

Chapter 1

An Insider's Look at Jewelry Making and Beading

In This Chapter

- ▶ Deciding whether jewelry making is for you
- ▶ Introducing jewelry-making techniques
- ▶ Choosing your projects
- ▶ Making more from your jewelry-making hobby

Although I could spend time explaining how rewarding, creative, and fun jewelry making and beading are, I want to show you instead. Look at the beautiful photos in this book, which are filled with handmade jewelry pieces. Just flip through the chapters, look at some of the projects, and come on back to this chapter when you're ready. Go ahead, I'll wait.

Like what you see? Great! Intimidated? I hope not. Don't worry. I spend the rest of the book giving you details on how to make each and every piece you see in the pages of this book.

In this chapter, I give you an overview of the topics 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 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. Pouring your artistic energy into a new creation is incredibly satisfying. But this creativity has a practical side, too: You produce something to wear. You can make very simple pieces to wear today, or you can create complicated designs that take hours or 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 of beautiful beads.
- ✓ You have tons of divided plastic containers and don't know what to do with them.
- ✓ You can't fathom giving the Kardashians (or their Kardashian Kollection jewelry line) any more fame or fortune.
- ✓ You can start a low-cost home-based business.
- ✓ You can always find a new technique, stitch, or pattern that you haven't tried, 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 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 it. You can get countless ideas from looking at what other people have done.

Check to see whether your local library has an online catalog at its website. 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 kids' craft areas, too, where you can find great resources that can provide inspiration.

- ✓ **Browse social media curation websites.** Pinterest (www.pinterest.com), Pearltrees (www.pearltrees.com), and The Fancy (www.the-fancy.com) are *social media curation* websites that let users create virtual pin boards of images of designs, projects, and ideas that inspire them. You can find high-end designs and DIY projects all in one place. Create your own boards full of whatever you love. Many jewelry pictures link back to full instructions for making the items. Clicking through the images is a great way to find new blogs and websites of crafty people making beautiful things.

If you haven't been to a site like Pinterest before, I warn you it's addictive. You can spend hours looking at projects, but remember that the real fun is in making them.

- ✓ **Search the Internet.** Look up different styles of jewelry, search for ancient inspirations and the hottest trends, or look up specific terms like “wrap bracelet” or “steampunk style,” and you’re sure to get some inspiring pictures, techniques, and tutorials. Also take a look at celebrity “news” sites like www.eonline.com to see what the stars think is hot. Look at fashion sites like www.instyle.com, www.baublebar.com, or www.shopbop.com. Look at their accessories sections to zero in on jewelry inspiration.
- ✓ **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.** Having a catalog is like carrying a bead store with you! My personal favorite is from Fire Mountain Gems and Beads; I like its catalog because it has plenty of project ideas mixed with fantastic full-color photos. Every time I pick up the catalog, I want to make several somethings. Visit Fire Mountain’s website at www.firemountaingems.com and click Free Catalog, or call the customer service number (800-355-2137) to request a free 500+-page catalog.
- ✓ **Spend a few hours in a craft or 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 you can use to make your pieces right there. Check out Chapter 3 for design tips and ideas on pairing beads together.

If you’re like me, 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 them:

- ✓ **You control the noise level.** If you like to work to music, blare it. If you prefer silence, 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 room where 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 and 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 home.

- ✓ **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 may be 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, and I offer many color photos to illustrate my suggestions. For many of the projects I present, I also give you ideas for making them your own.

The following sections briefly explain a few 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. Techniques for stringing beads and connecting jewelry findings are used in some way or another in almost every piece of jewelry.

Knotting, tying knots between beads, is traditionally used to separate fine gemstones, like pearls, on simple elegant strands. But you can make trendy pieces like the Tin Cup Necklace (see Project 5-2 in Chapter 5) using this technique as well.

Wire wrapping

Wire wrapping involves 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 6 for exciting and easy designs using this technique.

Putting a few techniques to use

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

Project 1-1: Eternity Knot Pendant on Leather Cord

You use a simple sterling silver eternity 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.



I used a prepackaged clasp set to finish this necklace. It came with two coil ends, and one end already had the lobster claw attached. If you'd rather use the individual findings than a set, you need two coil ends, a lobster claw, and a jump ring to attach the lobster claw to one of the coil ends.

Tools and Materials

Chain-nose pliers

Eternity pendant, sterling silver

2 feet black leather cord, 2mm round

1 clasp set with 2 coil ends and a lobster claw, silver

1. String the pendant onto the cord.

Yours should look something like Figure 1-1.

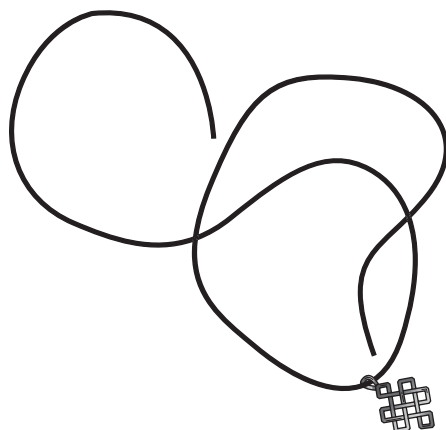
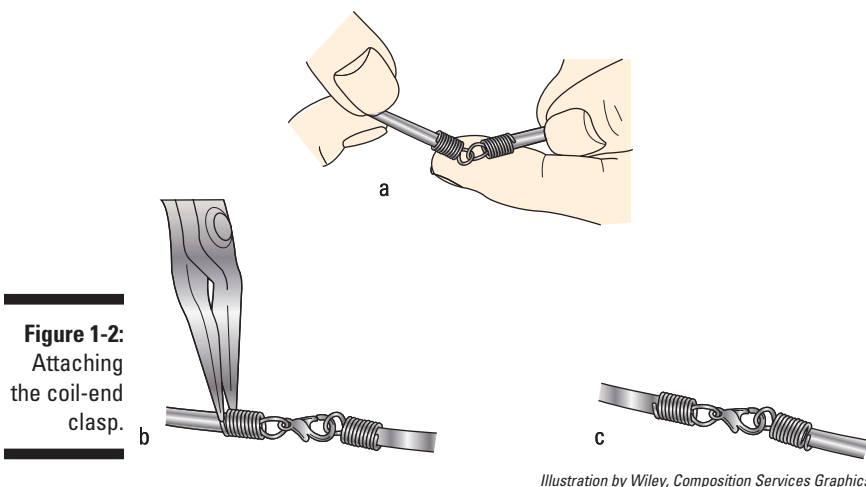


Figure 1-1:
Sliding the
pendant
onto your
cord.

Illustration by Wiley, Composition Services Graphics

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.



3. Using the chain-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:
Eternity
Knot
Pendant
on Leather
Cord.

Photograph by Andy Dismore

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 every day. The tough part is deciding which projects to make first.

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

- ✓ **Wrap bracelets:** Long bracelets that wrap two or three times around the wrist, closing with a chunky clasp, are extremely popular right now. You can find versions of this bracelet with different bead and cord combinations in Chapter 9 (Project 9-9) and Chapter 11 (Project 11-3). Take a look at Figure 1-4 to see each project.



Figure 1-4:
Wrap
bracelets.



Photographs by Matt Bowen and Andy Dismore

- ✓ **Customized rings:** Chunky rings are a great way to add personality to your look. Making them yourself is a great way to add to your collection on the cheap. Take a look at the Wire-wrapped Ring in Chapter 9 (Project 9-11) and Button Rings in Chapter 12 (Project 12-4) and check out Figure 1-5. After you get the technique down, you can create one for every outfit.
- ✓ **Chunky statement necklaces:** Large, colorful baubles are hot, hot, hot. I create a few in this book, including the Fabric Pom Pom Bib Necklace in Chapter 8 (Project 8-6), the Layered Charm Necklace in Chapter 9 (Project 9-4), and the Turquoise Bib Necklace in Chapter 10 (Project 10-8). Check them out in Figure 1-6.
- ✓ **Hip, simple earrings:** Try the Wrapped Beaded Earrings in Chapter 6 (Project 6-4) or the Steampunk Chandelier Earrings in Chapter 9 (Project 9-3), both shown in Figure 1-7. I include several earring projects in their very own section in Chapter 9.

Figure 1-5:
Fashionable
rings.



Photographs by Matt Bowen and Andy Dismore



Figure 1-6:
Statement
necklaces.



Photographs by Matt Bowen



Figure 1-7:
Simple
earrings.



Photographs by Andy Dismore

✔ **Craft-inspired jewelry projects:** Chances are good that jewelry isn't your only creative hobby. Blend your other interests with jewelry to make some amazing creations in Chapter 8. Maybe stamping is your thing; use your stamps and shrink plastic to create custom jewelry components (see Project 8-1). Or if you're a knitter, why not try a Braided Knitted Bracelet (Project 8-4)? If you love sewing, consider making the Fabric Flower Pin (Project 8-7). All three projects are shown in Figure 1-8.



Figure 1-8:
Craft-
inspired
jewelry
projects.

Photographs by Matt Bowen

- ✓ **Vintage gems:** One of my favorite pastimes is digging around thrift stores to discover hidden treasures. In this updated edition of the book, I include a whole chapter (Chapter 12) on upcycling these finds and using them in new and exciting ways. Take a look at the Recycled Component Necklace (Project 12-6) and Gear and Sprocket Cuff Bracelet (Project 12-7) for inspiration. Both are shown in Figure 1-9.

Figure 1-9:
Vintage
finds find a
new home.



Photographs by Matt Bowen and Andy Dismore

Don't miss the themed chapters in Part III, where you find, among other things, a chapter on creating high-end pieces (see Chapter 10). Also check out Chapter 13, in which you create home décor accents that utilize jewelry-making techniques and beading.

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.

Assuming that you want to, you can involve other people 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 employ 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 15 for details.
- ✓ **Make jewelry with kids.** In Chapter 14, 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 Etsy (www.etsy.com, the leading online handmade and vintage marketplace), you can find a market for your pieces. In Chapter 16, I help you work through the legal and logistical issues to find a way to make it work for you.
- ✔ **Meet other jewelry makers online.** Chapter 17 gives you tips for online communities to check out. You could develop a group of trusted advisers to give you advice, feedback on new designs, or tips on where to go next.
- ✔ **Develop your online presence as a jewelry maker.** Go to social media sites, such as Twitter and Pinterest. Create a profile that identifies you and your jewelry-making hobby. Then search for other like-minded people to follow, who may follow you back if they like your posts, tweets, and pins.
- ✔ **Take field trips.** Go to crafts stores and bead stores when you travel for business or pleasure. There's no substitute for walking around a store and looking at the lovely items. Most stores have inspiration pieces displayed to help get your own ideas flowing.

