
Knot Bead Pendant with Melanie Schow

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- The knot-bead pendant is a free-form bead made with various gauges of wire. It can be complex or simple, but it's always evocative.

Chapter 2 - Creating a Sampler

Tools & Materials

- The knot bead pendant is made with simple tools and materials. We're going to use various gauges of silver wire to make the bead, we'll use copper wire to practice and a number of different pliers. I have long round nose pliers, round nose pliers, flat nose pliers, chain nose pliers, a flush cutter, and be sure you have a ruler and a work surface. I want to give you a suggestion about keeping your eye out for tools. Sometimes you'll find the shape of a jaw, or the shape of a tool, useful. I wanna give you an example of that. I have an orthodontia tool. It gives you a very nice cone shape and can add texture and interest further than your jewelry tools.

Practicing the basic shapes: Coils

- To make the shapes that go on the knot bead, it's nice to do some practice work. This creates muscle memory for you to be able to make your coils, cones, and springs. If you practice, you also know how much wire it takes to make those shapes so when you get ready to make your knot, you'll know the length of wire that makes the shape. I'm going to use a sample page, a sampler, and make notes as I work. I've precut copper in 16 and 18 gauge. I have five inches of each to practice making my coils. To make the coil, make sure that you flesh cut the end. Just double check yourself. If you haven't, make a flesh cut. Cover when you cut. And then with the small round nose pliers, I'm gonna start on the 16 gauge wire making a coil. You hold this near the tip of the plier and turn away, turn away again until this touches and then you're gonna turn just a little ways along the wire. At this point, I'm going to switch to flat nose pliers and I'm gonna roll down my coil. I can turn the wire, grasping this right where the two wires come together, and turn the wire. Do this in small steps. You wanna keep this nice and flat and nice and round. As you get more experience, you can go a little faster. But when you're learning, go ahead and go slow. If you're trying to bring this shape to just the right spot, you can turn the plier instead of the wire. The reason I measured this is so I know how much wire I'm using to make each coil. I'm gonna check how much is left on the straight part. I have one inch left straight. That means I used four inches to make the coil. I'm going to tape this onto a sampler and this will be a pdf download that you'll have for your use when you take this workshop. I'm gonna tape this down on my sampler. It's just a reference point for when I make it on the knot bead. And I'm gonna make a note that this is five inches and I have a four-inch coil. I'm going to do the same thing in 18 gauge. With my small round nose tool, I've turned the tip. I'm switching to my flat nose pliers and continuing this coil. Remember to hold the pliers in your dominant hand and the wire in your nondominant hand. Sometimes the wire can get a little slippery. If you have that experience, go farther down in the jaw of the tool. You can work closer to the base and it will give you a firmer grip. Again, I've rolled the coil down until I have one inch left and I can see what four inches looks like in 18 gauge coil. And you have a spot on your sampler sheet to make a practice coil of your choice. Make a different length or use a different gauge. Keep practicing your coils until you

feel comfortable making them on your knot bead pendant.

Basic wire shapes: Cones

- The next thing I'm gonna put on my sampler is a cone shape. I've pre-cut six inches of 16 gauge and 18 gauge. This gives me a little bit more to work with, because a cone using more wire than a coil. I'm going to make a cone shape on the jaw of my small, round nose tool. This tool is already shaped like a cone, so the wire will just follow the shape of the jaw. Start at the tip, near the tip of the small, round nose plier, with your 16 gauge wire, and turn away, open the tool, and turn away again, and the wire will come just underneath the end. Continue to turn the cone down your plier, following the shape of the jaw. Do this as gently as possible. Hold on as carefully and lightly as you can. You don't want to mark the wire. Just as with the other shapes, I'm leaving myself one inch straight to allow me to tape down this sample onto my sampler. I'm going to tape this down on my sampler page. (tape tearing) And make the same note as I did before. This was six inches of 16 gauge, and I've made a five inch cone. Repeat the cone shape on your sampler with 18 gauge wire, and then make yourself some other practice cone shapes until you feel comfortable making this for your knot bead pendant.

Basic wire shapes: Springs

- The next shape that you're going to practice for your sampler is springs. Do the same thing you did with the first two of pre-cutting wire. I've cut six inches for the spring samples, both 16 gage and 18 gage. This is my 16 gage wire, six inches. I'm gonna work at the base of my small round nose pliers. Make sure that you don't feel the wire coming through, turn away, open the tool, and turn away again, and you wanna come just underneath the first end. Then you're going to continue turning right in the same place at the base of the tool, and you'll notice for this that the wire, end of the wire goes up the tool rather than down the tool, staying the same diameter. I'm doing the same thing as I did with my other samples, leaving an inch at the end to be able to tape that onto my sampler. Make a note of this one too; six inches and I made a five inch spring. Continue as you did with the other shapes and make a spring sample in 18 gage, and other practice springs until you're comfortable making that shape. You'll notice on this handout that I've also left room for you to make other practice shapes or try other things you might wanna use on your knot bead. Practicing in copper gives you the opportunity to really try some things out without using an expensive material.

Chapter 3 - Creating the Knot Bead Pendant

Wire lengths and starting spring

- We're ready to build the knot bead pendant. I've switched to my silver wire. And just as with cooking, you get everything prepared before you start. I've cut various lengths and gauges of wire. I have 10 inches of 16 gauge wire. Then I have two other samples of 16 gauge wire. I have eight inches and six inches. I have seven inches of 18 gauge wire, and six inches of 18 gauge wire. And I have this nice twisted wire. And this is something you can purchase. It's nice to have some texture in the piece by adding textured wire. The next thing that we're going to do is make a spring to fill in the core of the knot bead. This is made with two feet of 20 gauge wire on a large round-nose plier. I've precut two feet of wire. I'm going to start at the base of my large round-nose plier. Turn away, turn away so the wire comes just underneath, and continue turning to make the spring. It takes a little time to make this, and I have one ready. So we'll just finish up this spring. You wanna coil right down

to the end. Those are the pieces that you need to make your knot bead.

Building the framework

- Building the framework of the knot pendant puts all of these wire elements together. I'm gonna start with the 10 inches of 16-gauge and roll a coil at the end of the 10 inches of 16-gauge. I wanna make a 2-1/2-inch coil. Start near the tip of your round nose plier and turn away. Turn away until it touches and turn along the wire. I'm going to switch to my flat nose pliers to continue the coil, grasping where the two wires meet, and turning the wire to continue making a flat coil. I need to check that I've got the right measurement. A 2-1/2-inch coil means I have 7-1/2 inches of wire left. I'm gonna go on from this point and make the core of the bead. I'm going to measure one inch of straight wire, and then make a 45-degree angle bend. I'm gonna use my long round nose pliers to make the bail of the knot bead pendant. I'm making a double bail, or a rabbit ear bail, so I'll have two loops. Position the wire so that you're holding just above the bend and with your fingers, bring the wire up and over the top jaw of the plier. Now, what would happen if I continued to wrap here? I'd be wrapping two jaws, and not making a very round eye, so I'm gonna stop and move the bottom jaw of the plier out of the way, and then continue my wrap. Continuing to wrap around the jaw of the plier, if the jaw's in the way, open the tool, and move it up so that you can continue to wrap and make a double bail. Make sure that it's nice and tight. Twice around to a nice right angle here, where you finish your bail. The next step is to switch the round nose pliers to your non-dominant hand. You can use these to hold the eye that you've just made, the bail, and that holds it nice and steady. With this piece of 16-gauge wire, I'm going to make three wraps around the stem of this section. With your fingers, wanna take this around. One, go slow to do this. It's a little bit challenging, so go slow. Two. And three. Now, I'm going to slide on the spring that we made. This is the two feet of 20-gauge. And I wanna catch the end of this and continue to wrap. You want this spring to pop open, so you have to hold on to the very end of it. This is the spaghetti stage of a project, that time when everything feels like it's loose, like noodles, and sliding off your fork. The wires are gonna be all over every place for a little while, and I want you to be confident that this will come together. At this point, once I have the spring wrapped once around, I'm going to pick up the random wires that I cut, the lengths of 16, 18, and the patterned wire, and lay them in parallel to the stem of the bead, parallel. And then, I'm going to continue to wrap the whole thing together. I'm using the tool to hold on, I'm using all my fingers. You run out of spring, and then you're wrapping just wire. Once you have one wrap of just wire, you're going to bend your random wires up out of the way. Note that I'm just sweeping these up. I don't wanna make a sharp bend, just sweeping them out of the way. And then, find the core wire that you were wrapping with and continue to wrap down towards the coil, wrapping just the core and not the random wires. If you have a little extra on the end, you can use that for an embellishment, if you have a little extra. If you're finished with the wire and wrapping to the end, that's fine too.

Filling in the bead

- I finished making the core and now I'm going to fill in the bead with the shapes that we practiced earlier. You want to spread the wires around your bead a little bit. And remember that they are all interconnected at this stage. Gonna pick this long wire to make a nice big coil. I know that four inches makes a really pretty coil. That's what we practiced. Remember that the coil starts at the tip of your round nose tool. Hold the end, turn away. Turn away until this touches. Sometimes your tool will slip. Turn away until it touches and turn along the wire. Switch to your flat nose plier. I'm

grasping this right where the wires meet. Turn the coil along the wire. Notice that when I work, I'm focusing on what I'm working on and the other part of the bead is just hanging out in the background. As I get in closer, I want to figure out where this coil is going to come in for a landing. I want to make sure that it's filling in the space nicely. I want to show you each of the other shapes and I also want to show you how this orthodontic tool makes a bigger cone. Just so you see how another tool will work. I'm going to use this patterned wire and I'm going to use the orthodontic tool to make a cone. Actually have to start on my small round nose pliers because the tip of the tool is broken, improvise. Turn away. Turn so that the wire comes just underneath. And now that I have this started, I'm going to switch to the orthodontic tool. You're rolling this down the jaw of the plier. You see how the textured wire gives a really pretty look. It's something different, more texture. And I'm looking to see where this is going to come in and look pretty. Be aware of when you're rolling the first end of the wire, that the other end is not secure. If I just kept turning on this particular cone I'm working on, I actually could pull the whole section of textured wire out. So I'm stopping when I reach the bead. The next thing I'm going to demonstrate is a spring. We haven't done that yet. And be aware as you work with a knot bead that you want to fill the shapes in around the shape of the bead. It's important to look at the big picture and consider what you're going to do next and where it should land. You'll see on this section that I have quite a big hole here that I need to fill in. So that's where I'm going to aim the spring that I'm demonstrating next. I picked a long piece of wire to make the spring because the spring uses up more wire like we talked about earlier. Make sure that the end of your wire is flush cut. If you miss that when you cut it, come back and flush cut the end. Working at the base of my tool turn away, turn away and come just underneath. Remember a spring is all the same diameter. Now I want to make sure that this is aimed to land in this big open space and help me fill in the bead. From here you see that there's lots of wire left to make shapes. You're going to use up the different pieces of wire and fill in your bead

Combining shapes and adding wire

- So, I still have a few little wires that I need to work in here, and I wanna show you some other things, like combining shapes and adding wire. If you have holes in your knot bead or you need a space filled in, you need to know how to do that. This is a piece of 20-gauge that I've made into a spring. It was six inches of 20-gauge, and I rolled it just like the springs I rolled earlier. I'm gonna use this to stitch on to the knot bead and fill in the space that I need filled. I can use an existing wire to make the stitch. Slide this spring on, and then I'm going to feed the end through the bead. This is a complicated process. You need to find a hole if you're gonna stitch something down, and sometimes, the core is pretty tight. There we go. You can see where the wire's coming out over here, underneath this other element. Stitching's a little tricky. You can use a tool to help you pull the wire through once you've established a spot, and make sure that spring looks nice when you do this. At that point, you'll finish the other end of the wire, and that finishes this random wire. I think I'm gonna choose a coil for this. Just as with the earlier shapes, you want to make sure that this one comes in and fills a hole and looks pretty on the face of the bead. I have one more wire to fill in. I think this needs a cone. I'm gonna choose a cone over here. Make sure that your end is flush cut. If it's not, don't forget this step. To make the cone, start at the tip of your round nose pliers, turn away. And I can see there's a space right there. Doesn't look too interesting. I'm gonna make this cone come in for a landing right in that spot. The next thing I'm gonna do is a combination of the two shapes that you've made, something you haven't seen yet, and I'm also gonna add a wire. This will help you fill in and help you give variety to your knot bead. At this point, it's a good idea to use

18-gauge. That's easier to work through the holes that are left in the bead. I'm gonna make a combination of a coil and a spring. I'm gonna start with a small coil at the tip of my round nose pliers. Switch to flat nose. And when you've completed a small coil, now I'm gonna make a spring and add a spring to this. Going back to the round nose plier, and remembering that a coil is all the same diameter, you wanna work the spring around the jaw of the tool. The other thing that's important on this step is to hold the face of the coil with the jaw of your tool, or keep the tool all the way off the coil. Leave enough so that you can thread this shape on to your knot bead. Look for a space where you need to fill in the shape, and look for a hole that you can put the wire through. Again, this is not always easy at this point. There we go. So, this will let me fill in this little area with this last shape that I'm making. And you might have to make an adjustment, 'cause remember that this is called free form, and so, you might have to make an adjustment so that it looks nice. There we go. Then, I have one more wire end to finish up. I'm gonna make a very small cone with this last piece of wire. Starting near the tip of your tool and rolling down the jaw of the plier. A little cone right there. The last thing I'm gonna do is take a look at the big picture of the bead. When I'm forming the shapes, I wanna make sure that they're balanced. You wanna determine what's the front. So, not that side. Not really that one. I think this is the front of my bead. Unfortunately, my bail is oriented in the wrong direction. To fix that, I'm gonna use my long round nose pliers. Take a hold of the whole bail, take a hold of the whole bead, and very gently, turn this so that my bail is oriented to the front of the bead. The bail is centered, and with that step, the bead is done.

Chapter 4 - Finishing touches

Final details and samples

- With the bead complete, you have some design choices to make. You can use the bead just as it is, or you can oxidize the bead with liver of sulfur. This is kind of a messy process, but it has a really nice result. I'm gonna show you some samples. Here's the bead without the liver of sulfur, very shiny and silver. When you dip the bead in liver of sulfur, it darkens the bead. And then by polishing it back out, you see the detail. When you oxidize your bead, don't forget to oxidize your chain so that it matches your bead. Liver of sulfur is a bit of a messy process. There's a PDF download if you wanna have the exact steps to do it. I wanna show you one more thing. How do you use this design in other pieces that you're making? Here's a more complex piece. I have a knot bead as the focal, and also smaller knot beads that I've created as part of the necklace. The knot bead is a free form design that's a lot of fun, gives you a lot of creativity and options. You'll enjoy making these over and over again, and your friends are sure to comment when you wear one.