

The Japanese Bead-knotting Technique

We have tried every knotting technique known and this one is the best! Easy to learn, quick, secure, looks great and no tools required! We would like to share this great technique with you.

Why knot?

Knotting between beads is a lot more trouble than simply stringing them, so why bother?

- The beads look better. The knots space the beads allowing you to see the entire bead better.
- Beaded necklaces and bracelets have a more finished and expensive look.
- If the necklace ever breaks while your customer is swirling around on the dance floor, only one bead will be lost.
- Softer bead materials (such as pearls, malachite or coral) are prevented from rubbing together and abrading the sides of the beads.
- The necklace is less likely to break. The sharp part of the bead hole tends to wear at the reinforced knot, not the thin bead cord.
- The necklace costs less to make since fewer beads are required (1-1/2-2mm per bead). You can sell it for more, too!

Here's how to do it:

Step 1 Forget everything you know about bead knotting.

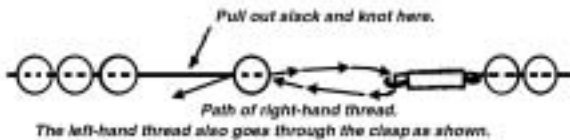
Step 2 **Selecting Thread: Choices to Make**

Color: Select thread to match the color of the beads.

Type: Silk is the preferred thread for knotting. Nylon thread will work when a stronger, stiffer thread is necessary.

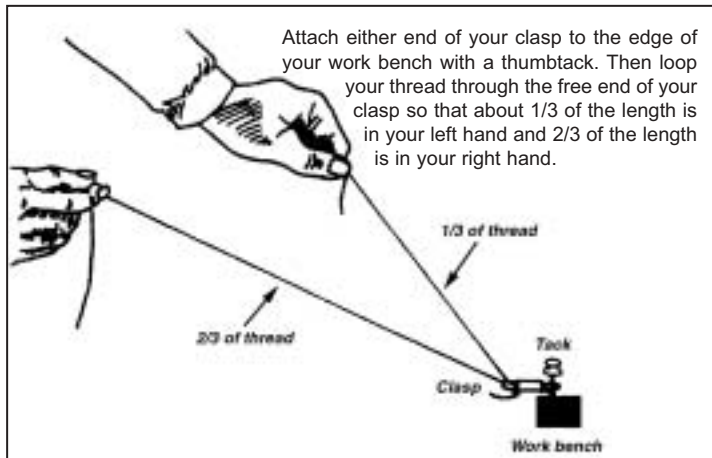
Thickness: Use a thickness of thread that when doubled (2 strands) will fit slightly snug through your bead. Most beads are drilled with a 1.0mm diameter hole. For soft bead materials such as pearls, silk thread in size E or F will work well. For harder materials like black onyx, garnet or rose quartz, use nylon thread in size #2 ~ or silk in size F ~ for 8mm beads.

Length: You'll need a length of thread at least four times the length of your finished necklace, for example, an 18" necklace will need 4"x18"=72" or 6 feet.



Step 3

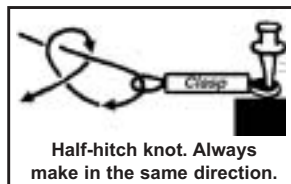
Select two (2) beading needles. Light-medium beading needles work well for most jobs. Endless necklaces (necklaces without clasps) will be explained later.



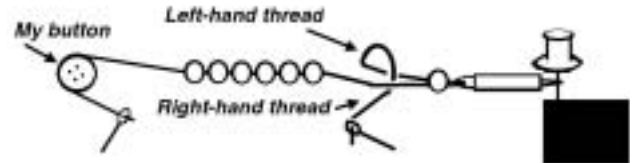
Step 4

For those of you who are left-handed, just reverse all of my directions. Now, tie the cord to the clasp with a simple overhand knot (single half-hitch). This is the only knot you'll need to do the entire job.

Attach beading needles to the end of right and left hand thread.



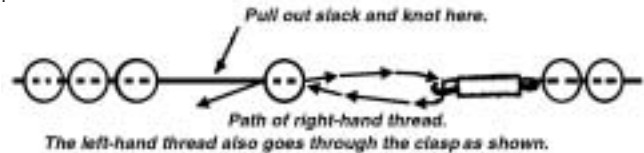
Let a few inches of thread dangle loose through the needle. (The loop in the needle will collapse and grip the thread when it goes through the first bead.)



Step 6

String about a dozen beads loosely onto the left hand thread. Wrap the loose end of the left-hand thread around your middle button on your blouse or shirt. This will keep the beads in easy reach and keep them from falling off the thread. Push the lowest bead up to the clasp and string through it with the right hand needle.

Tie another half-hitch just as before, always with the right needle. Look, you're knotting!

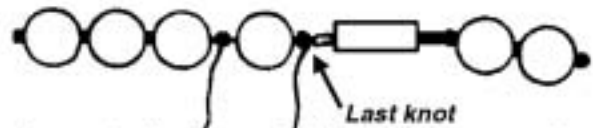


Push the second bead into place, string through it with the right-hand thread as before, knot as before, pull snug as before. Keep doing it, loading fresh beads onto your left-hand thread as required. You can use any mixture of beads you desire, just knot after each bead.

Before you get to the end read the next step.

Last Step: Tying off to the clasp

Do not knot the last two beads. Instead, string both threads through them. With the right-hand thread go through the loop in the clasp that was held by the tack and back through the last bead. Remove all slack and tie a double half hitch between the last bead and the next to last bead. (A double half hitch is a single half hitch done twice.)



Now, put a tiny drop of a thin adhesive on each of the last two knots. When dry, trim off excess threads carefully.

Now, put a tiny drop of a thin adhesive on each of the last two knots. When dry, trim off excess threads carefully. You did it! You have a knotted strand of jewelry to equal the work of the professionals. Now put it on and go dancing!



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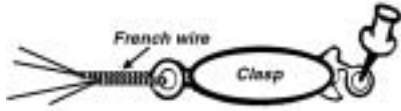
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Advanced Techniques

These techniques are optional. They have the advantages of hiding the thread where it goes over the clasp and protecting the thread from being worn through by the clasp.

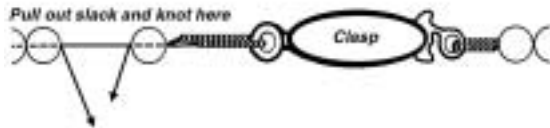
Advanced Techniques I: French Wire

French wire is a thin, flexible metallic tube which looks like a tiny "Slinky." It goes over the threads where they come into contact with the clasp.

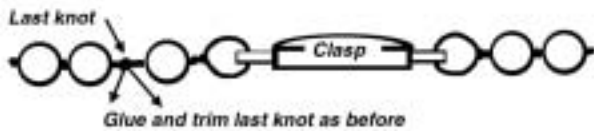


Here's how: You'll need 1" of French wire. Prepare your needles and thread as before. Cut two pieces of French wire about 1/2" long. String the first piece onto your thread and curl it around the clasp.

Do not knot to the French wire. Instead, string both threads through the first bead. When you take up the slack with your first knot, you will notice that the French wire will compress to about half of its original length.



Proceed to the other end exactly as before except string only the left hand thread through the last bead. String your second piece of French wire onto the left-hand thread, loop it around the clasp and go back through the last bead as shown. Pull out slack as before and knot both cords together behind the last bead with a square knot. This knot is a half-hitch with one cord followed by a half hitch with the other cord.



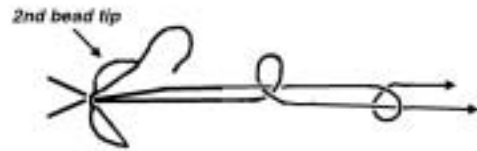
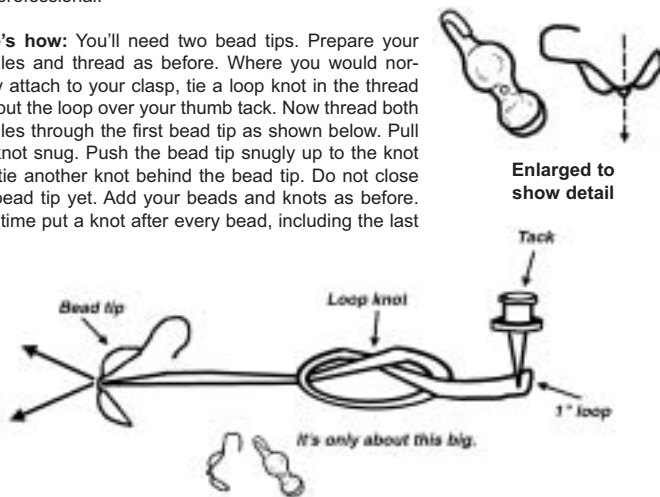
French wire is available in gold or silver finish. It makes an elegant way to finish a necklace.

Advanced Techniques II: Bead Tips

There are three types of metal bead tips. All three cover the final knot and attach to the clasp with a metal leg that is bent over the clasp loop with pliers.

For this technique, we will use the bottom clamp-on style of bead tip. It is available in 14k gold, gold-filled, sterling silver, silver-plated and gold-plated. See enlarged view of a bottom clamp on bead tip at right. When finished, the bead tip will look like a small round metal bead at each end of your strand. This looks very clean and professional.

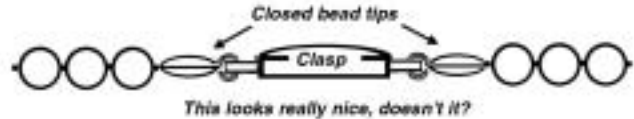
Here's how: You'll need two bead tips. Prepare your needles and thread as before. Where you would normally attach to your clasp, tie a loop knot in the thread and put the loop over your thumb tack. Now thread both needles through the first bead tip as shown below. Pull the knot snug. Push the bead tip snugly up to the knot and tie another knot behind the bead tip. Do not close the bead tip yet. Add your beads and knots as before. This time put a knot after every bead, including the last one.



A square knot is just two half-hitch knots; right over left - pull snug, then left over right - pull snug.

Now you are ready for the second bead tip. String both threads through the back of the bead tip as shown, and secure it with a square knot.

Put a droplet of thin glue on the loop knot and the and the square knot. When dry, carefully trim excess threads. Now close the cups of the bead tips and attach their loops to the clasp. A pair of chain nose or needle nose pliers works well here.

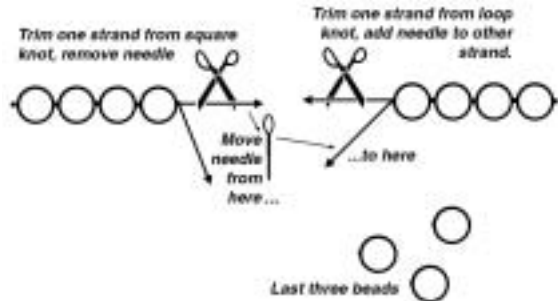


These are the primary techniques for attaching to clasps. Now let's look at a clasplless, "endless" necklace technique.

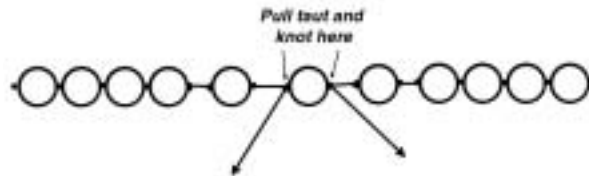
Advanced Techniques III: Endless Necklaces

If your necklace is long enough to slip over your customer's head and the pattern is repetitive, you may wish to eliminate the clasp and create a long strand that appears to have no beginning and no end.

A large circular bead board is always useful to lay out any necklace. For these endless strands, it is extremely helpful for checking the uniformity of your pattern.



Here's how: Start with an extra foot of thread. Make a loop knot as you did in the bead tip example, except this time make a loop approximately 5" long. Put a dot of glue on the loop knot. Put the loop over your thumbtack. Lay out your beads in a circle on a bead board or terrycloth towel, making sure that the pattern is continuous. String and knot all except the last three of your beads. Make your last knot a square knot, see bead tip example at top of page. Put a dot of glue on the square knot. Trim the shortest thread from the square knot, not both threads and remove its needle. Trim one thread from loop knot and add the needle to the remaining thread. String each thread through two beads as shown below.



Pull each thread taut and make a double half-hitch where each thread emerges. Glue and trim knots.

Congratulations, you're an expert!!



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