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Beading Lesson - Making Decorative Head Pins

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Head pins are a jewelry-making staple. In this Beading Lesson, you'll learn how to make your own freehand and using a Wig Jig. We'll also talk about simple versus wrapped loops.

Head pins look like very thin nails. They're made from hardened wire and have a flat or decorative surface on one end that prevents beads from sliding off. You can also make your own decorative versions using colorful 20-gauge or 22-gauge Artistic Wire.

To make a simple spiral head pin, use round nose pliers to make a loop on one end. Then, grip the loop inside the jaws of flat-nose or chain-nose pliers and turn your wrist to make a spiral. Bend the pin in a right angle above the spiral, then add your beads.

For a Celtic knot, place three pegs in a Wig Jig. Two pegs should be one space apart, with the third peg one row down in the center. Start with a loop around the lower peg, then wrap around the other two pegs in a figure 8. Bend the pin in a right angle at the center.

You have two options for making wire-wrapped loops on head pins. You can make a basic loop, which opens like a jump ring. Or, you can make a wrapped loop, which is permanent. A variety of factors determine which loop would be best. If you're using very lightweight wire, then it is necessary to make a wrapped loop. Otherwise, the loop will open too easily. Sometimes a wrapped loop can also add an essential decorative element to a simple design.

To make a basic loop on a head pin, string beads onto a pin. Bend the pin against the top bead to form a right angle. Place your round nose pliers about 1/4" away, then turn your wrist to roll the pliers back toward the wire stem. This makes a nice, clean loop that sits straight on top of the pin. If the loop isn't centered, place the tip of your round nose pliers inside the loop and nudge it to the center. Cut off any extra wire.

To make a wrapped loop on a head pin, string beads onto a pin. Leave about 1/8", then bend the wire in a 90 degree angle. Place your round nose pliers about 1/4" away, then make a loop. Slip the loop onto whatever surface you want to

attach it to before closing the loop. Use chain nose pliers to hold the loop, and then use your fingers to wrap the extra wire around the stem. If you think of the loop as a stick figure's head, then the wire wrapping is like wrapping a scarf around the neck.

Links:

Head Pins <http://www.beadalon.com/BaseHeadPinsEyePins.asp>

Artistic Wire <http://www.beadalon.com/artisticwire.asp>

Wig Jigs & OtherTools <http://www.beadalon.com/tools.asp>

Beadalon <http://www.beadalon.com>

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