Wrapped in crystals

Reimagine crystal cup chain as the core of a crystal-wrapped necklace, then mimic the technique to make matching earrings.

by Laura Timmons

Cup chain, often used for purse trims and sparkly shoulder straps for evening gowns, is cleverly recast as the foundation for this shimmering set. Simply thread crystals on wire and wrap it around a cup-chain core, creating visual width that makes for a stunning necklace. Companion earrings carry on the color scheme and technique, but you’ll substitute silver rings for the cup chain to provide appropriate structure.
When you've reached the end of the cup chain, wrap the wire around the space before the last cup, orienting the remaining wire on the opposite side of the cup chain.

Rotate the piece 180° so it's easier to handle. Slide the next crystal in place and wrap as before, sliding the wire down to the connectors. Don’t let the wire catch on the crystals on the opposite side of the chain.

Continue along this side of the chain.

When you've wrapped back to the beginning, wrap the wire around the original wraps a few times. Trim the wire close, and use chainnose pliers to flatten the wraps.

Open a jump ring (Basics), attach the cup-chain connector and one half of a clasp, and close the ring.

If you’re using a two-part clasp, repeat on the other end for the second half of the clasp. If you’re using a lobster claw clasp, connect three jump rings and attach one of them to the cup connector on the opposite end.

Divide the 4 mm crystals into identical assortments, setting aside two indicolite beads for the bead units. Cut a 12-in. (30 cm) piece of 28-gauge wire. String one assortment of 4 mm crystals on the wire in the following order:

1. Round crystal moonlight, 4 mm bicone indicolite, 6 mm rondelle mint alabaster, and 4 mm round olivine.
2. Slide the first crystal close to the cup chain, and manipulate the wire so the bead sits right next to the chain. Wrap the wire once around the cup chain to secure the crystal in place.
3. Continue wrapping the crystals along the length of the cup chain.
4. Leave a 3-in. (7.6 cm) tail of wire, wrap the wire a few times around the cup chain between the first and second cup. Trim the tail.
5. Using chainnose pliers, bend the prongs of a cup-chain connector around the last cup on each end of the cup chain.
6. When you’ve reached the end of the cup chain, wrap the wire around the space before the last cup, orienting the remaining wire on the opposite side of the cup chain.

editor’s notes

- While you’re wrapping, it’s easier to work directly from the spool of wire. If your wire isn’t already on a spool, wrap it around a spool of some type before getting started.
- Be firm but gentle with the wire. You want the bends to be snug and neat, but pulling too hard can break the wire or damage the crystals.
Cut a 2½-in. (6.4 cm) piece of 22-gauge wire. String an 8 mm crystal, a 6 mm rondelle, and a 4 mm bicone, and make a wrapped loop.

Open the plain loop, attach the twisted-wire loop, and close the loop. Open the loop of an earring wire, attach the wrapped loop of the earring assembly, and close the loop. Make a second earring to match the first.

Leaving a 3-in. (7.6 cm) tail, wrap the wire around a silver ring. Position the first bead along the edge of the ring, and wrap the wire around the ring as in step 4 of the necklace.

Continue wrapping crystals snugly around the ring.

When you reach the beginning, wrap the wire around the ring a few times, then trim the wrapping wire even with tail. Twist the two wires together.

Make a wrapped loop (Basics) with the twisted wire.

mint alabaster, olivine, crystal moonlight, indicolite. Make a loop on one end of the wire to secure the beads.