

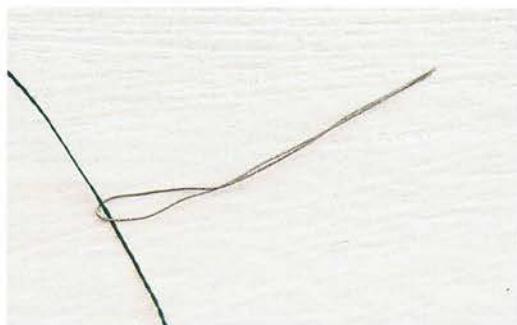
This advanced, traditional technique can be used to make fashion items or heirloom pieces, and gives an elegant and secure finish that will stand the test of time.

Pearl knotting

Pearl stringing and knotting is the name for a traditional stringing technique that applies whether you're stringing tiny beads or large fashion beads. The techniques are designed to use with a fine, soft, flexible stringing material, such as silk or nylon cord, and give you a piece of jewellery that drapes wonderfully when worn. Whether you use the advanced technique or the easier, shortened version, the end result will be worth the work.

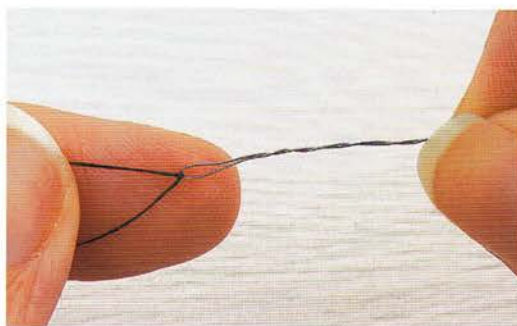
MAKING A FINE NEEDLE

When working with gemstones and pearls, you will find they have very small holes – so working with a normal needle may be impossible. In addition, the basic thread-and-gimp method of stringing makes use of a double thread, which is too thick to be worked with a normal needle. Therefore, you'll need to use a needle that's fine enough to pass through the beads and also to be cut off.



STEP 1

Cut a short length of fine wire (0.2mm/30ga or finer) and close the ends together to form a loop around your thread.

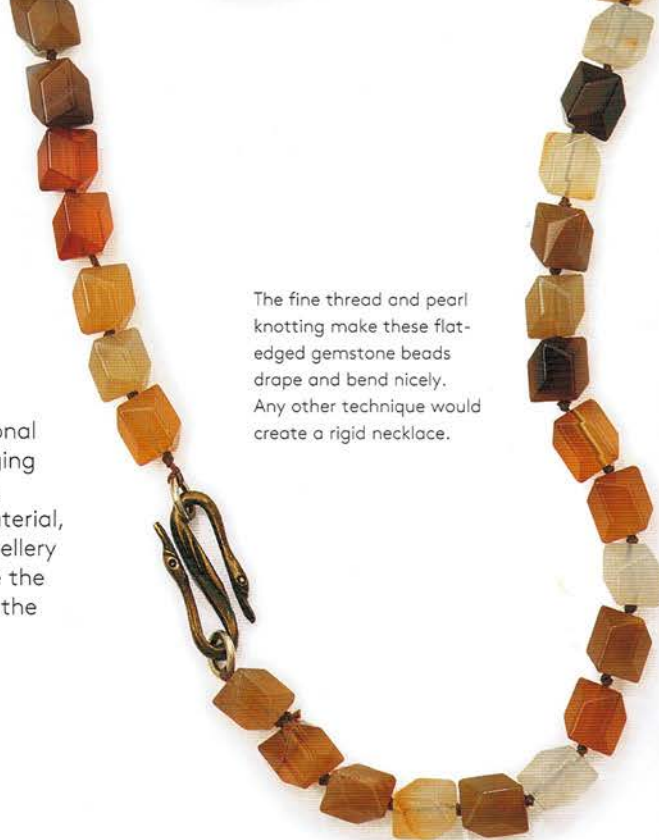


STEP 2

Grasping the cut ends of the wire tightly – using flat-nose pliers if necessary – begin twisting the wire around itself from the loop down until you've made a fine needle. The more you twist it, the neater and finer it will be. Trim the ends before use.

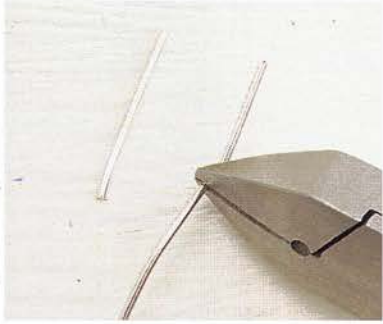
If you want to cheat, stringing tiny seed beads between each pearl will replicate the look of knots.

The fine thread and pearl knotting make these flat-edged gemstone beads drape and bend nicely. Any other technique would create a rigid necklace.



USING THREAD AND GIMP

Using a fine thread paired with gimp (to protect your thread) is an ideal way to create an elegant piece of jewellery. Knotting between each bead is optional with this method.



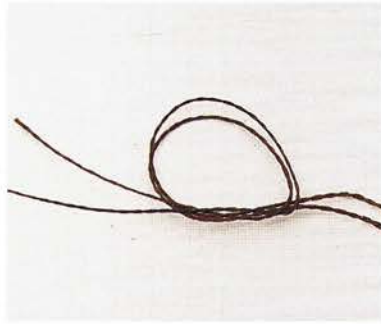
STEP 1

Cut two lengths of gimp about 1cm (1/2in) long. Depending on the size of your clasp, you may need to cut a different length. Make sure your wire is long enough to completely cover any thread that goes through your clasp.



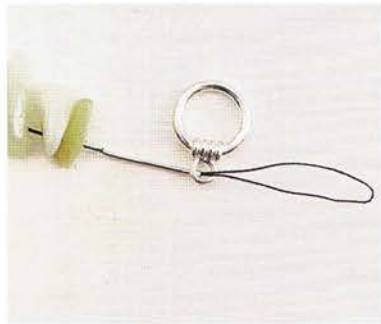
STEP 3

Thread on one bead and a length of gimp. Thread through the attaching ring in your clasp and then back down your bead. This end will be neaten later, but leave a short length of thread.



STEP 2

Cut a length of thread double the length you want your finished piece to be (or four times longer if knotting). Add the fine needle you made on page 40. Knot the ends of the threads together.



STEP 4

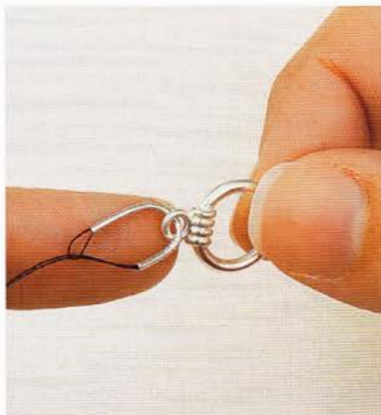
String on all your beads and then the other length of gimp and the other end of your clasp. Remove the fine needle.

6 TRICKS FOR SUCCESSFUL KNOTTING

- Make the first bead hole larger.**
 When using the traditional gimp method, the first bead you thread will have four strands of thread through. You may need to make the hole slightly larger with a bead reamer to allow for this.
- Be prepared for the work to loosen.**
 Your work may be tight when first strung, but it will soon loosen with wear. To allow for this, you can pull the length through your fingers a few times to stretch the thread before you use it.
- Use single thread with calottes.**
 The methods described here use doubled thread through the beads. When using calottes (see page 43), you can use single thread instead.
- Go slow and pay attention.**
 It's easy – especially towards the end – to lose concentration as you finish knotting a long strand, so if you accidentally find you tighten a knot in the wrong place, it will be very hard to undo with this fine thread.
- Watch the position of your knots.**
 Don't let the weight of your beaded strand pull your knots tight in the wrong place when you pull the strand through.
- Be gentle with your gimp.**
 Although it is designed to protect your thread, gimp by itself is very fragile and can easily be pulled apart or distorted. It's best to cut it with wire cutters rather than scissors, which may squash the gimp.

**STEP 5**

At the second end, slide the clasp and gimp close to the end loop of thread. Insert your fingers through the loop and take hold of the clasp and gimp, making sure that the clasp sits on the gimp.

**STEP 6**

Pull tight so that the loop of thread catches on the length of thread and the clasp is sitting on the gimp, which is now bent.

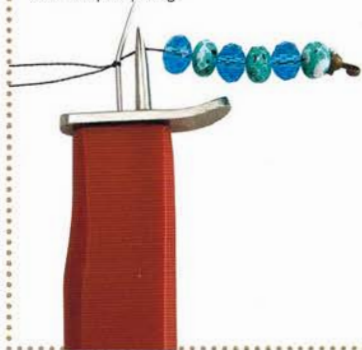
**STEP 7**

Slide one bead to the gimp. If you're using knots, tie an overhand knot and position it close to the bead with your needle. If you're not knotting, simply slide all your beads to the gimp and skip the next step.

USING A KNOTTING TOOL

There are a variety of knotting tools on the market. Each one is slightly different, but their general purpose is to help to slide the tied knot close to the beads and to keep the knots uniform.

Knots slide off the awl-shaped prong.

**STEP 8**

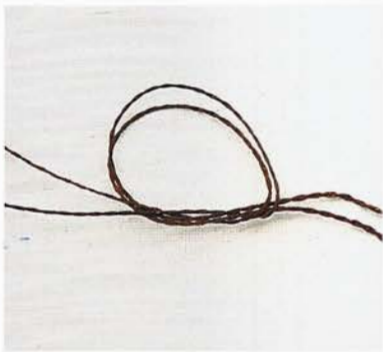
Continue sliding on single beads and then knotting until you have just one bead left. Slide this down but do not tie a knot.

**STEP 9**

Working carefully, adjust the bead, gimp, and clasp from the starting end so that they slide down close to the rest of the work. Cut off the knot and use the thread ends to tie the string closely between the gimp and the last bead. Trim neatly to finish.

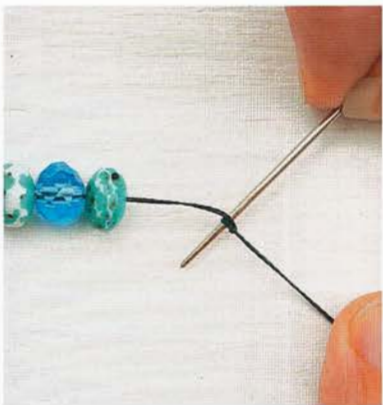
USING CALOTTES

This method gives your strand the look and feel of the more complicated thread-and-gimp method, but it is quicker and easier to do.



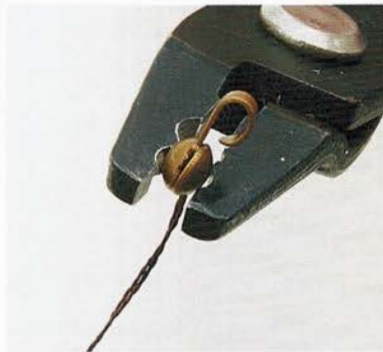
STEP 1

Cut thread more than double the length of the finished piece you want (or four times longer if you're knotting). Add a fine needle and tie the ends together with an overhand knot.



STEP 3

If using knots, string on one bead, then tie an overhand knot after it, using a large needle to slide it close to the bead. Repeat with the remaining beads. If not knotting, simply string all the beads and then tie a knot.



STEP 2

Trim the thread ends and place the knot inside a calotte. Use flat-nose pliers or the rounded notch of crimping pliers to close the calotte around the knot.

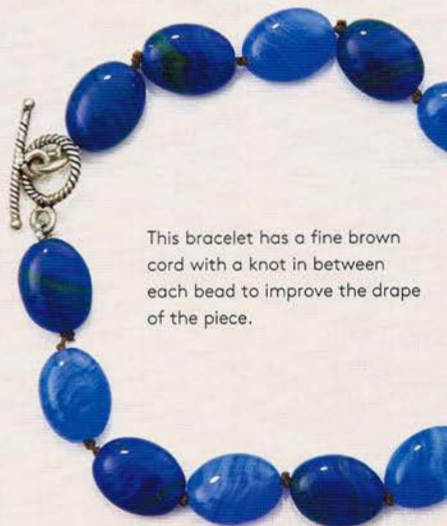


STEP 4

Trim the thread close to the knot, place the knot inside a calotte, then close as before. Use jump or split rings to attach a clasp to each end.

4 CLEVER WAYS WITH BIG BEAD HOLES

- **Try using a thicker thread.** Rather than a fine thread, a thicker one will fill larger bead holes.
- **Place small beads on either side of your large ones.** This will ensure that the knots stay on each side of the two small beads and won't disappear inside the larger single bead.
- **Push small beads inside larger ones.** This will help fill the larger holes - visually, all you'll see are the large beads.
- **Tie two or more knots on top of each other.** This makes the knots larger and will help to hold the larger beads in place.



This bracelet has a fine brown cord with a knot in between each bead to improve the drape of the piece.