

More than 1 Way to Make Beads

You can make your own beads for stylish jewelry options, fun décor accents and more. Discover the basics of bead making techniques below, then check out our complete kits and excellent instruction books to get started.

Flameworked bead basics:

Project shown by artist Gail Joseph.

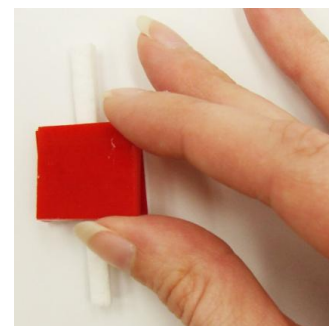
- Coat mandrels in bead release and dry according to manufacturer instructions
- Heat a glass rod in the torch flame, creating a gather of glass, wrap glass around a prepared mandrel to form a bead
- Continue turning mandrel in flame while adding glass, shaping and decorating the bead
- Cool and anneal the bead, remove from mandrel and clean



Fused bead basics:

Make a cut glass bead

- For each bead, cut 2 small squares of tested compatible glass (about 1/2") and 2 strips (about 3/16" x 1/2")
- Unwrap a section of fiber rope, separating strands to use individually or cut a narrow strip of thick fiber paper or fiber felt
- On a prepared kiln shelf, stack: a square of glass on the bottom, a strip of fiber rope or paper between two glass strips in the middle, and a square of glass on top
- Position as many stacks as you'd like on the shelf, leaving space between each, and ensuring fiber rope extends beyond edges of glass layers
- Medium or Full Fuse and anneal, then remove fiber rope and clean



Make a GlasClay bead

Project shown by artist Geneva Perkins, from "GlasClay Basics! The Book" #6347

- Mix GlasClay™ following manufacturer instructions
- Form clay into bead shapes, then pierce with a clean straw or metal mandrel to create the bead hole
- Allow GlasClay to dry completely
- Place the bead on a prepared kiln shelf and fire according to manufacturer directions



Metal Clay bead basics:

Projects shown by artist Melanie Churchill.

- Select a section of plastic straw or other small tube to use as a mandrel, apply release (olive oil or Cool Slip) as desired
- Use metal clay to form a bead:
 - Make a filigree style bead by squeezing a clay filled syringe and forming around the mandrel
 - Roll clay into a sheet and cut a shape, wrap around the mandrel and secure with metal clay paste
 - Roll a coil and wrap around the mandrel, cutting ends to meet and securing with paste
 - Form a wood clay bead shape (with a toothpick or other organic mandrel through it) and allow to dry; coat with 4 or more layers of metal clay paste to form a hollow bead
- Allow to dry, file, sand and prepare for firing
- Fire according to manufacturer directions (according to clay type)
- Polish with metal bristle brush, tumble in stainless steel shot, or burnish as desired

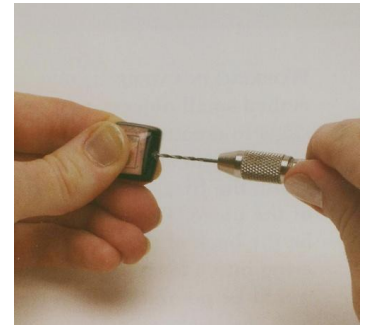


Resin bead basics:

Image from "The Art of Resin Jewelry" #6014

Make a cast bead

- Prepare a resin cabochon mold with release
- Mix resin and colorants according to directions
- Pour resin into mold and allow cabs to cure completely
- Release cabs from mold and drill holes using a hand drill and small drill bit



Make a tube bead

- Tape a piece of wax paper to your level work surface
- Mix resin and colorants according to directions
- Pour small lines/puddles of resin on the wax paper and allow to set several hours until partially dry "tacky"
- Gently roll resin to form tube beads, allowing resin to stick to itself forming the bead walls
- Let cure completely