

March Free Design - Earring Charmers

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These designs were inspired by the recent article in Bead & Button about making earring charms, designed to be used with a pair of simple gold or silver hoops. The charms in the article were made using jump rings and headpins, but I decided to try making some using seed bead techniques instead. I used two different techniques to make the earrings shown below. Click on one of the images to see a closeup of that design.

Of course, if you prefer, you could add a post or earwire to the top of the loop to make these into earrings instead of charms.

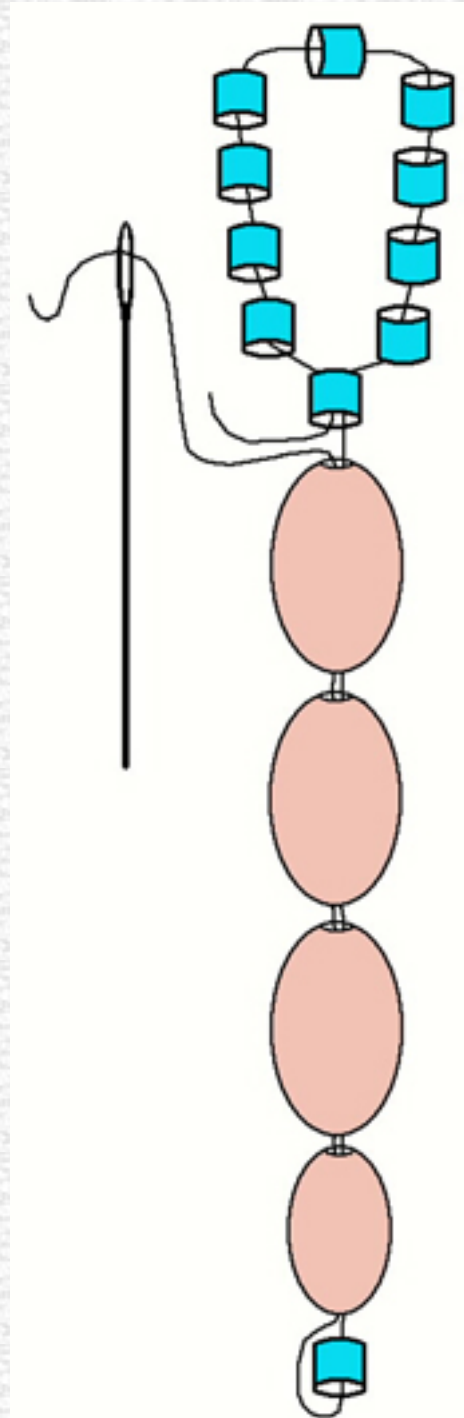


TECHNIQUE ONE - FRINGE

In the images above, the earrings with the leaves are made with this technique. It is basically the same as a simple fringe. The only difference is how the top is made into a loop that will fit over the earring. My earrings have a fairly slim width, and I found that using 12 seed beads or Delicas was about the right size to fit snugly on the hoop. You may have to alter this number if your earrings are slimmer or fatter.

To make this type of charm, start by picking up 12 beads. Go back through the first bead, in the opposite direction, and pull tight to form the loop.

Then add the beads for the fringe part of the charm, ending with a small seed bead. Skipping this final bead, go back through all the fringe beads. You should now have both ends of the thread in the same place, with one coming out the bottom of the loop, and one coming up out of the top of the first fringe bead. The image below shows the charm at this step.



Tie a square knot with the two ends of the thread. Make sure that you pull the knot tight so that your loop isn't loose. After tying the knot, pass both ends of the thread back through the beads of the loop and fringe several times before cutting the ends. If you prefer, you can add a dab of glue or nail polish to the knot to secure it.

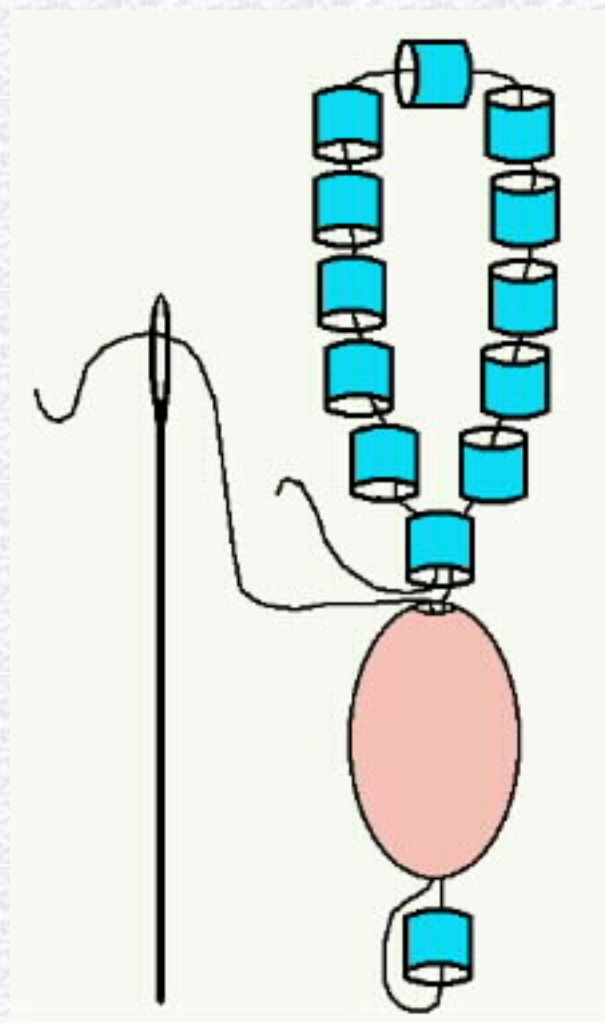
That's all there is to it! Now slide the loop over the earring hoop whenever you want to wear it!

TECHNIQUE TWO - LUSH DANGLES

The other three images all use this technique. I've found it give a fuller look to the charm than the simple fringe style. As you can probably guess, I prefer this technique! ;-> The basic steps are similar to the fringe style.

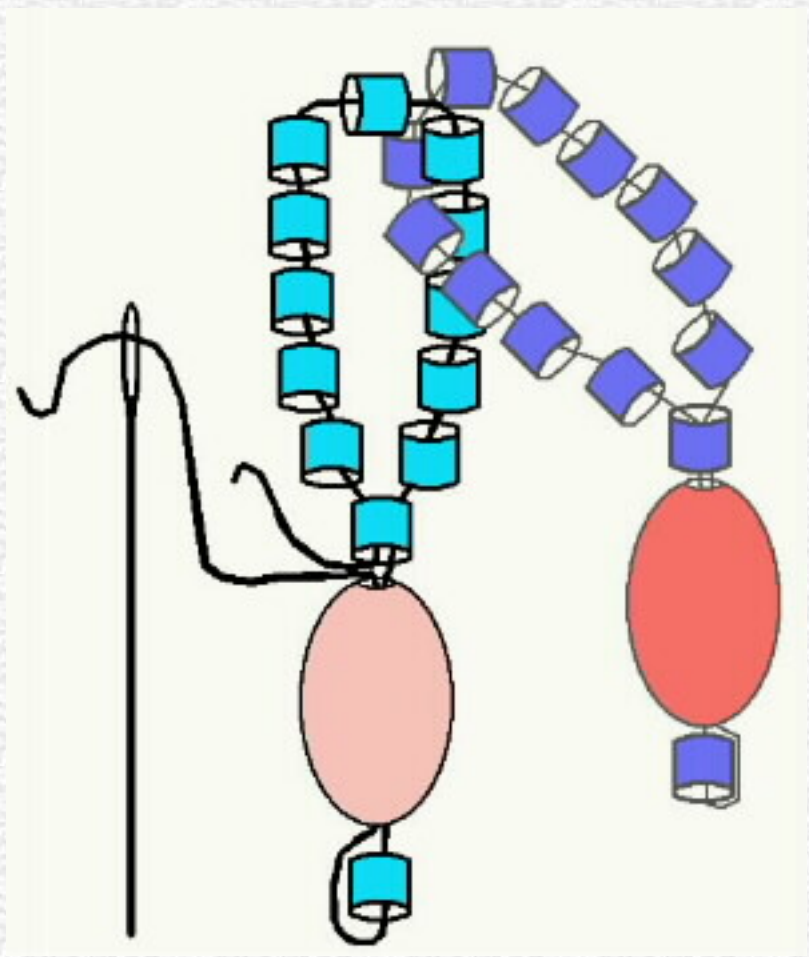
To start, pick up 12 beads. Go back through the first bead, in the opposite direction, and pull tight to form the loop.

Then add a single accent bead and a small seed bead. The accent bead can be any bead larger than a seed bead. I like using freshwater pearls or crystals. Skipping the final seed bead, go back through the accent bead. You should now have both ends of the thread in the same place, with one coming out the bottom of the loop, and one coming up out of the top of the accent bead. The image below shows the charm at this step.



Tie a square knot with the two ends of the thread. Make sure that you pull the knot tight so that your loop isn't loose. After tying the knot, pass both ends of the thread back through the beads of the loop and fringe several times before cutting the ends. If you prefer, you can add a dab of glue or nail polish to the knot to secure it. You now have a single dangle.

To continue, you are going to repeat the steps above, looping each dangle in the one made previously until you have a charm the desired length. I generally make mine between 5 and 7 dangles long. The image below shows adding the second dangle to the first. (Note: Make sure that each dangle only has two other dangles connected to it - the one above it, and the one below it.)



If you want a very full looking earring, make several charms in graduated lengths and wear them all at the same time. The green and white set with freshwater pearls above was made this way, with the middle length having 7 dangles, the two on either side of that having 5 dangles each, and the outer charms having 3 dangles each.

What I find the most amazing is that even with 5 charms, the earrings still are very lightweight, which is great for me, since I can't wear very heavy earrings. Of course, if you use something like hematite for your accent beads, they will obviously be much heavier, so be careful when choosing your beads if you can't wear heavy earrings.

THE BEADING BANSHEE

Suggestions and additions to:
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