

Lampwork Bib Necklace

by Karen Wolffis

Make this funky lampwork “bib” necklace out of lampwork disc beads or funky colorful buttons. Use your imagination by adding different elements to the design.

I will teach you how to make the basic foundation which will allow the beads to “float” upon a flexible wire foundation.

Need lampwork beads? I will custom make disc beads and small accent beads for your creation. Just let me know the colors and how many you would like. Rates are about \$5 per bead for the ones shown in my tutorial. Please email me at kwolffis@toast.net for more information or if you have any questions.

Note: It is important to read through the entire tutorial before attempting this necklace.

Materials List

- 18” 12 gauge aluminum wire
- 3” of 18 or 20 gauge aluminum wire for every bead (depends on the heaviness of the beads and size of the holes)
- Six to eight lampwork disc beads or buttons
- Any additional embellishments you wish to add like silver beads.

Tools List

- Wubbers Large Round Mandrel Pliers
- Wubbers Classic Narrow Flat Nose Pliers
- Wubbers Classic Round Nose Pliers



Step 1

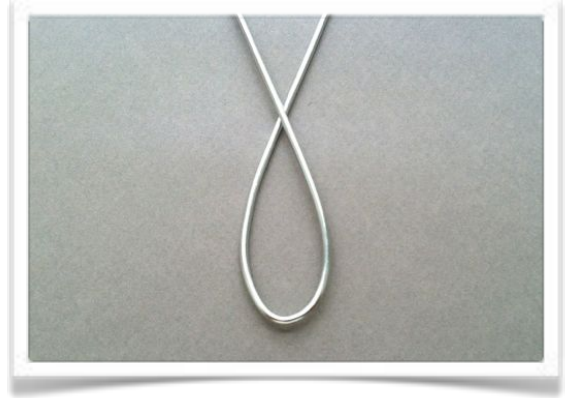
I have used my lampwork beads in this tutorial but you could use two-holed or even shank buttons to create a whimsical bib necklace.

First, lay out the beads so you know the basic design. I like to use six focal beads from 1/2” to 3/4” in diameter.



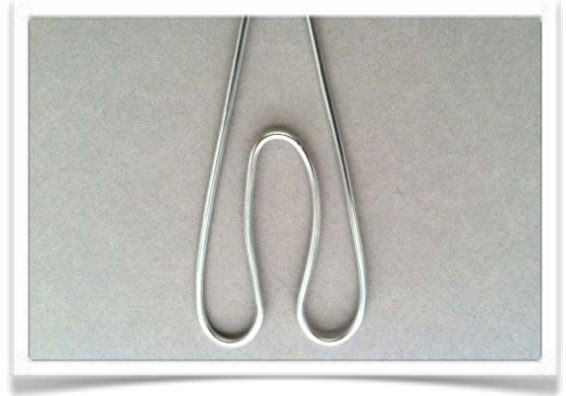
Step 2

Use your Wubbers Large Round Mandrel Pliers to start the first loop in the middle of the 12 gauge aluminum wire by bending it and letting it cross. Check to make sure it is centered in the middle of the wire.



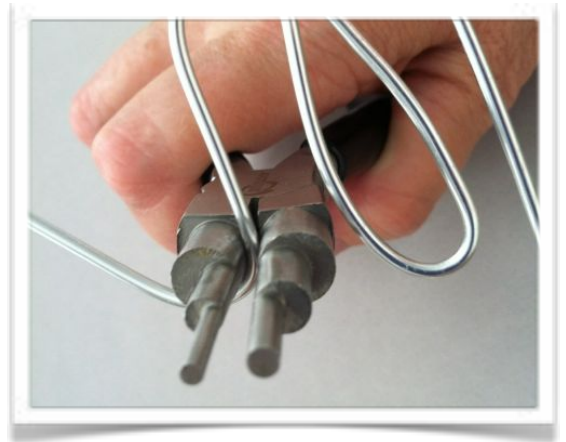
Step 3

Make two more loops on either side of the main loop using a Wubbers Large Round Mandrel Pliers. The loop **length** should be between 1 3/4" and 2". Don't be afraid to use your pliers to shape and manipulate the wire. Aluminum is very lightweight and flexible. It does not work harden like copper or silver.



Step 4

Start your next loop **slightly higher** than the main loop. Remember, you are making a curved support for the beads that you first laid out in step 1.



Step 5

Pull the aluminum up to finish the loop.



Step 6

At this point the back frame should look like this.



Step 7

Continue making loops until you have five lower loops and four upper loops.

You should have used equal lengths of the wire when bending. Make sure and leave extra length for the end loops.



Step 8

Use your Wubbers Classic Round Nose Pliers to form the end loops.



Step 9

Lay out your first two focal beads. Keep in mind that the frame can expand and retract like an accordion. This is the beauty of the flexible wire backing. Use the loops to hold your beads in the frame of wire.



Step 10

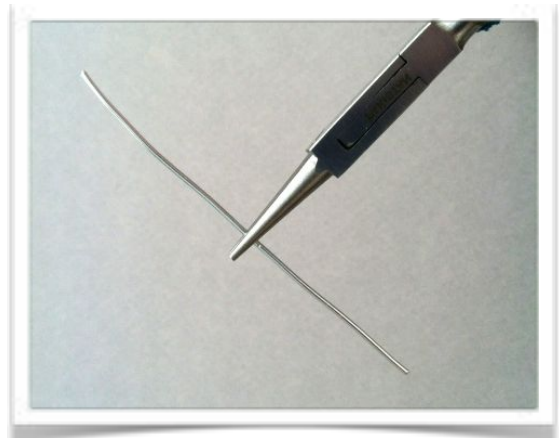
Expand and collapse the frame until you find a “home” for all your beads. Keep in mind that this can change as you wire wrap the beads. You will see this in the final photo where it was expanded to accommodate four extra elements- two round beads and two silver discs with crystals.



Step 11

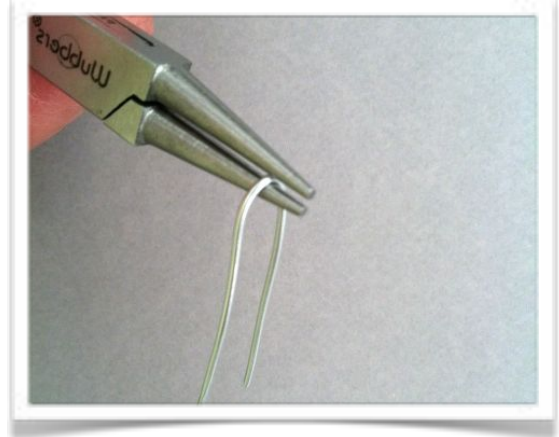
Now let's form the bead wire for wire wrapping.

Start the wire wrapping by double wrapping a 3" piece of 20 gauge aluminum wire. You could use silver, but I prefer the flexibility and lightness of the aluminum.



Step 12

Fold the wire in half over your Wubbers Classic Round Nose Pliers



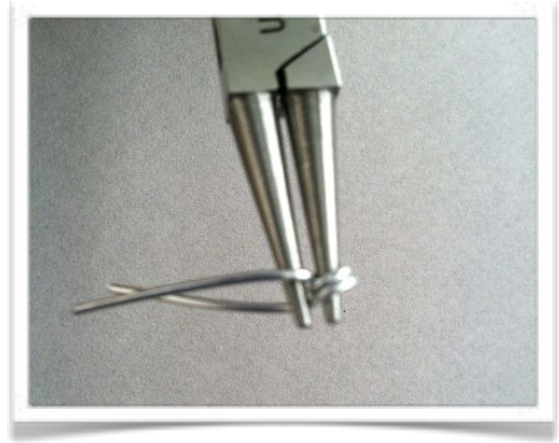
Step 13

Loop the wire twice.



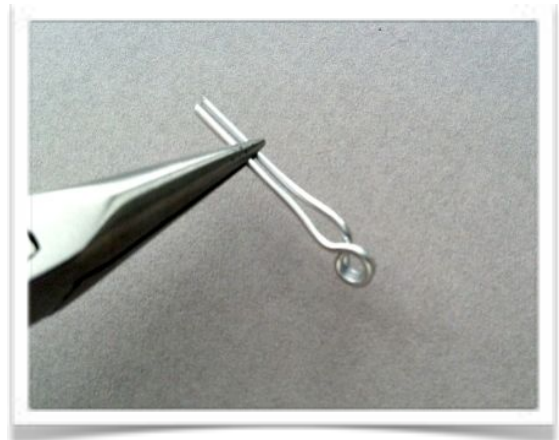
Step 14

Place one side of the Wubbers Classic Round Nose Pliers into the loop and the other side under the two wires sticking out at the sides and bend the two wires together.



Step 15

This is what your wire should look like.



Step 16

Insert your looped wire into the first focal bead to be wire wrapped to the first and middle loop on the frame.



Step 17

Spread apart the wire ends and clip excess if necessary. Wire wrap only two or three times, just enough to hold your beads in place but not show from the front side.



Step 18

Start making your loop with a Wubbers Classic Round Nose Pliers. Once you have it started, it is easier to pull through with your Wubbers narrow flat nosed pliers and continue to wrap around twice or three times.



Step 19

It should look like this from the front. Notice the double loop. You will be opening this up later with a very thin bladed knife. This procedure not only gives more detail but tightens the wire to the frame.



Step 20

I usually make all the looped wires at one time and then wire wrap all the beads. This shows the backside of the second bead. You have now secured the first large loop in the frame. The other loops are still expandable. You will see how I have expanded my necklace in the remaining frames as I have added more details.



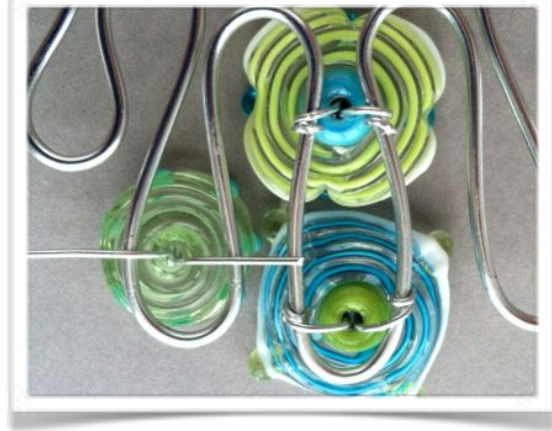
Step 21

Close up view of the back two beads. Check to make sure that your neckpiece looks similar to this.



Step 22

Adding a third bead to the back loop.



Step 23

Finished four beads on the frame.



Step 24

Place the fifth and sixth beads on the frame and adjust frame if necessary. The necklace could be finished at this point, however, I had more beads and wanted to cover the remaining frame so no aluminum backing would show.



Step 25

I had two hollow round beads that would just fit. Using **two ball headpins per bead** I inserted both in the hole and then wire wrapped them to the frame just like I did with the disc beads.



Step 26

Necklace after adding two additional beads with head pins.



Step 27

I still wanted more elements, so I added a textured silver disc and crystal to the two open spaces left on the frame.

Optional: You can open the double loops by *carefully* inserting a sharp narrow knife blade between the two loops and moving the blade from side to side until it opens up. Aluminum will open easy, silver and copper will take more effort.



Step 28

The completed “bib” necklace. I used a Kumihimo braided necklace to complete this piece.



Alternate Versions

Copper

This piece was done using 14 gauge copper wire in a figure eight type frame. I attached copper chain with a lobster claw closure.



Pink Leather Necklace

This piece has dangles hanging from the bottom loops of the aluminum frame. The necklace was finished off with silver square beads and leather.



Eclectic Blue Necklace

I used some eclectic beads on this one. The center focal bead had a silver insert with two holes drilled to accommodate the headpins. I used aluminum chain to go with the frame and attached two dangles from the bottom.

Be creative and have fun!



Review Questions

1. What is a reason that aluminum is used instead of silver or copper?
 - a) Aluminum doesn't work harden like silver
 - b) Cost
 - c) Both a) and b)
2. Where can you find beautiful custom lampwork beads?
 - a) They can be purchased from the instructor, Karen Wolffis
 - b) You can find them at big-box craft stores
 - c) You must know how to do lampwork in order to do this project
3. True/False. Wire wrap only two or three times, just enough to hold your beads in place but not show from the front side.
 - a) True
 - b) False
4. What type of necklace can be added to the project?
 - a) Cable chain
 - b) Braided Kumihimo
 - c) Leather cords
 - d) Any of these could be used