Hammered Aluminum Ring

By Christine Keller

Back in the 1950s, hammered aluminum was known as the poor man's silver. All kinds of serving ware were made of it—from platters to chafing dishes and ice buckets. Some very fine artists made international names for themselves, including the master Rodney Kent. In the 1980s, his pieces started to become highly collectible.

I have always liked the look of hammered aluminum and decided to make a ring of it.

These have provided me with a lot of enjoyment, with the added bonus of being a stress reliever! After all, what better way to take out frustrations than hammering on a piece of metal?

Materials List

- 12" length of 12-gauge aluminum silver-colored wire (available at Chrizart.com)

Tool List – Don't forget Safety Glasses!

- Wire cutters
- WUBBERS Classic Round Nose Pliers
- Ring mandrel
- Chasing hammer
- Rawhide hammer
- Steel block
- Safety glasses

Step One

Measure and cut a 12" piece of 12-gauge aluminum wire using the wire cutters. Straighten.

Step Two

Wrap the wire around the desired size on the ring mandrel.

Step Three

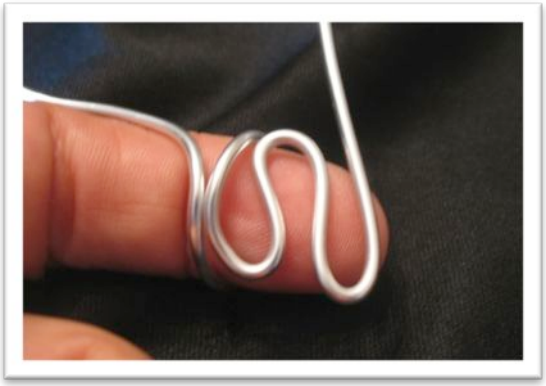
Bring both ends of the wire around to the front, holding the wire to the correct size.

Step Four

Slide the ring off the mandrel and onto your index finger for support. Using the fingers of your other hand, make a 'U' bend as shown.

Step Five

Make a second U bend.



Step Six

With the Wubbers Round Nose Pliers, grab the end of the wire and wind it back toward the U, forming a little loop.

Step Seven

Continue forming a nice spiral.

Step Eight

Flip the ring around, so you can start designing the other wire. Make one U bend.

Step Nine

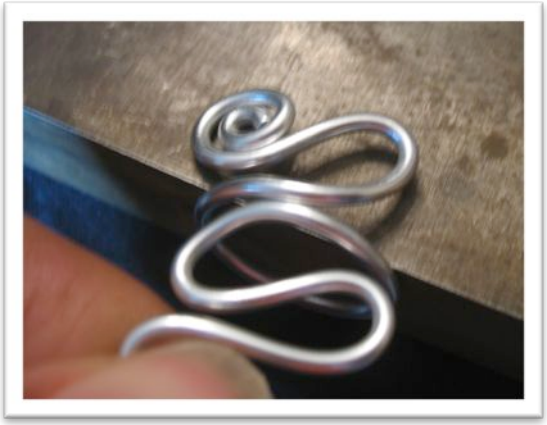
With the Wubbers Classic Round Nose pliers, form a spiral on this end as well.

Step Ten

Continue rolling until the spiral is formed.

Step Eleven

Using a steel block (or anvil), lay one end of the ring top on the steel block.



Step Twelve

Hammer the wire flat.

Step Thirteen

Now do the other end (not the underside). By hammering the aluminum, you have work-hardened the metal, strengthening it.

Step Fourteen

With both sides flattened, we need to shape the ring to fit comfortably. Using your fingers, adjust the top design, compressing the U bends if necessary.

Step Fifteen

Slip the ring back onto the mandrel.

Step Sixteen

With the rawhide hammer, form the ring top to have a slight curve as shown. This will better conform to the shape of the wearer's finger.

Congratulations on your completion of this project!

These rings are fun and popular. The designs that can be created using this as a basic template are endless. You can make them shorter by simply doing two spirals as shown on the left of the picture at the very top.

Review Questions

1) Why is aluminum a great choice for this ring?
    a) It's easy to work with
    b) It's inexpensive
    c) It looks like sterling silver
    d) All of the above

2) True/False. To hammer the ends of the ring, use a chasing hammer and a block of wood.
    a) True
    b) False

3) True/False. When nearing completion of the ring, leave the curls flat, because they're prettier that way.
    a) True
    b) False

4) True/False. Hammering the aluminum will work-harden the metal.
    a) True
    b) False