Make Resin Jewelry with Twinkie Chan

Chapter 1 - Make Resin Jewelry

Overview

(upbeat music) - You can make every day feel like a celebration by adding some sparkle to your outfit. I'm Twinkie Chan. I'm on the team here at Creativebug. And in this class, I'm gonna show you how to make your own glittery resin jewelry. There's no need to be intimidated by the process of resin casting. We'll take it from the start, from choosing the right resin to measuring and mixing it to the best practices for achieving the perfect cure. I'll also show you how to add your own jewelry findings and drill holes into resin pieces. Before you know it, you'll be designing your own resin jewelry line. It's your time to shine.

Materials

- Let's go over the materials you'll need for this class starting with resin. When you walk into the craft store, you'll probably see three different kinds of resin. There's epoxy, polyester and UV resin. You're going to only wanna purchase epoxy resin for this project. I think it's the most beginner friendly. Then when it comes to epoxy, there are different kinds of resins as well. You might see deep pour, super shiny, UV blocker. For this project we don't need a deep pour epoxy, those tend to be more expensive. Just focus on finding a clear casting, regular two-part epoxy. All the ones that I have on the table are two part epoxies that means they are resin and hardener and you need both to create your hard resin casting. My favorite brand right now is Unicone Art. You have to buy this online at their website, but I love it because it comes crystal clear, no bubbles, all my projects turn out beautifully and there's really no odor, which is really important to me when I work in my home. When you go to the craft store, you'll probably see something like EasyCast. I've worked with it. It is easy to use. Your projects turn out great. I find that these two, I put them in the same category. They're easy to find in craft stores. However, I do find that even though it notes a low odor, it does emit a bit of a smell as it's curing, so I don't prefer it for at home usage. But it is made for the hobby resin caster it just depends on how much ventilation you happen to have. So if you can wait a little bit longer to order something different online, that's great, but if you want to go to the store and just grab something today, EasyCast is a wonderful option. Over here, I have Art Resin brand. You might find this in a fine art store and it says that you can use it for casting. I've tried a couple of times and everyone does some molds with it because it tends to stick to the mold, but it might depend on the conditions in my home. Resin is very finicky. It needs certain temperatures to cure properly. And maybe my home isn't, you know, doesn't, isn't fitting for art resin. You should look at the particular brand that you're buying. It'll tell you, this resident likes to be cured, maybe between 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Where I live it's cold and humid. Room temperature is not 70 degrees. So when I'm working, I use a space heater just to bring up the room temperature. Moving on from the resin we've chosen, you'll also need a spray bottle filled with 91% isopropyl alcohol or acetone for cleanup, a measuring cup that will measure a half ounce measurement. I don't like to mix in this cup because it's actually too small to mix my two parts of resin, so then I need another small mixing cup just to mix everything together. These are both plastic and reusable. You can also use silicone, which is reusable as well. And for pouring, I like to use a paper cup because I can pinch it and make a little spout. I use a heat gun to heat my resin and blow away bubbles in the resin. However, you can also use just a regular drinking straw and use your breath to blow the bubbles. Some artists also

use a lighter or a small butane kitchen torch, but the heat gun is my preferred method. Get tons of paper towels. I like to use a mix of small plastic spatulas and wooden popsicle sticks, either, or will work. And definitely get some toothpicks. You'll use a lot of these in your resin projects. Just a couple pinches of chunky glitter. I like to look at colorful, glitter mixes on Etsy. That's a great resource for fun glitter mix. You can also use eco-friendly and biodegradable glitter, if you like. A silicone jewelry mold. This one, I really liked the shape, but it doesn't come with a hole for your jewelry hardware. The ones you find often have a hole. This one doesn't, so I'll also teach you how to drill your own hole, after your project is cured. Having a tray or a piece of cardboard underneath your mold is also really handy so that you can move it around while it's still in a wet stage. You'll need some packing tape, which is really useful for cleanup. It really is good at picking up all the little bits of glitter that might end up on your workspace. You need at least one pair of flat nose pliers, two is great, but if you only have one, you can also use your fingers, instead of the other pair. A pin vice hand drill for resin plus a drill bit that is either 1.5 or 1.8 millimeters. I like to use 1.8, it makes a slightly bigger hole, but it's just easier for me to work with. A surface for drilling, a soft cloth to protect your resin piece from the drilling surface. If you're making earrings, you'll need two fish hook findings, and two jump rings that match. These jump rings are seven millimeters. Again, I like to work a little bit big. You can also use a six millimeter pair of jump rings. If you're making a necklace, you'll need a necklace chain. This one happens to be about 19 inches and one jump ring. Or if you wanna try a version of the necklace where you don't drill a hole, you'll need a bale and some E6000 glue. For your protection, you 100% need to wear gloves. These are nitrile gloves. You don't want the resin to get on your skin anywhere. Some people are even allergic to resin. So make sure you protect yourself. If you happen to get a splash of it on you just wash that off with some soap and warm water. If it's still sticky, you can spray it with that rubbing alcohol and wipe it away. You might also want to wear long sleeves or a work apron. Tie up your hair. I'm using a very low odor resin, and I always work in a well ventilated area, so I don't necessarily work with the respirator, but it's always recommended. We're working with chemicals. If you want to be 100% safe, get a respirator with filters that filter out vapors. To protect your work surface, you need something like a silicone mat or just a big old piece of cardboard, plastic wax paper, parchment paper, anything that protects your table from a resin because it will get everywhere. Last but not least you'll need a small cardboard box or a plastic bin that fits right over your project while it's curing to protect it from any lint or dust.

Cast resin earrings and pendants with glitter
- We're almost ready to start preparing our resin, but first you want to assess the temperature that you're working in. If your room temperature isn't somewhere between 70 and 80, you want to prewarm your resin. To start, you can place both bottles in a bowl or a bucket of warm water, making sure you're not getting the caps wet because you don't want to introduce any water into your resin mix. Leave those in the bowl to warm for about 10 minutes. And that makes the resin and resin hardener a little thinner. It'll allow the air bubbles that you create while mixing to escape more easily. I have a heat gun, so I'm going to use that to heat up my resin. Before picking up your bottles of resin and opening them, remember to put on your gloves. I'm only using an ounce or less to fill all of these molds. However, the smaller the amount of resin you pour, the more likely you might get the ratio incorrect just 'cause it's really hard to pour a small, accurate amount of resin. So I would never pour less than an ounce total of resin at one time. So these little cups are an ounce. I'm going to mark off where it says one half and one ounce, because you need equal parts resin and resin

hardener. So here's the half ounce mark. I'm using a Sharpie here because these markings are really hard to see. And the one ounce on top. Starting with part one, which is the resin. You want to do all your pouring and mixing very slowly because you're trying not to introduce any air bubbles into your mix. And you will get some, it's kind of inevitable, but let's do our best to do everything slowly and intentionally and introduce as little air as possible. I'm pouring this to the half ounce line. You can grab the second part, which is the hardener, and pour another half ounce for the full one-ounce pour. Since this is almost filled to the top, and I don't feel comfortable using this measuring cup for mixing, I put it in a larger mixing cup. But I want this cup to still also be clear or at least clear on the bottom so I can monitor how well this is mixing together. So pour this carefully into a second container. You can see this is very thready. And as you start mixing, and mix very slowly, it'll go cloudy and that's totally normal. You need to mix this for about four to five minutes, scraping the sides and the bottom. Remembering, trying to not introduce air. There's a big air bubble down here. If you see any big bubbles, you can bring them to the top and help them pop. But we want to stir this until it goes clear once again. That's when you know it's fully mixed. And one of the biggest mistakes that beginners make is they under mix their resin. So once this goes clear and you feel like it's ready, you should definitely mix it for a minute or two more just in case. If you don't properly mix your resin, it won't cure the right way. And either it'll cure soft or it'll cure with soft sticky spots. It might cure cloudy. So you just want to be sure you're definitely mixing this as thoroughly as you can. I'm going to turn my heat gun on now to start heating this and help the bubbles dissipate. Keeping this about 12 inches away. You don't want to burn the cup, the resin, or your hand. (heat gun blowing) I keep rotating my cup so I don't scorch it. Don't forget to gently scrape the sides to get all the unmixed resin. And also to keep the bottom of your mixing spatula at the bottom of the cup. I like to put my fingers underneath the cup so I can get a little bit more visibility as to what stage this is at. This is looking pretty clear to me again. But I can see at certain angles that when I stir my stick around, it's creating thready swirls in the resin so it's not quite mixed. When you can't see stringy threads anymore, you can let this sit for a minute or two to allow time for the bubbles to rise and pop themselves. And then we'll hit it again with some heat. Or you can blow on the bubbles with a straw or try some sort of small flame. And that will help not only pop the bubbles at the surface, but keep the resin thinner so more bubbles can rise as well. (heat gun blowing) I only hold the heat over it for a couple seconds and I keep moving it around. It's difficult to scorch resin, but just to be safe, I don't want to hold it over one spot for a really long time. I'm grabbing my paper cup, which I'll use for pouring because I can bend it and make a little spout. I'll transfer this resin to the pouring cup. The next step is the fun part. We're going to add our glitter to the resin. You could pour a very thin layer of resin into the bottom of the mold just to make sure you're covering the bottom surface with resin. And then take your glitter and sprinkle it on. Or you can take tweezers and put them on very methodically one by one. But I feel that method gets really messy. I did try a sprinkle situation. Glitter goes everywhere. It's hard to control where the resin sits in the mold anyway since it's a liquid resin and it's moving around. But I like to add my glitter right into the resin. I like to see some clear resin in my finished piece so I'm going to use just a little bit of glitter. Take one, maybe just a little bit of a second scoop. I'm gonna stir that in gently. If it looks like you want to add a little bit more, you can always do that. It's just difficult to take it out once it's in. I might add a smidge more. You can draw the resin up to the side of your cup so you can get a little more visibility on the density of your glitter. And I might do a tiny, tiny bit more than that. And no matter what, it's gonna look super cute. Okay, I'm calling it done, that's it. To make sure that your mold is free of dust or any old resin if you've used this before, grab your packing tape. Make one of those little inside

out tubes. And this picks up all the little particles really well. This is already looking pretty clean, but sometimes those little lint pieces can sneak up on you. For a project like this with a lot of glitter, it's actually very difficult to see lint in the final piece. So this is actually a kind of low pressure situation as far as getting little bits trapped in here. But it's always a good practice to make sure your mold is as clean as you can get it. Hit this one more time with heat just to get any air bubbles out that we can. (heat gun blowing) And we're ready to pour. I'm gonna clean my stick off just a little bit just so it's not dripping with resin. I don't want to accidentally drip resin in places I don't want it to be. Make my little spout And carefully pour this into each spot in the mold. It's better to under pour this project than over pour. I'll teach you how to fix any under pouring, but over pouring is much more difficult to fix. Go slowly. Take your time. Always stop pouring before you think you have to. Let the resin settle in and you can add some more. I'm kind of assessing if I like the glitter density here. And I think it actually want some more. So I'm gonna put more in my cup. Do a scoop. You can move around the mold, too. You don't have to just concentrate on one part of it. Move on to the second one, see how I like the glitter. You can decide how much glitter you want. I'll go back to this first side that I started pouring. And if I don't want to pour a lot, I'll use my stick as kind of like a little scoop. And you can scoop up some resin and plop it in, and you have a little bit more control there. You can also play with things like syringes and pipettes. I tend to not because those are both very difficult to clean even if they're plastic or silicone. I find that the popsicle stick works pretty well. And you can reuse popsicle sticks, too. Just wipe them off while the resin is still wet. And you're pretty much ready to use it again. So I'm still being careful not to overfill this. I don't want resin to accidentally start leaking over onto the top of my mold. I want to avoid having to trim anything off. And under pouring is okay because after this all cures, we can just add a little bit more resin on top to fill in any dips that might have occurred. So you can keep filling the other parts of your mold in the same way. The working time for resin is typically between 30 minutes and 45 minutes. You want to check your particular resin brand for that pot time or working time. And when that time is up, this will start to really thicken up and you won't be able to work with it anymore. So you want to keep that in mind as you're working with your molds as well. You have about 30 minutes to work. When we heat up our resin, it can also make that chemical reaction happen more quickly. So sometimes resin brands will say that pre-warming the resin will decrease your pot time, sometimes down to 10 minutes. But I've never found this to be true. And I think that's the 30 minute mark is a pretty good spot to keep at the top of your mind while you're doing this. You don't have forever to work with it. It's gonna start jelling up on you. I am going to pause to clean up my little spill. I could just let that cure on the mold and pick it off later. But I feel like if you can clean up any spots right now, that's better in case this little blob moves into my mold and connects with my piece, and then I have to cut it off. So I want to avoid having to do that later. It's a pretty easy fix. Just take a little piece of paper towel and wipe that right up. I can see what's happening. It's dribbling on the side of my cup. So you wanna watch for that, too. If that happens and you're using a paper cup, you probably want to start using a different spot on the cup as a spout because it's just getting really messy. But also if you're using the scoop method, you don't really need that spout anymore. I can feel this is getting a little bit thick already. So it's a little more difficult to pour 'cause it wants to come out in a big blob. Okay, if you want to try to adjust any of these pieces of glitter, you can poke around gently with the tip of a toothpick without introducing any more air. We also want to hit this with the heat gun one more time to help those bubbles, which could shift the glitter around. So you can move some of this around, hit it with heat, move it around a little bit again. I feel like there's not a lot of big glitter down here. You can use your toothpick. It has a little bit of resin on it. So it kind of acts as a little bit

of glue so I can grab some sequins and just plop some in by hand, if you want to make any particular adjustments to resin placement. Make sure that's getting down in there. These pieces of glitter will kind of sink or float at different levels inside your mold, but you want to make sure that anything you add on top gets fully covered. So you want to push that down and mix it in. So keep making any adjustments we want and hit it with heat one more time. (heat gun blowing) Carefully take this to a safe spot, grab your bin, cover it up, and let this cure or harden for about 24 hours. Most resins, for a full cure, take 72 hours. But they're pretty hard by the 24 hour mark, and you'll be able to demold it then. Let's talk about cleanup, which is pretty easy. With this cup, I would probably leave this out. This is actually a good gauge for where your project is at in it's curing process. You'll probably be tempted to poke at your project to see if it's hard, so don't do that. And this is the exact same resin you poured. So you can poke at this for the next 24 hours, if you feel like it. And you'll find out how long it will take for your resin to get hard. So leave that out as well. For your plastic mixing cups and these little spatulas, these are all reusable. So, wipe this off. And whatever tiny amount of wet resin is left on here can just go ahead and cure right on the plastic. And these are totally reusable. Same with the wooden popsicle sticks, and the toothpicks are all very usable. For the little bit of resin that's left in the plastic cup, just use paper towels to wipe up as much as you can. You want to catch any sticky spots on your work surface as well. This is when your hands get super resiny, so definitely keep your gloves on during the cleanup process. I usually give this two paper towels' worth of wiping. If you feel like your gloves are so gooey that it's just adding more resin onto your cup, you can spray these off, too, with your rubbing alcohol to get some of that off. Spray this down too just to get any of that remaining tackiness off. Now this is ready to use for your next project. You can clean your tiny measuring cup in the same way, or they're disposable. It's up to you. And then you have to be patient. Wait the 24 hours for your project to harden, and then we're going to demold it.

Doming resin

- Let's see how these turned out. These should come out of the mold pretty easily, but I like to support them all by placing one hand behind it, pushing from the back, lifting out the object. Woo! Look pretty that turned out. Press from the back and lift out. Let's take a look. These all turned out really well, I'm really happy with them. This one is slightly too under poured. You can see the surface has a curvature, but as I mentioned, that's an easy fix. We're just gonna pour more resin right back in here. If you wait for a full 72 hour cure, this might not work quite as well, but if these have just been curing for 24 hours, they're hard, but still not fully cured. This is a really good moment to add more resin because the two layers are most likely to stick together. You only need a teeny, teeny, tiny bit of resin. I have some mixed here. Again, I don't ever mix less than an ounce at the same time. So this is a full ounce, but I won't be needing all of it to fill in. I'm going to use the scoop method rather than pouring, just because this is such a tiny volume to fill, and I don't want it to spill over the edges. You definitely should grab a piece of cardboard to support this in case you need to move it around. As before, just take a little scoop of resin onto a stir stick and drop this in. This is similar to a process called doming that some people use to finish their pieces. These in the mold tend to finish with a very flat surface, but if you like a curved surface, you can drop a layer of resin on top. The doming part just refers to the fact that there's generally a natural curvature to the resin when you pour it on top of a previous layer. That surface tension will create a curve. I exaggerated the under pour on this one so you could see it. Most times if you've under it, won't be this obvious. It's just, if you can feel that the edges, the outline of your piece, stick up way more than the middle and feel

sharp, that's when you want to put on this extra doming layer on top to help even out and smooth out all those edges. I'm using my toothpick to bring the resin closer to the edge and make sure I'm filling in any of those spaces. When you get to teeny tiny work like this, you can also drop in more resin using the toothpick. You can see down here, it's creating a really nice fill to the edge. Just want to do that all the way around your piece. With this thin of a pour, I usually don't see any bubbles, so I won't hit this with my heat gun. However, if you do notice any bubbles, use a toothpick to carefully pick or pop them because you don't want to add extra air and blow your dome around. So go ahead, cover this up to protect it, put it someplace safe and let that harden for 24 hours. If you over poured and you notice any sharpness or blobs of resin attached to your piece or any irregularities, what you can do is trim those off with a small scissors or even a pair of nail clippers and you can also use a light sand paper. Once you start adding sandpaper into the situation, it will cause your resin to look like it's kind of matte or not shiny anymore and then, to bring the shine back, you can use either a very teeny, teeny light coating of resin, or you can buy a finishing resin spray and give that a few light coats to bring that shine back.

Add hardware: jump rings & bails
- Now that we have all of our beautiful resin pieces, we can decide what we want to do with all of them. I find that the small and medium size of the arches on my mold are good for earrings. The bottom ones, if you like large earrings, can be cool, but if you're a little bit more conservative with your glitter jewelry, these make beautiful pendants. But first, I need to drill holes into my pieces so that I can put jump rings through those holes. Gonna put these aside. Bring in my board is to protect my tabletop from the drill. And then here's a soft cloth to protect my resin pieces from the board. I find that once you start poking holes, a lot of texture is created here. And if you put your pieces directly on the board and rub them around, this can dig into your resin. So you can make sure there's a smooth surface to start with and also put a cloth on. To determine where to put your hole, you want to decide where the top of your piece is. And this jump ring is only so big, so you can't put your hole way down in the middle of your piece or the jump ring will never be able to bite around it. So you want to get as close to the top edge as possible, and maybe down just a millimeter. You can eyeball this, or you can use a little Sharpie to make a dot. Actually, if you have this on a more plain surface, it's probably easier to find your spot. I'm gonna aim for about here. Grab your hand drill. You open it up by twisting the bottom. This is my 1.8 millimeter drill bit. Stick that. This will fall all the way in, so you kind of have to hold it out with your hand and then tighten this back around the drill bit. This part's really easy. You can actually very easily drill through resin with your hand. You can use an electric one if you want. I find that creates a lot more dust, so you need to wear a dust mask if you use an electric drill. It also can heat up the resin which can cause it to melt. So I think by hand is a fine and easy way to do this. Check for your mark. Just poke this right where you want the hole to go. Then start twisting it here. You can also hold it at the top to stabilize, and twist from the center. I'm using even pressure, I'm not pushing super hard, you don't have to. You can see it's digging out all that resin. Sometimes my piece starts spinning around, in which case I'll hold it with my left hand and keep drilling with my right. Not quite. You can see it's starting to catch my cloth, so it's probably... Yeah, it's all the way through. And then don't just yank it out. You want to go back in counter-clockwise, opposite direction, to unscrew the drill bit out of your resin piece. If your piece is clear, like mine is, you can see, especially from the top, the hole that we've drilled is no longer clear because you've disturbed and drilled through the resin. For this particular project for jewelry, it doesn't really bother me. If this is really bothering you, the fix is to

take a tiny bit of resin, put that on the end of a toothpick or a tiny wire and carefully paint the inside of this hole without clogging it up. And once that resin has cured, it'll be clear again. But for me, I think this still looks really cute. So I'm just going to skip that step. You can go ahead and drill another hole in the same way on your other piece. Next, let's put on a jump ring. They will come closed and you need to open them up. You might want to open it up this way, but you should really just open it this way. I usually just use my hand and one pair of pliers. I think professionals will use two pairs of pliers like this to really get a good straight grip. So if you have two, you can use two. If you have one, you can just use one. I'm just gonna use my hand because I find that easier, but I wanted to suggest that in case you find that to be easier. So I'll hold onto one side of the jump ring with one hand and use my other hand to twist it forward, away from the other one, like so. Then we will hook this on to our resin piece. Ope, it's easier to use your fingers to do that. It's just to whatever feels best to you. It can be a little hard to get this in the hole 'cause you're working with very tiny things. Just be patient, it will work its way through, like so. And then before closing, let's grab our fish hook earring finding. Determine if you prefer a front or a back. I find that if there's more of a domed surface on one side, I like that to be the front. You get to decide what you want to be the front. Just so you know that you're orienting the fish hook in the right way. The hook should face toward the back of the earring. One more thing for this fish hook. These won't hook together because they're facing the same way. I need the loop on the fish hook to face perpendicular. So that means either adding a second, or linking a second jump ring, or I'm just gonna twist this around. You can use your plier as well to help with that. Just gonna give that a little spin. So now this bottom loop is facing forward, facing flat, and the earring hook is pointing toward the back. Loop this through your jump ring, and then you're gonna close the jump ring the same way you opened it. Rotating it back into place. This is what it looks like when your shiny new pair of earrings are all finished. You can make a necklace in the same way. This is one of my larger arcs with a hole and the same jump ring. And all you have to do is grab your necklace chain and thread it through the jump ring. And then you have a super cute matching earring and necklace set. If you want to make a pendant, but you don't want to drill a hole, you can also glue on what we call a bale. It has a little glue pad and a little loop for your necklace chain. So decide what you want to be the front of your pendant, kind of feeling around. If there's a domed side, I like that to be the front. This is the domier side, so this is the back of my piece. And then this has some texture on it so that the glue can grab. If you want to, you can lightly sand the area on your pendant, just so that the glue has some grab. Since this is a clear piece, it would make the piece less clear if I sanded it. So I'm just going to make sure that this piece hasn't fully cured for 72 hours, it's just hard to the touch, so that there's still a little bit of tackiness and that the glue would more easily stick. I'm gonna use E6000, which is a pretty good industrial strength jewelry glue. It is very stinky though, so if you can use it in a ventilated area, that's great. If you have some leftover clear resin from a project, this is also a great use for that. You can use it to glue your jewelry findings onto your resin pieces. But since I don't have any right now, I'm gonna use E6000. And this comes shooting out of the tube really quickly, so I let some squeeze out onto a paper towel and then cap it. You don't need very much. And then I'll apply it to the bale with a little toothpick. If I can avoid it, I don't want any of this to squirt out the side. So I'm concentrating my glob of glue in the center of the bail, and then the pressure of me squeezing the two pieces together will even out all that glue. So I would say, be a bit conservative with your E6000, or your resin if you're using resin. Find the center in the top, again, this is the back of my pendant. Place this bale. You can press this together with your fingers for a minute, just so you know there's good contact between the glue, the finding, and your resin piece. And E6000 also

needs 24 hours for a full cure. You do not want to disturb it. Don't try to pry it apart. It needs that time to fully cure and just make sure everything is adhered together. Pretty much looks the same after the glue is cured and you can take another necklace chain and string this right through. You can also use these bales to make fun key chains. I have the bale attached here, there's no charm on it, but you can see how that would come together and have a super cute key chain set too. If you're not the kind of person who wants to wear glitter jewelry all the time, you can also make little wall hangings or a little window dangly by linking a bunch of your charms together with jump rings. I added some gold string to my top jump ring so I can hang that from wherever I want to admire it. Now you can play with different ways of making this jewelry your own. Play with different densities of glitter, different colors of glitter, different kinds of inclusions, a different kind of mold. There are so many opportunities for experimentation and play here. So put on your new jewelry and get ready for tons of compliments.