



Tutorial: Briolettes and Bead Clusters

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Briolettes and bead clusters are one of the most basic elements we incorporate into our jewelry. In this lesson I will teach you two simple ways to wrap a briolette, and how to wrap beads for bead clusters.

Materials:

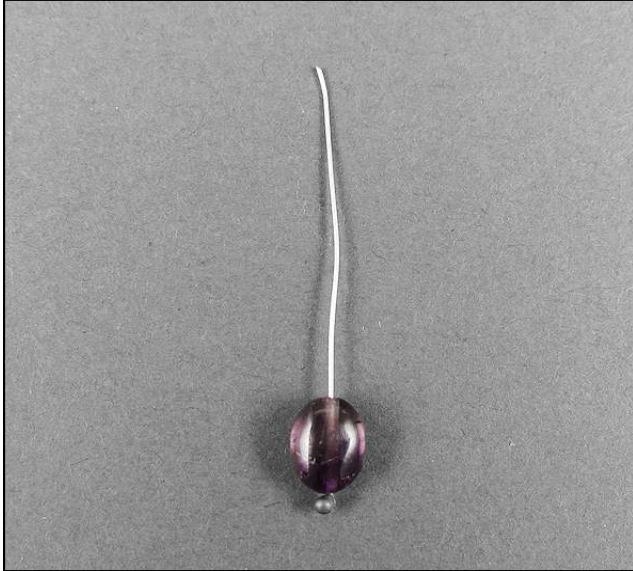
- Headpins (for bead clusters)
- Jump Rings (for bead clusters. Size depends on how many beads you want on the cluster)
- 24g wire (for briolettes)
- Briolettes
- Beads

Tools:

- Chain nose pliers
- Round nose pliers
- Wire cutters

Wrapping Beads for Bead Clusters

For this demonstration I am using a 4mm amethyst oval with a 26g headpin. You can use other size beads if you like. Using different sizes of beads, and different styles of headpins can dramatically change the look of the finished bead cluster. Just remember that the heavier the bead, the thicker the wire you'll need.



Step 1:

Put the bead onto the headpin and slide it all the way down the wire.



Step 2:

1-2mm above the top of the bead, create a 90° bend.



Step 3:

Using your round nose pliers, make a small loop centered over the bend you created in the last step.

The size of the loop you need here depends on how thick the jump ring is that you will be using for the bead cluster.



Step 4:

Wrap the wire around the portion of wire that is coming out of the top of the bead.



Step 5:

Cut the excess wire as close to the bead as possible. If needed, you can use chain nose pliers to tuck the end in a little better.



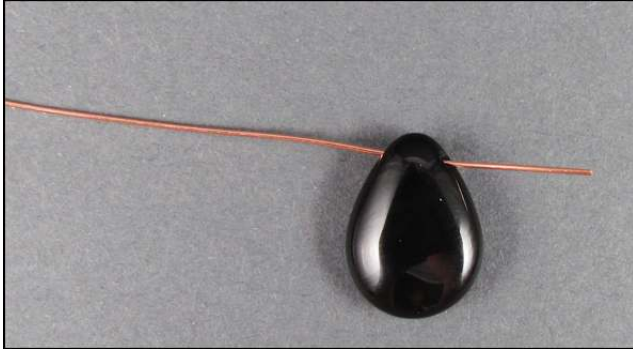
Step 6:

Wrap as many of these beads as you need and hang them all together from a jump ring. If you prefer, you can also use a wrapped loop to hold them together.

Simple Briolette Wrap

This is the simplest way to wrap a briolette. When you are going for a clean, uncluttered look to a final piece, this is an excellent choice.

For this one I am using a briolette that is 12x16mm, with 24g wire. For smaller briolettes you may need to use thinner wire. I usually start with a piece of wire that is 2-3" long for this size briolette (it's a great way to use up scrap wire!)



Step 7:

Put the wire through the hole in the bead, with about 1/2" or so coming out of one side. If the hole is lower down on the bead than this one is, you may need a slightly longer piece coming through.



Step 8:

Push both wires upward, shaping them to the top of the bead, so that they cross over the point.



Step 9:

Bend the longer wire straight up at the center of the point of the bead.

**Step 10:**

Wrap the shorter wire around the longer wire at just above the bend. I usually wrap 2 full turns, but if you want a longer wrapped section here you can wrap as far as you need to.

**Step 11:**

Cut the extra wire off as close to the longer wire as you can.

**Step 12:**

Bend the wire at a 90° angle about 1-2mm above the wraps.



Step 13:

Make a loop that is centered over the bend.

The size of this loop depends on what you are using this briolette for. If you are making a pendant, you need to make sure the loop is large enough for the chain to fit through.

Another thing to keep in mind here is that this loop will be supporting all of the weight of the bead. If you are wrapping a larger, or heavier bead, you can wrap the wire around your round nose pliers twice to make a double loop.



Step 14:

Wrap the wire around itself just below the loop.



Step 15:

Cut off the excess wire and press it tight against the core wire with your chain nose pliers.

Coiled Briquette Wrap

Coiling the wire down over the top of the briquette can change the way a finished piece looks entirely.

This is an extension of the Simple Briquette Wrap. Follow steps 7-14 of this tutorial, starting with a piece of wire that is about 12" long for this size briquette.

Step 16:

Wrap the wire down over the first wraps that were created in step 10 of this lesson.



Step 17:

Continue wrapping the wire down over the bead, as far as you want it to go. I usually go just a little bit past the hole in the bead.

For this you can keep the wraps as neat or as messy looking as you like, depending on the look you are going for.





Step 18:

Turn the bead over to the back and angle the wire up at a diagonal across the coils.



Step 19:

Continue wrapping again, going upward this time, until you reach the loop.



Step 20:

Cut the wire close to the loop and press it against the wraps.



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