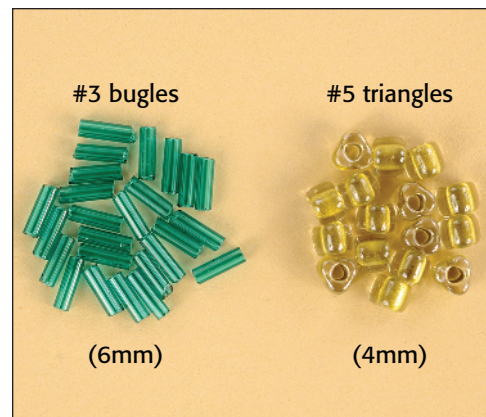


Note: These images are not shown to scale; the actual measurements of the beads are provided.

Cube beads, drop beads, some bugle beads, some triangle beads, and most beads that are larger than seed beads are sized in millimeters rather than in aught sizes. These beads are usually measured lengthwise end to end (hole opening to hole opening), with the exception of drop beads, which are often measured top to bottom.



Some Japanese and Czech bugle beads have their own sizing systems. Their sizes are denoted by a pound sign followed by a fraction or a whole number (such as #1 or #2). These beads are available in a more limited range of sizes than other seed beads. (See the online Appendix [www.wiley.com/go/tyvbeadwork] for a chart that matches typical bugle bead sizes with their approximate lengths in millimeters.)



TIP

Culling Beads

The bead-manufacturing process results in beads that have slightly different dimensions, even among beads of the same "size." Occasionally, you may come across a bead that is noticeably smaller or larger than the others, a bead that appears misshapen, or a bead that is chipped or otherwise damaged. To keep your beadwork looking smooth and even, you should *cull*, or remove, those beads from your supply. An easy way to cull beads is to examine the beads in your bead dish or on your mat (see page 16) and use a needle to pick them up and set them aside. You can either discard culled beads or keep them for possible future use. For example, extra-narrow and extra-wide beads are useful for making certain increases and decreases in peyote stitch (see Chapter 3).



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Beads Used for Bead Weaving *(continued)*

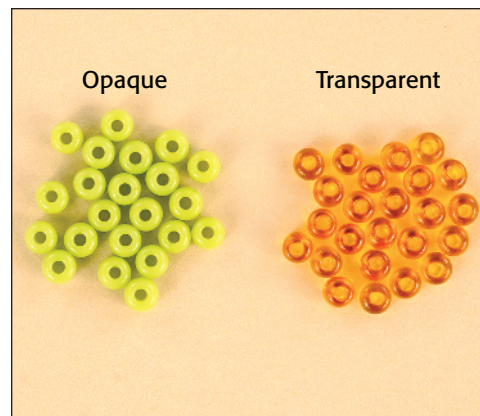
Seed Bead Colors and Finishes

Seed beads are available in an enormous array of colors and with many kinds of treatments, called *finishes*. Here are the most common types of colors and finishes, and what you should know about them.

OPAQUE, TRANSPARENT, AND TRANSLUCENT COLORS

These are basic bead colors, with no special finishes applied. *Opaque colors* are solid; they absorb light and very little light passes through them. *Transparent colors* allow much light to pass through. As a result, you can see through most transparent beads, which makes thread color an especially important choice when using them. *Translucent colors* are very similar to transparent colors, but they allow slightly less light to pass through. When you use opaque and transparent or translucent colors together in a design, the opaque colors usually appear to come forward, or be slightly raised, and the transparent or translucent colors seem to fade into the background.

Whether a bead is opaque, transparent, or translucent is usually indicated in its name, often by an abbreviation such as “Opq” for opaque or “Tr” for transparent or translucent (ask your bead supplier for a key to their abbreviations). If a color is a light or dark version of a standard color, the name may also include an abbreviation such as “Lt” for light or “Dk” for dark.



TIP

Using Manufacturers' Numbers to Identify Beads

Some major seed bead manufacturers assign numbers to their beads, rather than (or in addition to) naming them with descriptive terms. (For example, Miyuki assigns the number “DB0875” to its opaque, mauve Delica beads that have a matte aurora borealis finish.) Some online bead suppliers provide the option to shop for beads using these numbers, in addition to the beads’ descriptive names. This is a valuable service, because some patterns use manufacturers’ numbers to identify the beads required for a design. Some suppliers also use the numbers to create lists or charts of matching beads in different shapes and sizes, which can help you to develop your own designs.

SPECIAL FINISHES

- *Aurora borealis* is a multicolored, reflective finish. It is commonly indicated by the letters “AB” in bead names, but it may also be called *iris*, *iridescent*, *rainbow*, or *oil slick*.
- *Dyed beads* are colored at the surface and not all the way through, which makes them prone to losing their color over time. You should coat them with a clear protective spray before using them (see “Apply a Protective Coating to Beads” in the online Appendix [www.wiley.com/go/tyvbeadwork]).
- *Color-lined beads* have a colored finish on the inside surfaces of their holes. Be careful not to scratch these linings with your needle, and be aware that beads lined with metallic colors may darken over time as their linings *tarnish* from exposure to air. Lined beads are usually labeled with an abbreviation such as “S/L” for silver lined or “G/L” for gold lined.
- *Matte* and *frosted* beads have a lightly etched surface, which gives them a soft, less reflective appearance than other beads.
- *Satin* beads are manufactured to have numerous tiny bubbles that create a reflective sheen that glistens in different directions.
- *Metallic beads* are finished to look like metal. Lower-quality metallic beads are painted with metal-colored paint and are likely to chip or wear over time.
- *Galvanized beads* and *plated beads* are coated with metal in a process called *electroplating*, which uses an electrical current. Although plating is more durable than paint, it may also wear off or change color by tarnishing.
- *Luster finishes* are transparent surface treatments that add shine to beads. They include *pearl luster*, which has a pearly sheen, and *gold luster*, which reflects a shimmer of metallic gold. *Ceylon* is a special finish that is usually applied to pastel-colored beads to make them look like tiny pearls.
- *Two-tone* beads are made with two distinct colors of glass, where one side of the bead is the first color and the other side is the second color.
- *Combination beads* have two or more special finishes. For example, a “matte galvanized silver” bead is silver-colored with a matte and galvanized finish.



Beading Needles and Thread

Beading needles, which are the most common needles used for bead weaving, look like sewing needles with especially narrow eyes. *Beading thread* is a sturdy, smooth thread that is intended for use with beads. You can find beading thread and beading needles at bead stores and on the Internet. Be aware that different brands of needles and thread have slightly different characteristics. You may want to experiment to determine which you like best.

Types and Sizes of Beading Needles

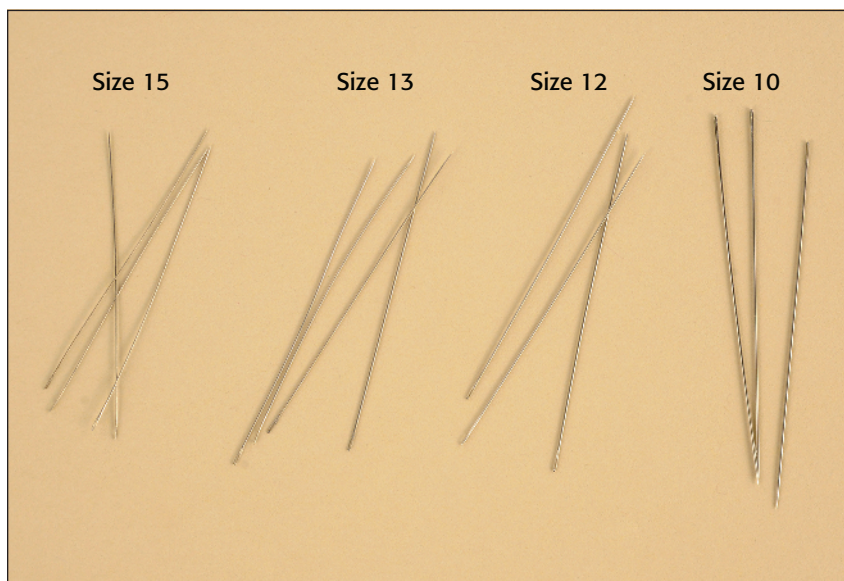
TYPES OF BEADING NEEDLES

Most beading needles are manufactured in England or Japan, and they often include the country of origin in their names—such as *English beading needles* or *Japanese beading needles*. Some manufacturers produce beading needles that are stiff and remain relatively straight while you stitch beads, and others produce softer needles that can become curved. Stiff needles are usually easier to work with, but they may be more prone to breaking than softer needles.

SIZES OF BEADING NEEDLES

English beading needles have a traditional sizing system that uses numbers to indicate needle thickness. These range from #16 (thinnest) to #10 (thickest), with #12 the most versatile. The size numbers approximate the sizes of seed beads that you should use them with (see the Needle and Thread Size Recommendations chart on page 15). English beading needles are also available in different lengths: *short beading needles* (also called *sharps*) are usually 1 inch to 1¼ inches long, and *long beading needles* (also called *normal beading needles*) are about 2-inches long. The length of needle you use is typically a matter of personal preference.

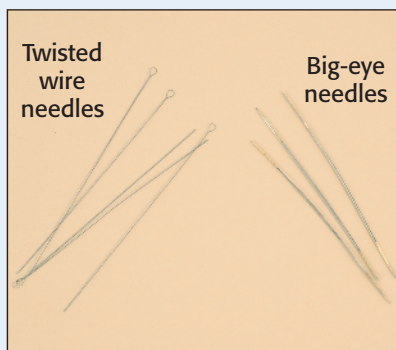
With needles made in different countries, such as Japan, ask your supplier how their sizes compare to the traditional English sizes.



FAQ

What are twisted wire needles and big-eye needles?

These needles are commonly used for stringing beads, rather than for bead weaving. Twisted wire needles have soft wire eyes that you can collapse with your fingers to fit them through bead holes. Big eye needles are slit vertically down the middle so that you can use them with wide stringing materials, like ribbon.



Types of Beading Thread

NYLON THREAD

Nylon thread, which is available in a wide variety of colors and sizes, is one of the most popular types of beading thread. It consists of many thin strands of nylon plastic, which are either stacked and bonded together, or twisted together like tiny rope. Untreated nylon thread may stretch out over time, so you should treat it with beeswax or thread conditioner and pre-stretch it before use (see the section “Prepare a Length of Thread” in Chapter 2). Popular brands of nylon thread include Nymo, C-Lon, and Silamide.



GEL-SPUN POLYETHYLENE THREAD

Gel-spun polyethylene thread, or *GSP thread*, has some benefits over nylon thread in that it is stronger, isn't as prone to stretching, and is less likely to fray at the ends. However, it is available in a more-limited range of colors and sizes than nylon thread. You can use a “plied” variety such as Power Pro or DandyLine to stitch larger glass beads, crystal beads, or non-glass beads. The brands Fireline and Wildfire work well for beadwoven designs that may experience extra wear, such as finger rings.



TIP

Beading Wire as an Alternative to Beading Thread

It is possible to perform some bead-weaving stitches using stringing materials other than beading thread. The most common alternative is size .010 (very thin) *beading wire* (also called *bead stringing wire*). Beading wire is composed of many tiny metal strands that are woven or wound together, and then covered with a thin layer of nylon. Popular brands of beading wire include SoftFlex and Beadalon. You can make knots with .010 beading wire, but it does not work with a regular beading needle. You must use it without a needle (it is stiffer than beading thread), or use a special needle made by the beading-wire manufacturer.



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Beading Needles and Thread *(continued)*

Sizes of Beading Thread

Beading thread is available in a range of thicknesses, also called *weights*. The thicker (or “heavier”) a thread is, the stronger it tends to be. Most nylon thread weights are denoted by letters, with the very thinnest threads denoted by zeros, as noted in the following chart.

Thinner	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	Thicker
000	0	A	AA	B	C	D	E	EE	F

Gel-spun polyethylene thread may be sized based on its actual thickness in fractions of inches or millimeters, or by its strength, as determined by strength tests performed by its manufacturers. The larger a thread’s *pound test number*, the stronger and thicker it is. For instance, thread labeled “30 pound test” (or “30#”) is stronger and thicker than thread labeled “8 pound test” (or “8#”).

You should use the thickest thread that is reasonable for your project, both for strength and to ensure that the beads lie properly. After you select the type and size of beads to use, try to determine the maximum number of times you need to pass the needle through any bead in your design. All stitches require you to pass through some beads twice, and most require at least three passes. Factor in any thread ends that need to be woven in, whether you need to attach fringe or findings, and whether you have increases or decreases that require weaving through the beadwork extra times. Use that number as the basis for determining which thread to use. For example, if you need to pass through some beads four times, test to make sure that the thread (and needle) you choose can do this without the needle becoming stuck in a bead. You can use the chart on the next page to narrow your options of thread sizes to try.

FAQ

How should I select a color of beading thread?

When you use nylon beading thread, you have a large variety of colors to choose from. Here are some things to consider when making your selection:

- Typically, your thread should be as invisible as possible within your beadwork, and you should therefore select a color that matches (or nearly matches) the most prominent beads in your design, or a slightly darker color that will blend in.
- When you perform a stitch where some thread always shows (like right-angle weave), you can either use a matching color to disguise it, or break the rules by using a coordinating color that becomes part of the design.
- If your design will ultimately lie on top of another material, use a thread color that matches the color of that material if you would like the thread to “disappear” into the background. For instance, use black thread for a beaded tube that you plan to string onto black cord.

Gel-spun polyethylene thread is typically available in neutral colors like black, white, gray, and olive green. You should experiment to determine which color you prefer to use with various bead colors and stitches.

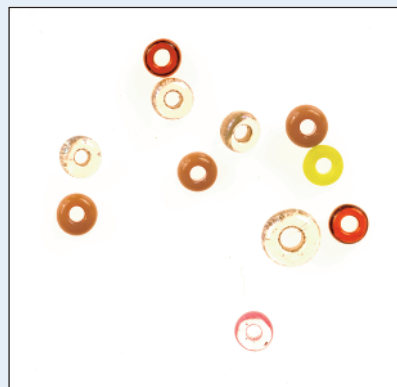


Needle and Thread Size Recommendations

	Bead Size	Needle Size	Thread Size
Larger	5/0 and 6/0	#10	F or FF
	8/0	#10	E, F, or FF
	9/0	#10	D, E, or F
	10/0	#10	B or D
	11/0	#10	A or B
	12/0	#11	A or B
	13/0	#12	A or O
	14/0	#13	A or O
	15/0	#13 or #15	O, OO, or OOO
Smaller			

TIP**Bead Size Versus Bead Hole Size**

Logically, it is a bead's hole size—not its overall size—that affects the size of thread and needle that you can use for a project. Keep in mind that not all beads of the same size have the same size holes. For example, Japanese seed beads may have slightly larger holes than the same size Czech seed beads. For this reason, it is always a good idea to experiment with different needle sizes, and sometimes different thread sizes, before you begin a project using unfamiliar beads. If a needle starts to become stuck in beadwork that you are stitching with single-strand thread (see the section "Prepare a Length of Thread" in Chapter 2), you can try switching to a smaller size needle mid-way through the project.



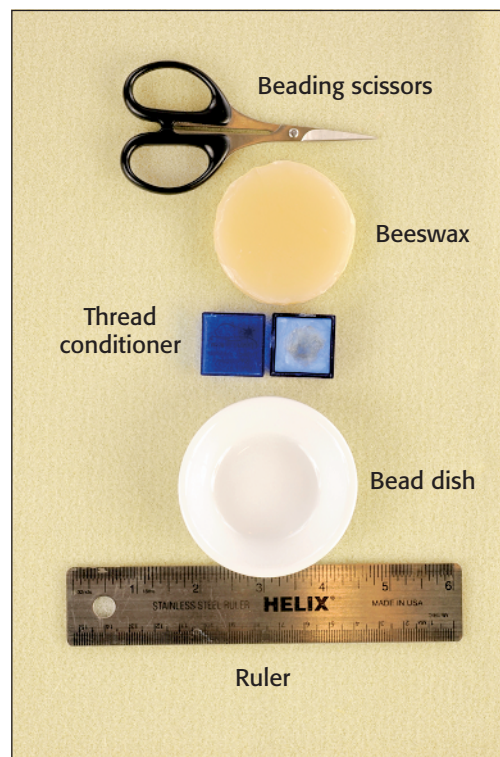
More Tools and Supplies

Here are some other tools and supplies useful for bead weaving. All of these materials are sold at most beading and craft stores. You will learn how to use them in the following chapters.

Essential Tools and Supplies

These items are required for most bead-weaving projects.

- *Beading scissors* are small, sharp scissors that you use to cut soft beading thread, such as Nymo and C-lon. To cut stiffer thread, such as FireLine and PowerPro, you should use children's craft scissors instead.
- *Beeswax* and *thread conditioner* are products that you apply to nylon thread to make it easier to work with and less likely to tangle and stretch. Because beeswax is thick and somewhat sticky, many bead-ers prefer to use a thread conditioner, like Thread Heaven, instead.
- A *bead dish* is a small plate, bowl, or tray that you fill with beads so that you can easily pick them up and stitch them into your bead-work. Many bead-ers use smooth white porcelain bead dishes that are available at some bead stores. Alternatively, you can use condiment dishes, like the dish shown on the right. You can keep larger beads in piles on a *bead mat*. The most popular bead mats are sheets of a soft material called Vellux. (Gray Vellux is shown as a background in the photo.)
- Keep a ruler or measuring tape on hand for measuring beadwork and sizing jewelry.



Optional Tools and Supplies

Many of these items can help you complete bead-weaving projects more easily. Others allow you to create beadwork of a certain type or style.

- A *form* is any cylindrical object used to support tubular beadwork as you stitch beads. Wooden dowels and metal tubes from hardware stores work well, but you can also use household items such as pencils and knitting needles.
- You can use a *beading awl* to undo knots in beading thread and to unstitch beads to correct a mistake.
- *Clear nail polish* is useful for tacking the ends of thread inside of beadwork when you end a thread or begin a new one.
- You can use *masking tape* or small, coiled clamps called *Mini Bead Stoppers* to prevent beads from falling off of loose ends of thread. These are alternatives to using stop beads, which are defined in Chapter 2.
- A *thread burner* cuts thread close to beadwork and shrinks the end of a thread so that it seems to disappear. You can use it as an alternative to scissors and clear nail polish when ending a thread or beginning a new one.
- *Bead scoops* are small metal shovels that you use to quickly pick up beads. You can use them to transfer beads from a bead dish to a storage container, or to gather spilled beads.
- A *pin cushion* or *magnetic pin holder* (not shown) is useful for temporary placement of needles while you work.



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More Tools and Supplies *(continued)*

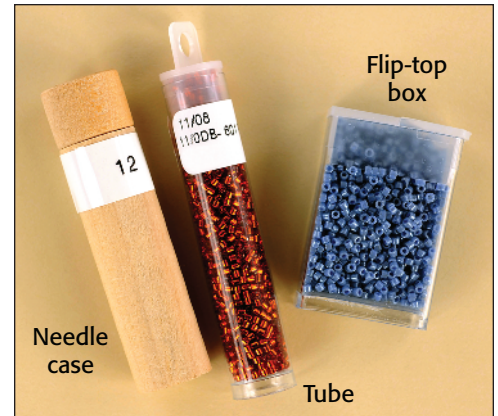
- If you plan to design your own beadwork patterns, you can use *colored pencils* to plot color schemes on graph paper.
- *EZ Bob bobbins* come in handy when you need to contain a long length of thread and keep it tangle-free. They have soft-plastic tops that flip open and closed, and they stack together for storage.
- *Jewelry findings* are components that serve practical purposes in jewelry. The most common jewelry findings used in beadwork designs include *jump rings*, *clasps*, *clamp ends* (also called *ribbon clasps*), and *ear wires*. *Crimp ends* are also sometimes used.
- To attach jewelry findings to your beadwork, you can use *chain nose pliers*, which are short needle-nose pliers with flat, smooth jaws. You need two pairs of these pliers for opening and closing jump rings (see page 174). For some applications (like securing clamp ends to beadwork) you can also use *flat nose pliers*, which look like chain nose pliers with broad, flat tips.
- Use a *craft glue*, like E6000 or G-S Hypo Cement, to attach findings that can be glued, such as clamp ends. It's a good idea to use a toothpick to apply small amounts of glue to your beadwork. Waxed paper is a good surface to work on when you apply glue, and paper towels come in handy for cleaning up.
- Cloth or fabric *first-aid tape* can serve as a cushion between beadwork and larger findings, such as clamp ends.
- *Cabochons* are jewelry stones that are flat on the bottom and domed on the top. You can bead around them to create *beaded bezels*.
- You can use *buttons* to create certain types of beaded clasps.



Storage and Organization

You should store your beads, thread, tools, and supplies in a way that keeps them organized and accessible. Seed beads are sold in small plastic bags or clear plastic tubes or boxes. *Flip-top boxes* are excellent containers for beads, because you can open and close them without spilling beads. (You can purchase them online and at some bead stores.) Tubes are also useful, but you should remove their tops slowly to avoid spills, especially with full tubes. If you purchase beads in bags (which is how most Czech seed beads are sold), it's a good idea to transfer them to boxes, tubes, or jars for storage. Always label your bead containers with the beads' size, color, and finish (or with the manufacturers' numbers).

Store needles in their original packages, or in labeled containers called *needle cases*. Some needle cases have magnets to keep needles secure until you need them.



TIP

Setting Up a Bead-Weaving Work Area

Your *work area* is the space you use to perform beadwork. It should include a place for bead dishes, a clear area over which you can hold your beadwork, and space for other essential tools and supplies.

Many beadweavers prefer to anchor their work area with a bead mat. You can place your bead dishes on top of the mat, or just to the side. At the edges of the mat, you may place needles, a spool of thread, beeswax or thread conditioner, a ruler, and any findings or jewelry components that you plan to use.

Make sure you also have a good-quality task light, and consider investing in a magnifier (one attached to a headband, or a desk-top model) to help you see intricate beadwork. Use a chair that allows you to sit upright while you work, with your hands and wrists in a comfortable, supported position. Avoid working in a cluttered space or at a table or desk that has protruding knobs that may catch your thread as you work. Finally, if you have children or pets, designate a secure container for storing scrap thread that you plan to discard or use later, because it can cause serious health problems if swallowed.

