5 ESSENTIAL GUIDES TO BEAD STITCHING

A supplement to BEAD&BUTTON MAGAZINE
Welcome!

Thank you for subscribing to Bead&Button magazine and welcome to the fascinating world of tiny bits and bobs held together with thread and cord. Of course it’s so much more than that. Whether you’re interested in making lovely jewelry to wear day to day or you want to create an over-the-top statement piece or work of art, the only limitation is your imagination. With beads, you can craft everything from simple bracelets and earrings to monumental sculptures. But whatever path you want to take, you need to begin at the beginning and learn the basics. The five booklets presented here (all bound together for your convenience) will get you started on your journey with beads. You’ll get an overview of the many beads, threads, and needles that are available, gaining valuable insights into how to decide which ones to use. An introduction to five basic stitches plus a slew of variations will put you well on your way to mastering this intriguing art form. To get you started making actual beadwork, we’ve included two charted bracelet patterns along with a step-by-step guide to interpreting these graphs. And finally, 50 smart tips from some of bead- ing’s most popular teachers offer valuable insights into best practices, helpful shortcuts, and useful advice to help you along your beading journey.

We hope you enjoy these guides and use them to further your love and appreciation of the wonderful world of beads!

– The Editors of Bead&Button magazine

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All about seed beads
Bead shapes

Shopping for beads can feel as complicated as high-school geometry. We cover all the angles with this handy guide to seed beads, shaped beads, and the myriad multi-hole beads that have been released in the past few years.

Seed beads

**Czech Round**

**Japanese Round**

**Round:** Don’t be fooled by the name; round seed beads are not perfect spheres. They’re more donut shaped, and their profile varies by manufacturer. Seed beads made by Japanese manufacturers Miyuki and Toho tend to be taller and have larger holes, while Czech-made versions are flatter with smaller holes. Round seed beads occasionally have square holes, and sometimes you’ll see round seed beads called “rocailles.”

**Charlotte:** Traditionally, Charlettes are 13-sided round seed beads called “rocailles.”

**Demi beads:** Brand new from Toho in 2016, Demis are the same diameter as 11° and 8° seed beads but only half the height.

**Cylinder:** If you were to saw a long thin pipe into short segments, you’d have something like cylinder beads. At your local bead store, these tiny tube-shaped beads may be called Delicas (Miyuki-brand cylinders) or Treasures or Aikos (made by Toho).

**Hex-cut:** As the name implies, these seed beads are flatter with smaller holes. While Czech-made versions occasionally have square holes, and sometimes you’ll see round seed beads called “rocailles.”

**Czech Round**

**Japanese Round**

**Round:** Don’t be fooled by the name; round seed beads are not perfect spheres. They’re more donut shaped, and their profile varies by manufacturer. Seed beads made by Japanese manufacturers Miyuki and Toho tend to be taller and have larger holes, while Czech-made versions are flatter with smaller holes. Round seed beads occasionally have square holes, and sometimes you’ll see round seed beads called “rocailles.”

**Triangle:** Finally, a straightforward name for a straightforward shape! Triangle beads look like an equilateral triangle when viewed from the top. Toho triangles have sharp corners. Miyuki makes triangles with either rounded corners or sharp corners (called “sharp triangles”).

**Cube:** Cube beads are three-dimensional squares, but like their triangular counterparts, certain details depend on the manufacturer. Miyuki cube beads have slightly sharper corners; the Toho variety are more rounded. Cube beads may also be called “squares” but should not be confused with flat squares, such as the two-hole Tila and tile beads.

**Drop:** Drop beads are pear shaped with the hole going through the top horizontally. Drops are also called “teardrops,” and since they are frequently used in fringe, you may also see them labeled as “fringe drops” or “fringe beads.” They are closely related to magatamas and are sometimes referred to as such, but there is a difference.

**Magatama:** Magatamas look like squashed drop beads with the hole just off center. Once you can tell a magatama from a drop, make sure to learn the difference between a magatama and a long magatama (a much clearer distinction).

**Long magatama:** When viewed from the front, long or “elongated” magatamas look like stretched-out magatamas.

**Butterfly:** Bugle beads are basically long cylinder beads. Bugles can be smooth, twisted, spiral, hex-cut, square, or triangular in shape, and have round or square holes.

**Peanut:** Here at Bead&Button, we’ve adopted the term “peanut bead,” but this shape goes by many descriptors depending on the manufacturer or distributor, the most common being farfalle (like the pasta), bowtie, butterfly, dogbone, and berry. Whatever you call it, this bead has two rounded ends joined by a short, thin middle where the hole is. Although most peanut beads are about the same size, Miyuki’s “berry beads” have a slightly thicker middle than other brands.
Over the past few years, a flurry of two-hole and multi-hole beads have hit the market. This roundup is organized by general shape so you can easily see which ones might have potential for substitutions or combinations.

### Oval / pinched oval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SuperDuo</td>
<td>2.5 x 5 mm oval that is slightly pinched at each end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiniDuo</td>
<td>2 x 4 mm oval; a smaller version of the SuperDuo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>2.5 x 5 mm oval bead with two holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressed Twin</td>
<td>2.5 x 5 mm oval bead that is slightly pinched at each end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super8</td>
<td>2 x 4.7 mm oval-ish with pinched ends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Square / tile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tila</td>
<td>5 mm tile with two parallel holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tile</td>
<td>6 mm tile with two parallel holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QuadraTile</td>
<td>6 mm tile with four holes through the face of the bead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chexx</td>
<td>6 mm tile with two holes through the face of the bead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silky</td>
<td>6 mm tile with two holes that go through opposite corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisscross cubes</td>
<td>4 mm cube with offset holes that cross through the cube</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rectangle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>2 x 6 mm slim, rounded rectangle with two holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>3 x 6 mm rectangle with two holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Tila</td>
<td>2.5 x 5 mm rectangle with two holes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cylinder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rulla</td>
<td>3 x 5 mm cylinder with two holes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin roller</td>
<td>3.5 x 9 mm capsule with two holes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Triangle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bead Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>6 mm equilateral triangle with two holes on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kheops</td>
<td>6 mm equilateral triangle with two holes running base to tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tango</td>
<td>6 mm right triangle with holes through the point and the base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMMA</td>
<td>3 x 6 mm equilateral triangle with three holes through face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity beads</td>
<td>6 and 8 mm rounded triangles with three holes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Round / disk**

- **QuadraLentil**
  6 mm disk with four holes

- **Lentil**
  6 mm disk with two holes

- **Piggy beads**
  8 mm curved disk with one center and one offset hole

- **RounDuo**
  5 mm sphere with two parallel holes

- **DiscDuo**
  6 mm flat, disk-shaped bead with two holes

**Other shapes**

- **Chilli**
  4 x 11 mm cupped, elongated drop with two holes

- **Crescent**
  3 x 10 mm crescent shape with two holes spaced 3 mm apart

- **Daggers**
  5 x 16 mm elongated spear / drop with two holes at the narrow end

- **Half moon**
  4 x 8 mm half circle with two holes on the flat side

- **Honeycomb**
  6 mm hexagon with two parallel holes

- **Infinity**
  3 x 6 mm infinity or figure-eight shape with two holes

- **Pyramid hex**
  12 mm hexagonal pyramid with flat bottom and two holes

- **Stud**
  8 or 12 mm square pyramid with flat bottom and two holes

- **Tipp bead**
  8 mm cone with flat bottom and two holes

- **Zorro**
  6 x 5 mm Z-shaped bead with two holes

- **Arcos and Minos beads**
  Two separate beads that were designed to work together; the Arcos bead is a 5 x 10 mm crescent shape with three holes and an even thickness; the Minos bead is a 2.5 x 3 mm cylinder that fits perfectly within the center of two Arcos beads

- **DiamonDuos**
  5 x 8 mm diamond shape with a hole at each end; one side is flat, and the other has a raised center that looks like facets
Seed bead finishes

Seed beads come in a dizzying array of colors and styles. While sometimes it’s enough to just like a particular color, arming yourself with more information may help prevent some unpleasant surprises. Below is a guide to the different glass types used to make seed beads and some of the various finishes that you may find.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLASS TYPE</th>
<th>FINISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparent</td>
<td>plain, AB, luster, matte, matte AB, semi-matte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opaque</td>
<td>plain, AB, luster, matte, matte AB, semi-matte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-lined</td>
<td>plain, AB, luster, matte, matte AB, semi-matte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal-lined</td>
<td>plain, AB, luster, matte, matte AB, semi-matte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>plain, AB, luster, matte, matte AB, semi-matte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Glass type**
- **Transparent**
  - Clear or colored glass that transmits light
- **Opaque**
  - Colored glass that does not transmit light
- **Color-lined**
  - Colored or clear transparent glass and has an opaque colored lining on the inside
- **Metal-lined**
  - Clear or colored transparent glass with a core of real metal or metallic-colored paint. The metallic lining gives these beads extra sparkle. Some have a square hole, which increases the sparkle.

**Finish**
- **AB**
  - An iridescent finish resembling an oil slick; sometimes called iris, rainbow, or aurora borealis.
- **Luster**
  - A transparent glaze that lends extra sparkle.
- **Matte**
  - An etched surface with a velvety, frosted look.
- **Matte AB**
  - A matte finish with an AB coating, resulting in a soft, variegated look.
- **Semi-matte**
  - A slightly etched surface with a silky finish.

**SPECIAL FINISHES**

- **Galvanized** beads, traditionally, are coated with a zinc-based finish which rubs off easily and should be coated with a fixative to prolong the life of the beads. The new Duracoat (Miyuki) and Permanent Finish Galvanized (Toho) beads are much more stable.

- **Metal-plated** beads are plated with a thin coating of metal such as high-karat gold, sterling silver, copper, titanium, palladium, or nickel. This is a permanent finish, though the metal layer may wear off over time.

- **Pearl** refers to a lustrous, pearly finish on an opaque bead.

- **Ceylon** refers to a lustrous, pearly finish on a semi-transparent bead.

- **Opal** beads have a milky, semi-translucent finish. Some are gilt-lined.

- **Satin** beads have a striated appearance.

- **White hearts** are dark transparent or opaque beads with an opaque white core.

- **Two-tone** beads are made with two colors of glass.

- **Striped** beads are made with two or more colors of glass in a striped pattern.

- **Gold luster** refers to a luster finish with glowing gold highlights.

- **Painted or dyed** beads have an impermanent color coating. Many bright purples, pinks, and fuchsias are painted or dyed. Exposure to sunlight will cause the colors to fade, and the colorants may rub off when handled.
How many beads do you need?

Figure out how many seed beads you need with these handy charts.

**Rows of beadwork per inch**
It’s one thing to know how many beads there are in an inch of strung beads but do you know how many rows of beadwork are in an inch? If you can figure that out, you’ll be able to tell the length of a finished project just by counting rows in a graph — if the bead pattern is fairly straight-forward. At right is a chart showing approximately how many rows there are in an inch of beadwork, listed by stitch and bead size. (Note: This is a general guideline as bead sizes vary somewhat by manufacturer.)

**How many seed beads in a gram**
Knowing how many individual beads you need is only marginally helpful when talking about seed beads, which are usually sold in tubes or packages of anywhere from 7 to 40 grams or more. Here in the U.S., however, most of us don’t have a clue as to what constitutes a gram. One M&M candy weighs approximately one gram, but how helpful is that, really? The topic is further complicated by factors such as style variances between manufacturers and finishes and linings that sometimes add a marginal amount of weight to each bead. (And this just refers to non-metallic finishes; see the sidebar, below, to learn about metallics.)

So, aside from trying to figure out how many beads equal one candy-coated chocolate, how do you know how many seed beads constitute a gram? Here are some charts based on research done with the Bead&Button stash, a jeweler’s scale, and, yes, a few M&Ms. Bead counts are given in ranges to account for the different brands tested (Toho, Miyuki, and Preciosa) and a wide variety of non-metallic finishes.

**What’s in a (metallic) finish?**
Different finishes and linings affect the weight of a bead slightly. Metallic finishes add a more noticeable weight to each bead, so there will be fewer beads in one gram. For instance, there are 120–150 non-metallic round 11° seed beads in one gram but only 110–130 of their metallic counterparts. When purchasing metallic seed beads for a project that uses non-metallic beads, you may want to buy more than what is called for in the materials list.
Choosing your needles & threads
Beading threads, cords, & flexible beading wires

Beads are beautiful by themselves, but obviously, you need to connect them to create a piece of jewelry or bead sculpture. What you use will depend a great deal on what type of beads you’re using, what you’re making, and how you’re making it. For instance, if you want to make a necklace with gemstone nuggets, you’ll want to use something that will withstand the weight of the beads and still allow the necklace to drape nicely. If you start with seed beads and crystals and decide to stitch them into a bracelet, you’ll need something that will go through the small holes of seed beads several times and won’t be cut by the sharp edges of the crystals. If you want to make a classic pearl-knotted necklace, you need something that will be thin enough to go through the small holes of the pearls, that will knot well, and that won’t stretch too much.

**Beading thread**

Because it is thin enough to pass through small holes several times, beading thread is the ideal choice for most stitched projects. It may also be practical for bead crochet if you are working with very small beads. You may need to do a little experimenting to find the right thread for your needs, but here are some things to keep in mind:

- Synthetic threads, like nylon and polyethylene, are the best choice because they are strong and less likely to decay than natural fibers, like cotton. Avoid the inexpensive threads from the beading section of many craft stores because they are prone to fraying, breaking, and raveling.
- Most nylon threads stretch, but if you condition them first, you’ll remove most of the stretch and won’t end up with beadwork that sags. If you come across a nylon thread advertised as having no stretch, it has probably been prestretched and bonded.
- For many beaders, visible thread in a finished project is a no-no. To make your thread “disappear,” use thread in a color that is similar or slightly darker than your beadwork, or choose a neutral color.
- Unless you’re a very careful stitcher, don’t use doubled thread, because it’s very difficult to take out stitches if you make a mistake.
- When deciding what size thread to use, make sure that the thread — with the needle attached — will pass through the specific beads you’re using several times. Also, try to match the size of the thread to the size of the beading needle you’re using. If you pair a thin thread with a needle that has a large eye, your needle will keep falling off. Likewise, you won’t be able to get a thick thread onto a thin needle.
- If you’re using beads with sharp edges, you may want to try a polyethylene thread because it’s less likely to be cut than nylon.

**Beading cord**

Use beading cord, which is thicker than thread, for stringing, knotting, macramé, and crochet projects. Like thread, most beading cords are synthetic, though some natural fibers, notably silk and crochet cotton, are also good choices in some cases. Some beading threads, like C-Lon, come in thicker sizes that can be used as cord.

Most cords cannot be threaded onto a beading needle. To load beads onto cord, use a Big Eye or flexible beading needle (depending on how heavy the beads are), or stiffen the end of your cord by dipping it into cyanoacrylate glue and letting it dry.

**Flexible beading wire**

Flexible beading wire is made up of multiple thin wires that are twisted together and covered with a clear or colored nylon coating. Usually the inner wires are stainless steel, though sterling silver, silver-plated, and gold-plated varieties are also available.

The best way to secure flexible beading wire to a clasp is with crimp beads. Both crimp beads and beading wire come in various sizes, so be sure to use the appropriate crimp bead for the wire you use.

The thickest wire, .036, is best for stringing heavy beads, like gemstone nuggets. Use thinner wires for smaller or lighter beads. The very thinnest beading wire, .010, can be used for bead weaving projects when you’re using beads with large holes or for bead crochet. It can be knotted like thread, but it can’t be attached to a needle.
### Beading Threads

**Type** | **Names** | **Sizes** | **Colors** | **Description** | **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** | **Best Uses**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
**Parallel filament nylon** | Nymo | 00–FF | many | Thin nylon fibers are extruded, bundled, and heat-set to form a single-ply thread. | Durable; easy to thread on a beading needle; great color selection. | Some are prone to fraying; stretchy; will break under stress. | Best in bead weaving (both on and off loom), fringe that drapes, and bead embroidery. Not good for stringing or twisted fringe.|
| C-Lon | AA, D | many | | | | |
| SoNo | A | 5 | | | | |
| Monocord | 000, A, B | 19 | | | | |
| K.O. | B | 18 | | | | |
| One G | B | 22 | | | | |
**Plied nylon** | Silamide | A | 21 | Two or more extruded nylon threads are twisted together and coated or bonded to enhance ply security. | Strong and durable; some have had stretch removed; more resistant to fraying than parallel filaments. | Somewhat difficult to thread on a beading needle due to round profile and thicker diameter. | Good for twisted fringe, bead crochet, and beadwork that should have a lot of body.|
| Hastings Bonded Bead Cord | 2/0 (00), 1/0 (0), 2-5 | white | | | | |
| Stringt | 0–7 | 14 | | | | |
| Conso upholstery thread | F | 22 | | | | |
**Plied gel-spun polyethylene (GSP)** | Power Pro | 8–30 lb. test | black, white, green | Polyethylene fibers are spun to form thread. Two or more threads are braided or twisted together. | Almost unbreakable; doesn’t stretch; resists fraying. | Limited color palette; most are too thick for multiple passes through a single bead. | Use for stitching with larger beads, such as pressed glass and crystals, or for beadwork that should have a lot of body.|
| DandyLine | 15–30 lb. test | black, white | | | | |
| SpiderLine Braid | 20–40 lb. test | green | | | | |
| Tuf-Line | 15–30 lb. test | green | | | | |
**Parallel filament GSP** | Fireline | 4–10 lb. test | smoke, crystal, dyed crystal | Polyethylene fibers are spun and then bonded to form a single-ply thread. | Extremely strong and thin; doesn’t stretch; resists fraying. | Limited colors, unless you get the after-market dyed variety; cord is rather stiff. | Great for bead stitching. Not great for fringe or stringing.|
| Wildfire | 4–10 lb. test | black | | | | |
**Polyester** | YLI Jeans Gutermann top-stitching | 30 | 29 | Polyester fibers are spun into single yarns and then twisted into plied thread. | Lots of colors; doesn’t stretch. | Gets linty from abrasion. | Good for bead crochet and for bead embroidery when thread must match fabric.|
| | E (equiv.) | many | | | | |
**Aramid** | Kevlar | 0 | black, yellow | Spun poly-aramid fibers are extruded and gathered to form a single-ply thread. | Extremely strong and thin; bullet-proof and fire-resistant. | Thread will cut itself; negative reaction to skin and UV light; doesn’t absorb dyes well. | Works well with beads with sharp edges.|

Flexible beading wire is most often used for stringing projects, though the very fine size can also be used for bead weaving.

Beading cord is great for stringing, knotting, macramé, and crochet.
Needle threading

Threading the narrow eye of a beading needle can be tricky. Try our 5 tips for success.

1 **Start with stretches** Cut the thread, hold one end in each hand, and pull. If you’re working with Nymo, condition it. This relaxes the thread’s kinks and curls, making it easier to use.

2 **Shear the edge** Trim the end of your thread on an angle using very sharp scissors. A tapered edge free of stray fibers will slide gracefully through the needle’s eye.

3 **Sink your teeth into it** Flatten the thread’s cut edge to its thinnest profile by pressing it with your fingernails, squeezing it with pliers, or biting it gently with your teeth.

4 **Bring needle to thread** Hold the needle in your dominant hand, and grab the thread close to the cut edge with your other hand. Move the needle to the thread, sliding the eye over the thread’s end.

5 **If all else fails** Pass the wire loop of a needle threader through the eye of your needle. Put your thread through the loop, then pull the loop out of the needle. Success!

**Choosing beads**

To choose a needle, consider your bead and thread sizes, the number of passes you’ll make through the beads, and the beading technique. The higher the number, the thinner the needle.

- **#10** Use with 8° to 11° seed beads.
- **#12** Use with 8° to 13° seed beads.
- **#13** Use with 11° to 15° seed beads.
- **#16** Use with 16° to 24° seed beads.

**Needle threaders**

- **Big Eye** Use for stringing and getting through tight spots.
- **Small Big Eye** Use for loomwork, off-loom stitches, and transferring beads.
- **Twisted wire** Use for stringing and getting through tight spots.
- **#12 long** Use for loomwork, off-loom stitches, and transferring beads.
Basic bead stitches
Ladder stitch

The foundation stitch for other techniques, such as herringbone and brick stitch, the bead ladder proves itself useful time and time again.

Ladder stitch basics
As you work this stitch, the beads begin to resemble the rungs of a ladder — hence the name “ladder stitch.” You can use almost any style of bead, or use two or more beads as one in each stitch, which results in a variety of looks that you can use in many ways. Ladder stitch is used most often as a base for brick stitch or herringbone stitch.

The traditional way to work ladder stitch is to pick up two beads and sew through the first bead (figure 1, a–b) and the second bead (b–c) again. Add subsequent beads by picking up one bead, sewing through the previous bead, and then sewing through the new bead (c–d).

This is the most common technique, but it produces uneven tension along the ladder of beads because of the alternating pattern of a single thread bridge on the edge between two beads and a double thread bridge on the opposite edge between the same two beads. You can easily correct the uneven tension by zigzagging back through the beads in the opposite direction after you’ve stitched your ladder to the desired length (figure 2). Doing this creates a double thread path along both edges of the ladder. This aligns the beads right next to each other but fills the bead holes with extra thread, which can cause a problem if you are using beads with small holes.

When you’re using ladder stitch to create a base for brick stitch, having the holes filled with thread doesn’t matter because the rows of brick stitch are worked off the thread bridges, not by sewing through the beads. If you’re using the ladder as a base for herringbone stitch, extra thread is potentially problematic, because you’ll be sewing through the ladder base more than once.

Creating a ring
If you are working in tubular brick stitch or herringbone stitch, sew your ladder into a ring to provide a base for the new technique. With your thread exiting the last bead in your ladder, sew through the first bead and then through the last bead, or cross the needles through the first bead if you are using the two-needle technique.

Alternative ladder stitch methods
You may wish to try one of these two other ladder stitch methods, each of which produces beadwork with even tension. The first, a cross-needle technique, results in a single thread path on each edge. To begin, center a bead on the thread. Pick up a bead on one needle and cross the other needle through it (figure 3, a–b and c–d). Add each subsequent bead in the same manner.

To begin the other alternative method, pick up all the beads you need to reach the length your pattern requires. Fold the last two beads so they are parallel, and sew through the second-to-last bead in the same direction (figure 4, a–b). Fold the next loose bead so it sits parallel to the previous bead in the ladder, and sew through the loose bead in the same direction (figure 5, a–b). Continue sewing through each bead until you exit the last bead of the ladder.

MATERIALS
samples
• assorted triangle, cylinder, and/or bugle beads
• Fireline, 6 lb. test, or nylon beading thread, size D
• beading needles, #11

The ladder at the bottom has only one bead per stitch; the next has bugle beads; the next has triangle beads, the points of which nestle together; and the top sample has two beads per stitch.
Brick stitch

The offset rows of brick stitch resemble a brick wall.

The exact origin of brick stitch is unknown, as is the date of its creation. Early examples of brick stitch have been found in the handiwork of native beaders in Africa and North America. One characteristic of the stitch is that you attach each bead to the thread bridge of a previous row rather than by sewing through other beads. This allows for a great deal of flexibility in combining beads of varying sizes and shapes.

**Flat brick stitch**

Begin with a ladder of beads, and position the thread to exit the top of the last bead. Brick stitch naturally increases or decreases at the start and end of each row, depending upon where you attach the first and last stitches of the row. To work the typical method, which results in progressively decreasing rows, pick up two beads. Sew under the thread bridge between the second and third beads in the previous row from back to front. Sew up through the second bead added, down through the first bead, and back up through the second bead.

For the row’s remaining stitches, pick up one bead. Sew under the next thread bridge in the previous row from back to front. Sew back up through the new bead. The last stitch in the row will be positioned above the last two beads in the row below, and the row will be one bead shorter than the ladder.

**Brick stitch increase**

A single increase in the row will keep the number of beads the same as in the previous row.

To increase at the beginning of a row, work a typical brick stitch, but start by sewing under the thread bridge between the first two beads in the previous row.

**Circular brick stitch**

**Continuous spiral**

Begin with a ladder of beads, and position the thread to exit the bottom of the second-to-last bead. Overlap the first two beads in the ladder with the last two beads. Sew down through the first bead and up through the second bead. Sew up through the last bead. Once this join is complete, you can work brick stitch continuously around the ring to form a tube or rope.

**Level rows**

Begin with a ladder of beads, and join the two ends. Position the thread to exit the top of a bead. Following the instructions for flat brick stitch, pick up two beads to begin the row. Continue around the ring. Join the last and first beads by stitching down through the first bead and back up through the last bead. Continue working one round at a time, stepping up to begin each new round.

**Brick stitch decrease**

Brick stitch naturally decreases by one bead in each row. To decrease by more than one bead within a row, skip a thread bridge, and complete the stitch.

To create a larger-than-normal decrease at the end of a row, stop short of the last bead in the previous row.

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**MATERIALS**

- 8" or 11" seed beads
- Fireline, 6 lb. test, or nylon beading thread, size D
- beading needles, #11
Peyote stitch
Learn the ins and outs of 23 peyote techniques.

The perfect technique for both flat bands and structural shapes, peyote stitch is wonderfully versatile. Regardless of the variation, all peyote techniques are based on the same basic thread path, which causes offset rows of beads to nestle together. If you’re a beginner, start with the “Basic techniques.” Try a few easy projects with these skills, and then move on to the “Shaping” and “Advanced techniques.”

BASIC TECHNIQUES

Flat peyote stitch

Flat even-count
The term “even-count peyote stitch” means that there are an even number of beads in each row.

1. Thread a needle on a comfortable length of thread, and pick up a bead to use as a stop bead. Slide it to about 6 in. (15 cm) from the end, and sew through it again. The stop bead isn’t absolutely necessary, but it will prevent your beads from sliding off the thread, and it will also help you maintain good tension while you’re stitching. Pick up an even number of beads (figure, a–b). These beads will shift to form rows 1 and 2 as row 3 is added.

2. To begin row 3, pick up a bead, skip the last bead strung in the previous step, and sew back through the next bead in the opposite direction (b–c). Position the new bead to sit next to the bead you skipped, so their holes are parallel. For each subsequent stitch in the row, pick up a bead, skip a bead in the previous step, and sew through the next bead, until your thread exits the first bead strung (c–d). The beads added in this row stick out from the previous beads and are referred to as “up-beads.”

3. For each stitch in subsequent rows, pick up a bead, and sew through the next up-bead in the previous row (d–e).

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED!

If you’re struggling with the first few rows, try one of these three methods:

• After stringing the beads for rows 1 and 2, pinch the beads between your thumb and forefinger. Pick up the first bead for row 3, skip the end bead, and sew back through the previous bead (photo a). Continue holding the beads in place as you complete the row (photo b).

• If the pinch method doesn’t work for you, try passing a wire, pin, or needle through every other bead in the first strand (photo c). This creates the peyote alignment, making it easier for you to see which beads to sew through in the next row.

• Another option is to use a Quick Start Peyote card. These durable, laminated cards have openings to hold the beads in row 1, turning them into up-beads from the start (photo d). This makes it a cinch to add subsequent rows. Get them at www.quickstartpeyote.com.

MATERIALS

samples
• assorted 15–50 seed beads
• Fireline, 6 lb. test, or nylon beading thread, size D
• beading needles, #12
Flat odd-count
Flat odd-count peyote stitch has an odd number of beads in every other row. It follows the same basic thread path as even-count peyote, except for the turn after odd-numbered rows, where the last bead of the row can’t be attached in the usual way because there is no up-bead to sew through. Begin an odd-count piece as follows:
1. Pick up an odd number of beads. Work row 3 as in even-count peyote, stopping before adding the last bead.
2. Work a figure-8 turn at the end of row 3. Sew through the first bead picked up in step 1 (bead #1). Pick up the last bead of the odd-numbered row (bead #8), and sew through beads #2, #3, #7, #2, #1, and #8.
3. Work row 4 as in even-count peyote, and then work row 5, stopping before adding the last bead.
4. In this and all subsequent odd-numbered rows, work the following turn: Pick up the last bead of the row, and then sew under the edge thread bridge immediately below. Sew back through the last bead added to begin the next row.

Two-drop peyote stitch
Work two-drop peyote stitch the same way as basic flat peyote, but treat pairs of beads as if they were single beads.

1. To work in even-count two-drop peyote, pick up an even number of beads that is divisible by four. To work in odd-count two-drop peyote, pick up an even number of beads that is not divisible by four. Remember, these beads will shift to form rows 1 and 2 as round 3 is added.
2. To begin row 3, pick up two beads, skip two beads added in step 1, and sew back through the next two beads. Repeat this stitch across the row.
3. If you are working in even-count two-drop peyote, you will not need to do anything special to turn and begin subsequent rows. If you are working in odd-count two-drop peyote, modify the turns as in steps 2 and 4 of “Flat odd-count peyote.”

Tubular peyote stitch
Tubular peyote stitch follows the same stitching pattern as basic flat peyote, but instead of sewing back and forth, you work in rounds to form a tube.

1. Pick up an even number of beads to equal the desired circumference. Tie the beads into a ring with a square knot, leaving some slack between the beads, and sew through the first bead after the knot (figure, a–b). These beads will shift to form rounds 1 and 2 as round 3 is added.
2. Put the ring over a form if desired. To begin round 3, pick up a bead, skip the next bead in the ring, and sew through the following bead (b–c). Repeat this stitch to complete the round (c–d), and “step up” by sewing through the first up-bead added in this round (d–e). Stepping up positions your thread to begin the next round.
3. To work subsequent rounds, pick up a bead, and sew through the next up-bead in the previous round. Repeat this stitch to complete the round, and step up.
4. Repeat step 3 to the desired length.

ZIPPING UP OR JOINING
To join two sections of a peyote piece invisibly, match up the two sections so the end rows fit together like puzzle pieces. If the end rows don’t fit together, add or remove one row of peyote from either section. Then “zip up” the sections by zigzagging through the up-beads on both ends.

Tip: Zigzag back through the beadwork to complete the join, making sure you connect the end beads on each edge.
**Tubular odd-count**
In odd-count tubular peyote, you don’t need to step up: the beads will automatically form a continuous spiral.
1. Pick up an odd number of beads, tie them into a ring with a square knot, and sew through the first bead again (figure, a–b). These beads will shift to form rounds 1 and 2 as round 3 is added.
2. Work round 3 in tubular peyote stitch until you sew through the bead prior to the first bead in the ring (b–c). Pick up a bead, and sew through the next up-bead (c–d).
3. For subsequent rounds, continue working in tubular peyote, always sewing through the next up-bead.

**Circular peyote stitch**
Circular peyote stitch is worked in rounds like tubular peyote, but the rounds stay flat and radiate outward from the center as a result of incorporating increase stitches or larger beads in subsequent rounds.

**tips**
It’s easy to make striped patterns in tubular peyote!
- To begin a tube with spiral stripes, alternate pairs of beads in each of two colors in the original ring. For subsequent rounds, pick up a bead of the opposite color as the bead directly below it for each stitch in the round.
- For vertical stripes, begin with a ring of beads that alternates color with every other bead. For subsequent rounds, pick up a bead of the same color as the bead directly below it for each stitch in the round.
- For horizontal stripes, start with a ring of beads in a single color. Work two or more rounds in the same color depending on the desired width of the stripe, and then switch to a second color for the next two or more rounds. Alternate colors for the desired length.
- Combine these techniques to create a tube of all three stripes (right).

In peyote stitch, the beads nestle together, so to figure out how many rows or rounds you’ve stitched, identify a diagonal line of beads, and count how many there are in the diagonal line.

**get a grip**
Literally. Picking up your beadwork and holding it while you stitch can greatly improve your stitching tension. Hold both the working thread and the bead you just added to prevent the stitch from loosening up as you add the next bead. Let go of the previous stitch only once the next stitch is completed, and then only to move your grasp to the next stitch.

**SHAPING**

**Increasing and decreasing at edges**

**Even-count increase**
To increase one row along the edge when working in flat even-count peyote, pick up two beads, and sew through them again. Continue in the opposite direction to stitch the new row.

**Even-count decrease**
To decrease one row along the edge when working in flat even-count peyote, sew under the nearest thread bridge along the edge, and sew back through the last two beads you just sewed through.

**Odd-count increase**
To increase one row along the edge when working in flat odd-count peyote, pick up the final bead for the row you’re finishing, and sew through the adjacent bead and the bead just added. Pick up two beads, and sew back through the first bead added.

**Odd-count decrease**
To decrease one row along the edge when working in flat odd-count peyote, omit the final stitch in the row. Pick up a bead to begin the next row, and sew back through the last up-bead in the previous row.
Decreasing and increasing within a piece

**Decreasing**

1. At the point of decrease, sew through two up-beads in the previous row.

2. In the next row, when you reach the two-bead space, pick up one bead.

3. Continue working in regular peyote stitch.

**Increasing**

1. At the point of increase, pick up two beads instead of one. Sew through the next bead.

2. When you reach the two beads in the next row, sew through the first bead, pick up a bead, and sew through the second bead. This is sometimes referred to as “splitting the increase.”

3. Continue working in regular peyote stitch.

**tip** Not all beads of any given type are shaped the same, and you can use that to your advantage when increasing and decreasing. For instance, when you add two beads for an increase, choose two narrow beads. In the next row when you split the increase, use another narrow bead. In the following row, go back to using standard size beads.

Likewise, when decreasing, pick up a wide bead when you are going over the point of decrease. In the following rows, you can use regular size beads.

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**ADVANCED TECHNIQUES**

**Fast peyote**

In fast peyote, you pick up all the beads for two rows or rounds at a time instead of repeatedly picking up one bead and stitching it in place. Be sure you are comfortable with the regular peyote technique before trying fast peyote so that you understand the mechanics of the stitch. We learned this technique from Dona Anderson, who got it from a Native American friend.

**Flat even-count**

1. Pick up an even number of beads to form rows 1 and 2. Work in flat even-count peyote stitch until you have a total of four rows.

2. Pick up the same number of beads you started with in step 1 (that is, enough beads for two rows). Drape them across the beadwork, and sew through the end up-bead in the previous row, going in the opposite direction.

3. Skip the last bead picked up in step 2, sew through the next one, and continue through the next up-bead in the previous row (a–b). Repeat this stitch across the row, zigzagging through every other bead picked up in step 2 and the up-beads in the previous row (b–c).

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the desired length.

**Flat odd-count**

1. Pick up an odd number of beads to form rows 1 and 2. Work in flat odd-count peyote stitch until you have a total of four rows.

2. Exiting an edge down-bead, pick up the same number of beads you picked up to begin step 1. Drape them across the beadwork, and sew under the thread bridge on the opposite edge (a–b). Sew through the last bead picked up, going in the opposite direction (b–c).

3. Sew through the next up-bead in the previous row, skip the next bead in the group you picked up in step 2, and sew through the following bead (a–b). Repeat this stitch across the row, zigzagging through every other bead in the new group and the up-beads in the previous row. Exit the first bead picked up in step 2 (b–c).

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the desired length.

**tip** While fast peyote does hasten your stitching, you’ll get bogged down if you pick up the wrong beads, so always double check that you’ve got the right beads on your needle before stitching them in place.
More fast peyote

Tubular even-count
1. Pick up an even number of beads, tie them into a ring with a square knot, and sew through the first bead again.
2. Work in tubular even-count peyote stitch until you have a total of four rounds.
3. Pick up the same number of beads you picked up in step 1, and sew through the first bead just picked up.

4. Sew through the next up-bead in the previous round, skip the next bead in the group you picked up in step 3, and sew through the following bead.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for the desired length.

Tubular odd-count
1. Pick up an odd number of beads, tie them into a ring with a square knot, and sew through the first bead again.
2. Work in tubular odd-count peyote stitch until you have a total of four rounds.
3. Pick up the same number of beads you picked up in step 1, and sew through the first bead again.
4. Sew through the next up-bead in the previous round, skip the next bead in the group you picked up in step 3, and sew through the following bead. Repeat this stitch until you’ve sewn through the last bead picked up in step 3. You do not need to step up.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for the desired length.

tip For straight and precise lines and edges, be sure to cull your beads as you work, setting aside any that are too wide, narrow, or misshapen.

Stitch in the ditch
The “stitch in the ditch” technique is done on top of an existing layer of peyote. Exit the beadwork as directed in the project instructions. Pick up a bead, and sew through the next bead in the same row. Repeat across the row or as directed.

Diagonal peyote
Diagonal peyote is a result of working flat peyote with an increase at one edge and a decrease at the other edge with every pair of rows.
1. To create a diagonal band, work three rows of flat even-count peyote stitch (a–b).
2. Work an increase: Pick up three beads, and sew back through the first bead just picked up (b–c).
3. Working in the other direction, continue in peyote stitch, stopping short of the final stitch in the row (c–d).
4. Work a decrease: Pick up a bead, and sew back through the last up-bead in the previous row (d–e). Continue in peyote to complete the row (e–f).
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 (f–g) to the desired length, always working an increase along one edge and a decrease along the other edge.

tip When your thread gets short, always add a new thread before ending the old one. Work a few rows or rounds with the new thread, and then end the old thread in the beadwork. This will ensure that you resume stitching in the right direction.

Peyote toggle clasps
The following instructions make a 3/4-in. (1.9 cm) toggle clasp. Adjust bead counts if you want a larger clasp.
To make a toggle ring: On 1 yd. (.9 m) of thread, pick up 36–40 15° seed beads, and tie them into a ring with a square knot, leaving a 12-in. (30 cm) tail. Work a round of even-count tubular peyote stitch using 15° seed or cylinder beads. Using the tail, work a round using 11° seed, and then zip up the two edge rounds to form a ring.
To make a toggle bar: On 1 yd. (.9 m) of thread, pick up 14–16 11° or 15° seed beads, leaving a 6-in. (15 cm) tail. Work a total of 10–14 rows of flat even- or odd-count peyote, roll the strip into a tube, and zip up the end rows.

tip For straight and precise lines and edges, be sure to cull your beads as you work, setting aside any that are too wide, narrow, or misshapen.
Cellini spiral

The Cellini spiral was originated by seed bead masters Virginia Blakelock and Carol Perrenoud who developed the tubular variation and named it after Benvenuto Cellini, a 16th-century Italian sculptor known for his Rococo architectural columns. Eventually, the flat version emerged, and both techniques are equally beautiful.

Flat Cellini spiral

1. Pick up two color A 15º seed beads, two color B 15º seed beads, two As, two color C 11º cylinder beads, and two color D 11º seed beads (figure, a–b). These beads will shift to form rows 1 and 2 as row 3 is added.

2. Work in flat even-count peyote stitch, picking up the following beads, one per stitch:
   - Row 4: B, A, C, D, C (c–d).
   - Row 5: A, C, D, A, B (d–e).
   - Row 7: B, A, C, D, C (f–g).
   - Row 8: C, D, C, A, D (g–h).


4. Work three more rows to complete the pattern:

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you reach the desired length.

Tubular Cellini spiral

1. Pick up two color A 15º seed beads, two color B 15º seed beads, two color C 11º cylinder beads, two color D 11º seed beads, two color E 8º seed beads, two Ds, and two Cs. Tie the beads into a ring with a square knot, and sew through the first two As again (figure 1, a–b). These beads will shift to form rounds 1 and 2 as round 3 is added.

2. Work round 3 in tubular peyote stitch, picking up the following beads, one per stitch:
   - Row 4: A, B, A, C, D, E, D, C (b–c).

3. Repeat step 2 (figure 2) to the desired length.

Tip: To enhance the sculptural aspect of tubular Cellini spiral, gently squeeze the opening of the beadwork as you stitch. This will help you maintain the tension and prevent gaps between beads of different sizes.

Dutch spiral

Similar to tubular Cellini spiral, Dutch spiral is a sculptural variant of tubular peyote. The distinguishing characteristic is a loose “bridge” of beads that spans one section of the beadwork, and it tends to be more flexible than tubular Cellini spiral. Just about any types of seed beads can be used in Dutch spiral. The beads used in the sample shown here are:

- As – 11º hex-cut beads
- Bs – 10º seed beads
- Cs – 8º seed beads
- Ds – 5º triangle beads
- Es – 6º seed beads
- Fs – 11º seed beads

1. Pick up an A, two Bs, two Cs, two Ds, two Es, and seven Fs. Tie the beads into a ring with a square knot, and sew through the A again (figure 1).

2. Work a round of tubular peyote, picking up the following beads, one per stitch:

3. Repeat step 2 for the desired length. Alternatively, you can vary the number of Fs picked up to create a piece with a graduated spiral.
Netting

Gather some seed beads, your favorite needle and thread, and learn vertical, horizontal, tubular, and circular netting.

**Materials**
- 1–2 g 11^o_0 seed beads
- Fireline, 6 lb. test, or nylon beading thread, size D
- beading needles, #11

**Note** Any size seed bead can be used to stitch these samples. If you are new to netting, you may want to start with 8^o seed beads instead of 11^o's.

**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**

**Figure 3**
Work the following samples with comfortable lengths of thread. If desired, condition your thread. Work each sample to the desired length.

**Horizontal and vertical netting**

Horizontal and vertical netting have the same basic structure, and they are named for the orientation of how the stitches are worked. Both are commonly used to make simple bands, collar necklaces, or larger scarf-like sections of netted beadwork. The following instructions are for small sections of five-bead netting that introduce the basic technique, but netting can be worked with any number of beads per stitch. The more beads you use in each stitch, the larger the spaces between the stitches in the finished piece. Fewer beads produce a more fabric-like appearance.

Netting is a close relative of peyote stitch; if you only picked up one bead per stitch, you would be working in peyote. Once you have made the samples, try varying the size of the netted stitches by altering the number of beads per stitch.

1. Pick up 40 11s, skip the last three 11s, and sew through the next 11° in the previous row (figure 3, a–b).
2. Pick up five 11s, and sew through the next 11° in the previous row (b–c). Repeat to complete the row (c–d).
3. To turn and start the new row, pick up six 11s, skip the last three 11s, and sew through the next 11° (d–e).
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to reach the desired length (e–f).

**Picots**

1. Pick up 40 11s, skip the last three 11s, and sew through the next 11° in the previous row (figure 3, a–b).
2. Pick up five 11s, and sew through the next 11° in the previous row (b–c). Repeat to complete the row (c–d).
3. To turn and start the new row, pick up six 11s, skip the last three 11s, and sew through the next 11° (d–e).
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to reach the desired length (e–f).

**Points and picots**

The technique described above results in rounded “loops” along each edge. For a more decorative edge, you can make points or picots.

**Points**

1. To create a point along the edges of the netted sample, pick up 38 11s. Skip the last 11s, and sew through the next 11° in the previous row with your needle pointing toward the tail (figure 2, a–b).
2. Pick up five 11s, skip five 11s in the previous row, and sew through the next 11° (b–c). Repeat to complete the row (c–d).
3. To turn and start the next row, pick up four 11s. Skip the last 11s, and sew through the next 11° (d–e).
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to reach the desired length (e–f).

**Circular netting**

Each round of circular netting requires additional beads in each stitch to allow the piece to lie flat.

1. Pick up 10 11s, sew through them again to create a ring, and exit the first 11s picked up.
2. Pick up three 11s, skip an 11s in the ring, and sew through the next 11° (figure 5, a–b). Repeat to complete the round, and step up through the first two 11s in the first stitch (b–c).
3. Pick up five 11s, skip three 11s in the previous round, and sew through the center 11° in the next stitch (c–d).
4. Repeat to complete the round, and step up through the first three 11s in the first stitch (d–e).
5. Continue adding rounds, increasing two beads per stitch per round to reach the desired size (e–f).

**Horizontal and vertical netting**

Tubular netting

1. Pick up 24 11s, and sew through them again to create a ring, exiting the first 11s picked up.
2. Pick up five 11s, skip five 11s in the ring, and sew through the next 11° in the ring (figure 4, a–b). Repeat to complete the round (b–c). Step up through the first three 11s in the first stitch (c–d).
3. Pick up five 11s, skip five 11s in the previous round, and sew through the center 11s in the next stitch (d–e).
Embroidery is an ancient tradition in cultures around the world. In early days, beads were attached with thin strips of sinew, leather, or fiber in designs that identified them culturally or geographically. Their designs reflected patterns observed in nature and symbolic interpretations of their beliefs.

You can bead-embroider directly on the fabric or leather of your desired project or you can do your beading on a beading foundation, such as Lacy’s Stiff Stuff, which provides stability and support for the beads and allows for easier stitching. To get started, thread a needle with a comfortable length of thread, and tie an overhand knot at the end. Sew up through the fabric or foundation at the point where you wish to begin beading. Work your design using the desired beads and stitches, ending your thread either on the back of the work or within the beadwork when your thread runs short.

For a nice finish, attach a backing layer of leather or Ultrasuede to hide the exposed stitching on the back, and then work an edging stitch around the perimeter to camouflage the seam.

**Beaded backstitch**
On the top surface of the fabric or foundation, pick up three beads, snug them up, and align them on top of the fabric. Sew down through the fabric next to the last seed bead and up through the fabric next to the first seed bead. Sew through the three beads again (figure 1). In subsequent stitches, pick up a bugle and a seed bead, and sew through the last seed bead in the previous stitch and the two new beads. The seed beads prevent the sharp edges of the bugles from cutting the thread.

**Moss stitch**
On the top surface of the fabric, pick up three beads, and sew back through the fabric approximately one bead’s width away (figure 4) to form a picot-like stitch.

**Bugle bead stitch**
On the top surface of the fabric, pick up a seed bead, a bugle bead, and a seed bead, snug them up, and align them on top of the fabric. Sew down through the fabric next to the last seed bead and up through the fabric next to the first seed bead. Sew through the three beads again (figure 2). In subsequent stitches, pick up a bugle and a seed bead, and sew through the last seed bead in the previous stitch and the two new beads. The seed beads prevent the sharp edges of the bugles from cutting the thread.

**Seed stitch**
On the top surface of the fabric, pick up a bead, position it on the fabric, and sew back through the other beads and the fabric (figure 5).

**Stacks (short fringe)**
On the top surface of the fabric, pick up three or more beads, skip the last bead, and sew back through the other beads and the fabric (figure 6).

**Stop stitch**
On the top surface of the fabric, pick up two beads, skip the last bead, and sew back through the first bead and the fabric (figure 7). The first bead is usually larger than the second bead.

**Traveling stitch**
The traveling stitch is useful in projects in which there is a hard surface, such as a button form, under the fabric because the needle passes through the fabric at an extreme angle, causing it to exit quite a distance from the last stitch.

To make a traveling stitch, sew up through the fabric after adding the previous bead. Without adding any beads, sew back through the fabric near the spot where the needle just exited, and sew up through the fabric again next to the previous stitch (figure 8).

**MATERIALS**

- assorted beads
- fabric, leather, or beading foundation
- backing material, such as leather or Ultrasuede
- nylon beading thread, size D
- beading needles, #11 or #11 sharps

**FIGURE 1**

**FIGURE 2**

**FIGURE 3**

**FIGURE 4**

**FIGURE 5**

**FIGURE 6**

**FIGURE 7**

**FIGURE 8**
Charted patterns simplified
About peyote patterns

Peyote patterns are a perennial favorite among beaders. Mastering just a few techniques opens up a whole world of design possibilities!

Here at Bead&Button, a “pattern” refers to a panel of beadwork charted on a graph where one cell equals one bead. From start to finish, you usually work the pattern in the same stitch, which allows you to focus on picking up the correct color beads to create the design. This makes patterns different from many other beading projects, which are often worked in multiple techniques and usually cannot be represented on a single chart.

Peyote patterns are wildly popular among beaders. They’re meditative to stitch, and encourage one to wax philosophical about how all those tiny beads add up to make one large image.

The following pages contain three stunning examples of peyote patterns. If you’re not familiar with flat even- and odd-count peyote stitch, first turn to Peyote stitch, p. 16, to brush up on these crucial techniques. Then continue reading below to learn how to stitch these beautiful bands!

Size up the shape

Peyote patterns can be worked in any size or shape bead, but more often than not they’re made with 11° round seed beads (such as those manufactured by Miyuki or Toho) or cylinder beads (including Delicas, Aikos, and Treasures). Whichever bead shape and brand you choose, stick with it for all the beads in the pattern (unless otherwise directed by the designer). This ensures that all your beads will be the same size and that the finished beadwork will lie flat.

Compile a palette

In the following pages, each bead color used in a pattern is represented in a “bead key” along with the names and numbers of the colors used by the designer. These are suggestions only; feel free to use colors you love or, if nothing else, colors you have on hand. Pick one color bead for each color in the key, and keep these hints in mind as you select your palette:

• Using a mix of bead transparencies (such as opaque, silver-lined, or clear) and finishes (luster, AB, matte) results in visual depth.
• Contrast is key to being able to distinguish each design element in the finished beadwork. If a few yellow beads need to stand out against a beige background, choose a bright yellow that will punch a hole through the beige. Likewise, if you use matte beads for the background, consider using glossier beads for objects in the foreground.

Thread your engines

You’re ready to prepare your thread! Cut a length of thread that’s comfortable for you, perhaps 1–2 yd. (.9–1.8 m). Thread a needle on one end. If you wish, attach a stop bead to the non-needle end of your thread, leaving the desired length tail (at least 6 in./15 cm unless otherwise directed by the designer). The stop bead prevents the first two rows of beads from sliding off the end of your thread.

Where do I start?

We recommend reading a peyote pattern from top to bottom or bottom to top. Below, we’ll assume you’re working from top to bottom, but regardless of which direction you read, you’ll start with a corner. But which corner? That depends on if you’re working in even- or odd-count peyote stitch and if your pattern is all one width or has tapered ends.

Even-count, one width

For an even-count peyote pattern that’s all one width, like “Kate’s pandas” on p. 27, look at the top of the pattern. See how some of the beads stick out past the others? In peyote stitch, the beads that stick out are called “up-beads.” One of the top corners should end with an up-bead. This corner is not the corner you start at. Go to the other top corner (the corner with the “down-bead”), and start picking up the beads for the first two rows. Follow the steps for flat even-count peyote stitch (p. 16) to turn and work row 3.

Odd-count, one width

For an odd-count peyote pattern that’s all one width, it doesn’t matter which corner you start at. If both corners have an up-bead, simply pick up the beads for the first two rows, and work the remaining rows in odd-count peyote stitch as described on p. 17. If both ends have a down-bead at each corner, the easiest way to begin is to ignore the first row. Starting from either corner, pick up the beads for rows 2 and 3, leaving at least an 8-in. (20 cm) tail. Continue working in odd-count peyote stitch as usual. Later, use the tail to add row 1.

Tapered ends

If your pattern has tapered ends, stitch the wide part of the pattern first, and then decrease at the ends of the band to create the taper. You will find instructions for working decreases on p. 18.
Following along
As you work in peyote stitch, the offset structure of the beadwork (like bricks in a wall) means you can lose your place in a pattern. Here’s a simple solution. Using a ruler, draw a horizontal line ¼ in. (6 mm) down from the top of a piece of paper. Lay this end of the paper over your pattern, and trace onto the paper all the vertical lines, including the lines that form the edges of the pattern. Extend the lines down to the horizontal mark. Cut each vertical line down to the mark, fold down every other strip, and use tape to secure the folded strips to the back. This creates “windows” the same width as the beads in the pattern. Align the bottom of each window with the beads of the first row you plan to work (photo, above). The paper will block out the beads of the following rows. When you complete this row, shift the paper down and to the left or right so that the beads of the next row appear in the windows.

At the end of your thread?
It’s not likely that you’ll complete a peyote pattern with one length of thread, nor should you try to. (You’d need such a long length that you’d be prone to tangling and knotting.) When your working thread is between 6 and 8 in. (15–20 cm) long, complete your current row, and leave the thread hanging out of the beadwork. Then, add a new thread to the beadwork, making sure it exits the same bead your old thread is exiting. Finally, end the old thread. Adding a new thread before you end the old one ensures that you stitch the next row in the correct direction. One more note on the topic of thread: If possible, avoid adding or ending your thread to a section of transparent beads. You may be able to see the extra thread path through the beads, especially if you’re using dark thread.

Get some closure
The following peyote patterns result in bracelets, each featuring a unique closure or clasp. Read the write-up next to each pattern for full details. Other peyote patterns work up to make wall hangings, amulet bags, pins, pendants, and even earrings. You can stitch metal findings — like clasps, snaps, chains, or jump rings — to a completed peyote pattern, or you can stitch loops of beads to the pattern and then attach findings to those loops using jump rings. You can also clasp with a beaded bead, beaded toggle, or button that fits into a loop of beads.

Another technique is to work extra rows of peyote at the end of your pattern and then wrap the rows around a bar, such as a wall hanging rod or a clasp with a bar attachment (right). Zip up (p. 17) the last of the extra rows to the last of the pattern rows to form a tube of beadwork around the bar. Once you master these basics, you too can wax philosophical while you stitch. Will you find the meaning of life in a peyote pattern? Some beaders, no doubt, already have!

Kate’s pandas
My 10-year-old niece, Kate, is passionate about pandas, so I designed this flat even-count peyote stitch (p. 16) bracelet for her. The finished piece measures 6 in. (15 cm) without the clasp. On each end, I attached a two-strand slide clasp with loops of seven 11° cylinder beads each.

– Jane Danley Cruz
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Geometric flowers

The flowers in this 7 x 1¾-in. (18 x 4.4 cm) bracelet really pop because I used matte beads for the background and shiny beads for all the flowers. Work the pattern in flat even-count peyote stitch (p. 16) until the band is about ½ in. (1.3 cm) short of the desired bracelet length. If you stitch the pattern as shown, the beadwork will measure 6½ in. (16.5 cm). If you need a longer bracelet, work more rows on each end using the background color.

To add toggle bars and square-shaped loops like I did, make two toggle bars (p. 20), beginning with peyote strips that are 14 beads wide and 12 rows long. Add a 3 mm crystal and 15 seed bead at each end of each tube. To attach them to the band, sew through the beadwork of the band to exit the third up-bead at one end, with the needle pointing toward the center of the band. Work a strip of peyote that is four beads wide and 30 rows long. Wrap the strip around one of the toggle bars, and zip up (p. 17) the end of the strip to the end of the bracelet. Tack the toggle bar to the strip in several places to secure it. Work another strip that is three up-beads in from the other edge, and attach the remaining toggle bar in the same manner.

For the square toggle loops, work at the end opposite the toggle bars, and refer to the dark beads in the figure below: Stitch a strip along one edge that is four beads wide and 13 rows long. Sew back to the band, and sew through the end row to exit the fourth up-bead from the first strip. Work a new strip that is 10 beads wide and 14 rows long. Pick up seven beads, sew through the end bead of the middle strip, and work across the strip in peyote. Pick up seven beads, sew through the end bead of the remaining strip, and work across the strip in peyote. Work two more rows all the way across the top of the strips. Retrace the thread paths along the inner edges of the toggle loops for added security.

When the loops are complete, work a picot edging around the outside of the bracelet: Exiting an end edge bead with your needle pointing away from the beadwork, pick up three 15 seed beads, and zigzag through the next two edge beads. Repeat along the entire edge, sew through to the other edge, and add picots to the other edge.

- Julia Gerlach
  jgerlach@beadandbutton.com
50 tips from top 10 teachers
If you ever take beading or jewelry-making classes, you know that that can be a great place to get insider tips from the pros. Below, ten of today’s most popular teachers share their secrets for jewelry-making success.

Finding inspiration
1. Let making jewelry help you discover new cultures, history, design, and math. – D.F.
2. Develop your style. Look at others’ work and decide what you would do instead. – D.F.
3. When designing pieces, put jewelry out of your mind. Turn to nature, art, architecture, and sculptural sources of inspiration. – M.H.
4. Add a little metallic color to your beading. Metal may heighten the value of a piece. – D.F.
5. Soften a palette by selecting two colors and transitioning from one color to the other. – L.M.
6. Look for the “second right answer”. Consider an alternative technique. – D.F.
7. Carry a notebook to jot down notes or make sketches when you’re inspired. – D.F.
8. Look for unusual components at hardware stores, scrapbooking shops, and science, electronic, and salvage sources. – M.H.
9. Keep a journal about how you made your jewelry, its measurements, and the materials you used for reference later. – M.H.

Making jewelry
10. Make your work to last 100 years. Focus on good materials and construction. – D.F.
11. When storing or transporting tools, cover sharp ends with rigid Styrofoam, cork, or packing material for safety. – M.H.
12. Use clear tubing from a hardware store to lengthen or “soften” pliers’ handles. – K.S.
13. Use an oval jump ring to hang thin-gauge components from chain. If the slit opens on the jump ring, it will be on the side of the jump ring and your piece will be more secure. – L.K.
14. To price a work, record your time. – M.H.
15. When you finish a project, create a kit for future repairs by putting extra materials in a zippered sandwich bag and labeling it. – M.D.
16. When working with polymer clay, include “breaker pieces” — polymer clay pieces the same thickness as your jewelry — in the same oven in which you are baking polymer clay jewelry to be fully cured. Bake according to the directions, remove a breaker piece, cool it, then try to break it. If it breaks easily, bake your pieces for another 20 minutes. When a breaker piece bends without breaking, your jewelry is cooked. – C.F.
17. Epoxies are the strongest glues if you measure the two parts by eye, then mix thoroughly with a clean wood stake (don’t use toothpicks) for a full minute. Wipe the wood stake clean, and use it to apply the glue to a clean surface. – C.F.
18. If you’re having a bad jewelry-making day, walk away and come back later. On a good jewelry-making day, crank up the music and work until you fall over. – A.M.
19. Slow and steady wins the clay. Rushing will leave you fixing problems. – A.M.

Stitching with beads
20. Store beads by color and size. Dedicate a drawer to red 11° seed beads, etc. – L.M.
21. Keep leftover beads from larger projects in zippered sandwich bags. The bead mixes are great for making earrings and brooches. – S.S.
22. To identify crystal colors later, string a crimp bead, your crystals, and a second crimp bead on beading wire. Make a loop, crimp the crimp beads, and tag the sample. – M.D.
23. Set a timer and stretch on the hour. – M.H.
24. Keep a variety of beading needles on hand for different bead sizes. – S.S.
25. Small, flexible English beading needles are best for 15° and micro beads. – L.M.
26. Use a short, sharp needle when working on a project with tight spaces. – M.D.
27. Dedicate an old pair of scissors to cut synthetic fishing-line thread. – S.S.
28. Wind your thread around a cabochon, don’t add to your tray table. – L.M.
29. When beading on a plane, clip a book light or reading light to your tray table. – L.M.
30. Color the tip of light-colored thread with a black marker to make it easy to thread. – L.M.
31. Wax protects thread, minimizes knots, maximizes longevity, and improves tension. Microcrystalline wax is stickier, coats thread better, and lasts longer than beeswax. – L.M.
32. Excess microcrystalline wax can be removed from beadwork carefully with a warm, damp paper towel. For Fireline, if your bead finish is stable and your beadwork has no fabric or leather, run it under warm water. – L.M.
33. To clean smoke Fireline, thread it on a needle and run it through a paper towel. – M.D.
34. Use baby or demitasse spoons to pick up your beads from a soft work surface. – M.D.
35. Sand the back of a smooth cabochon before gluing for better adhesion. – S.S.
36. When learning right-angle weave, use one color for the top and bottom bead and a contrasting color for the side beads. – M.D.
37. To keep thread from splitting, hold the working thread exiting the last bead to one side of the bead, out of the needle path. – C.F.
38. When weaving with crystals, pull the thread directly in line with the holes, not at an angle, to avoid cutting the thread. – M.D.
39. To increase tension, place the thread over your index finger and behind your middle finger as you stitch. – C.R.
40. To decrease tension, pull on your thread after each stitch and then let it relax as you prepare for the next stitch. – C.R.
41. Embellishing with doubled thread will make your tension tighter and more even. – L.M.
42. To weave in a small tail, pass the eye of the needle through beads adjacent to the tail. Thread the needle and pull it through. – M.D.
43. When you only have space for one more bead as you backstitch in an even count around a cabochon, don’t add
MEET THE TEACHERS

Marcia De Coster
Business: MadDesigns
Teaches: Bead weaving with a focus on right-angle weave
Web site: maddesignsbeads.blogspot.com
E-mail: See marciaedecoster.com
“Tuition is not the important part; the most important is that this is a class where students are able to produce a project and improve technique.”

Ciele Fago
Business: Ciele Fago
Teaches: Precious metal clay, 24k gold keum-boo, polymer clay, and metalwork
Web site: cielefago.com
E-mail: cielefago@comcast.net
“When it comes to teaching, preparation, knowing a student’s subject, and organization all go without saying. The truly essential tool is patience.”

Diane Fitzgerald
Business: Beautiful Beads
Teaches: Jewelry made with basic beadwork stitches including peyote, brick, netting, and Zulu stitches
Web site: dianefitzgerald.com
E-mail: dmtbeads@bitstream.net
“My goal in teaching is to give respect to each student, to give each person confidence in herself and her creativity, and to offer appealing designs that provide a means of self-expression and satisfaction.”

Mary Hettmansperger
Business: Mary Hetts
Teaches: Mixed-metal jewelry, cold connections, woven and fiber-related techniques for jewelry design, basketry, surface design for quilting, metal clay jewelry, wirework, and peyote beading
Web site: maryhetts.com
E-mail: hetts@ctnet.com
“Everyone has a playful side, although many people don’t allow themselves the freedom to explore it. I try to give students a fun, safe, and noncritical environment to find their creative voices.”

Lisa Niven Kelly
Business: Beaducation, Inc.
Teaches: Wirework, metalwork, and off-loom beadwork
Web sites: lisaivenkelly.com, beaducation.com
E-mail: lisa@beaducation.com
“When teaching, I have two goals in mind: to teach students something new and useful and to ensure that they have fun doing it. I want to fill our class time with as much information as possible and make the experience enjoyable and fun.”

Laura McCabe
Business: Just Let Me Bead
Teaches: Bead weaving
Web sites: justletmebead.com, lauramccabeart.com
E-mail: justletmebead@gmail.com
“Teaching is about sharing a love of beads and beadwork and the camaraderie that comes from practicing and expounding upon an ancient craft. In sharing my enthusiasm for the materials and the art, I hope that I inspire others to find their own creative voices.”

Anne E. Mitchell
Business: Anne E. Mitchell
Teaches: Ancient chain making, fine-silver metalsmithing, wirework, and PMC
Web site: annemitchell.net
E-mail: anne@annemitchell.net
“I teach techniques designed to encourage students to grow and explore their own creativity. The most important tool that I use is humor. By being accessible and attentive and making people laugh I help them relax, open up, and have fun.”

Cynthia Rutledge
Business: Cynthia Rutledge
Teaches: Bead weaving
Web site: cynthiarutledge.net
E-mail: info@cynthiarutledge.net
“I teach beadwork to share the creative experience. Classroom camaraderie is based on sharing ideas about design and color theory and exploring the beading process. A great workshop generates the perfect conditions for inspiration, and inspiration leads to art!”

Kim St. Jean
Business: Studio St. Jean, Inc.
Teaches: Cold connections, silver-smithing, and leatherwork
Web site: kimstjean.com
E-mail: kim@kimstjean.com
“When I was a schoolteacher, I had a poster in my classroom that still speaks to me: ‘Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.’ I love helping people learn.”

Sherry Serafini
Business: Sherry Serafini
Teaches: Beaded Adornment
Web site: serafinibeadedjewelry.com
E-mail: sherryserafini@gmail.com
“I stress individuality and exploring one’s inner artist with my students. It’s important for me to see them grow and develop their own skills while working with materials that please them in their embroidery.”

Working with wire
47. Keep sterling silver wire and jewelry in sealed bags or boxes with an anti-tarnish strip to avoid unwanted oxidation. – L.K.
48. If investing in a lot of sterling wire, opt for dead-soft wire. It’s easier to harden wire. – L.K.
49. A high-quality tool lasts longer, is stronger, is more ergonomically sound, and has better grip in the jaws. – L.K.
50. To preserve cutters’ tips, only cut thin and soft wires at the top third of your blades. When cutting heavier gauges, cut them back on the blades, toward the plier joint. – L.K.