

TAKE AND MAKE: Wire Jewelry



Watch the tutorial on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/A10VGfIS6qw>

What is wire jewelry? Wire jewelry is just what it sounds like: jewelry made out of fine wire that can be shaped with your hands or with pliers.

What is in this Take and Make? In this bag, you will find two lengths of 20-gauge wire and a pack of air-dry clay that can be used for the sample project below. You will need to supply a pair of scissors or wire cutters. There is a list of resources and more advanced supplies at the end of the instructions if you are interested in trying out other techniques with wire.

Terms to know before you start:

Temper: How hard or soft a wire is. This ranges from dead soft (the wire in this kit), which is easily shaped by hand, to memory wire, which will always return to its original shape. If you need to work a wire a lot, you want it to be soft.

Gauge: The diameter of a wire. The higher the gauge, the lower the diameter, and the finer the wire. The 20-gauge wire in this Take and Make is commonly used for wire-wrapping.

Below Are Some Common Techniques Used in Making Wire Jewelry:



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Wire Knitting – Fine wire (gauge 26+) can be woven, knitted, or crocheted much in the way that yarn is.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQmmKq1WPHE>)



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Wire Wrapping – A style in which wires are connected by wrapping or coiling them rather than soldering.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjHeSLKc4XE>)



(CCO 1.0 image via Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Chain Linking – Small loops of wire can be connected to form a chain for bracelets or necklaces.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m79PZqeLPfo>)



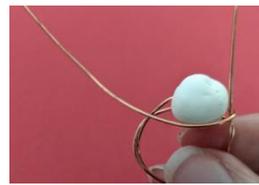
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Making Findings – The pieces used to make jewelry, from clasps for necklaces to hooks for earrings. While usually mass-produced, they can be hand-made.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prU9xOayb50>)

Sample Project: Wire-Wrapped Ring

In this project, you will learn how to shape your own bead out of clay, string the bead on wire, and use basic wire-wrapping to form a ring.

1. Pinch off a piece of clay the size that you want your bead to be. Roll it in your palm to form it into a ball.
2. Use the toothpick to poke a hole through the center of the bead. Rotate it to widen the hole.
 - a. Optional: score the bead with the toothpick to create patterns on it.
3. Let the bead air-dry for 24 hours. Repeat process to make additional beads if desired.
4. Take one length of wire and poke it through the hole in the bead. Pull it through until the bead is in the center of the wire.
5. Now you will size it to the finger you want to wear the ring on. This is typically done with a tool called a ring mandrel, but you can easily use your finger or a sharpie/other object of a similar size. Place the bead on top of the finger/object and wrap the left and right strands around it once. At this point, you can either continue forming the ring while it is on the ring-sizer or you can remove it; it should hold its size.
6. Now take the left end of the wire and wrap it around the bead once. Repeat with the right end of the wire.
7. Continue wrapping both the left and right strands around the bead until there is about 1 inch remaining on either side.
8. Finally, secure the strands. First, take the left strand, bend it down, and wrap it around the left side of the band about 4 times. Once it is secure, snip the end off and press it tightly to the ring (pliers can help with this, but it can be done by hand).
9. Now repeat this process with the right strand, wrapping it around the band and then trimming it and pressing it tightly to the ring.
10. Your ring is done! You can experiment by using other styles of bead or by wrapping the wire in different patterns (going over the top of the bead, forming loops, etc.).



Resources for Exploring Wire Jewelry:

- [Wirework: An Illustrated Guide to the Art of Wire Wrapping](#) by Dale "Cougar" Armstrong.
- [Wire Wrapping](#) by Linda Chandler and Christine Ritchey.
- [Wire Jewelry: Visual Quick Tips](#) by Chris Franchetti Michaels
- [Weave Wrap Coil](#) by Jodi Bombardier
- Find more information on jewelry on PPLD's LibGuide at <https://research.ppld.org/CreateAtHome/Jewelry>

Some Common Tools Used for Wire Jewelry:

- Jewelry pliers (needle nose, round nose, fat nose, bent nose, long nose, chain nose)
- Jewelry hammer (for forming/flattening wire)
- Wire cutter
- Ring Mandrel (for sizing rings)
- Wire Jig (for forming decorative loops)
- Micrometer/calipers (for precise measurements)
- Knitting/crochet needles (for wire knitting/crocheting)

Did you know? The Manitou Art Center (MAC) has a jewelry-making studio with tools. Now that Manitou Springs Library is co-located in the MAC, you can access this with your library card during library hours. For more information, visit <https://ppld.org/create/MAC>.

