Welcome to the Wire Jeweler, a resourceful site with loads of information for those who are interested in either trying something new or wanting to advance their skills in making jewellery from wire.

With so many choices available in raw materials, you too can learn to set beads, stones — or just wire — into eye-catching designs. All you need is the desire, detailed instructions and the right tools.

Project Sample
Hoop Earrings

Although a classic favourite with the young and young at heart, hoop earrings are sometimes a tendency to turn upwards away from the side of the face. But, with a simple change to the design of the hoop, these earrings will look perfect every time they are worn and just right with that special outfit. An ideal project for teen, pre teens and art therapy.

Materials you’ll need:
- 15 ins 22-ga round 2½ hard wire (half-hard)
- 10 ins 21-ga round 2½ hard wire (half-hard)
- 8 2½ stone chip beads
- 8 6, 3mm diamond shaped beads
- 8 2, 5mm diamond shaped beads
- 8 5, 5mm round beads
- 8 8, 4mm round gold-filled beads
- 8 4, 4mm outside diameter jump rings

Tools you’ll need:
- Round-nose pliers
- Flat-nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- 3-step combination pliers
- Ring mandrel
- File
- Ruler
- Chamois

1. Using a chamois, straighten short lengths of 22-ga round hard wire as you cut two pieces that are 1 5/8 inches in length, four pieces that are 1 1/2 inches in length and four pieces that are 1 3/8 inches in length.
2. Pick up one of the 1 5/8-inch pieces, slightly trim one end to a point. Using the tip of your flat-nose pliers, turn over about 1/16-inch of this (pointed) end of the wire.
3. Still using your flat-nose pliers, tack the end of the wire into itself. This folded over end will act as a bead stopper.
4. Thread on a stone chip, a 5mm diamond shaped bead, a 4mm round bead, a 3mm diamond shaped bead and another stone chip. With these beads held in place by the bead stopper, bend the thin wire - at a right angle - where it comes out of the last bead.
5. From where the wire was bent, measure 5/16-inch and cut. With the tip of your round-nose pliers, take hold of the end of the wire and begin shaping a circle towards the bend until the end of the wire meets up with the right-angle bend as shown in inset. (The loop should be centered over the last bead.) Repeat Steps 2 through 5 to make three more identical bead dangles with the other 1 5/8-inch pieces.
6. Using the 1-1/2-inch-length pieces, prepare them in the same manner but this time add an extra 5mm diamond-shaped bead and one stone chip to each, making them slightly longer. To prepare the 1-3/8-inch-length pieces, thread on the following: one stone chip, one 5mm diamond-shaped bead, another chip, another 5mm diamond, one more chip and another 5mm diamond-shaped bead. For each earring, divide the beads dangles into two sets by placing the longest piece in the middle with two mid-sized pieces on each side and two of the smallest-sized pieces along the outside.

7. For the hoop, straighten and cut two pieces of 21-gram hard wire into 3-inch lengths. Holding the middle of one piece over the size 8 mark on the ring mandrel...

8. Shape both sides of the wire around the mandrel until the ends of the wire are pointing up towards you. See Helpful Hint No. 1.

9. As the wire is tempered 2½ hard (half hard), it will spring open. This hoop should measure about 1 inch across its diameter. In the same manner, prepare the second hoop—but this time, let the ends of the wire cross each other opposite to that of the first hoop.

10. Working with the end of the wire that circles around from the back of the hoop, measure 3/4 inch from the tip of the wire and take hold of it with your round-nose pliers.

11. At a right angle, bend the end of the wire straight back from the hoop.

12. Using the first step on your round-nose pliers, hold the part of the wire where it was bent at a right angle. (The easiest way to do this is to slip the tip of the pliers under the wire end that circles around the front of the hoop.)
13. Working around on the inside edge of the hoop, shape a circle in the wire. The protruding wire end should once again be pointing away from the top of the hoop.

14. From the right-angle bend, where the end of the wire protrudes from the back of the hoop, measure 5/16 inch along the wire and cut it off.

15. On the cut end of the hoop, thread a 5mm goldfilled bead, a 4mm jump ring that is attached to the smallest-sized bead dangle, a 4mm goldfilled bead, a medium-sized bead dangle, a 4mm goldfilled bead, the largest bead dangle, a 4mm goldfilled bead, another medium-sized bead dangle, one more 4mm goldfilled bead, another jump ring that has a small bead dangle attached to it and a 5mm goldfilled bead.

16. Using the same pliers as in Step 14, hold the cut end of the hoop and, working around on the inside edge of the hoop...

17. ...shape the end into a loop that isn't quite closed up, leaving enough room for the width of one wire to pass through. This slighly-opened loop will act as a bead stopper that will keep all the beads on the hoop. But, it has a dual function, as you will see in Step 21.

18. From the back of the hoop, measure 7/16 inch along the protruding wire end and cut it off.

19. File to remove the sharp edges and to round off the end of the wire.

20. Using your fingers, twist the two ends of the hoops, placing the slightly-opened loop on the backside of the earring. Without distorting the hoop, stretch the two ends of the hoop by pulling the post end towards you while pushing the looped end away from you.

21. Let go of the two ends of the hoop, allowing them to spring back towards each other. There should be enough room between the two ends of the hoop to accommodate the width of an earlobe. Once the post of the earring has been inserted into the pierced ear, the slightly-opened loop can be easily slipped over the post—locking your earring in place. See inset.

22. Repeat Steps 10 through 21 to make the second earring, but remember to make the post portion on the hoop of the second earring mirror image of the first hoop.
To give you an idea of the articles featured in the Wire Artist Jeweller, here is a copy of one of the many, varied and informative feature stories published.

**Feature Story:**

**Tools, tools, tools:**

The fundamentals

by Helen Goga

The dictionary defines ability as 'the quality that makes an action or process possible; the capacity or power to do something; cleverness, talent'.

Wire artists know that their success lies in their ability to handle their tools and control the wire; the ability to use hand tools has a direct impact on the wire. So it comes as no surprise that, whenever wire artists meet, they should talk about wire and what neat tools they have just bought. In fact, talking about pliers is probably the one thing they are most willing to
share. But, make no mistake -- "You toucha my pliers, I breaka you face!"

Their love of hand tools is not the only thing they have in common. Many are confirmed toolaholics and are proud of it. Legends have been shared about particular artists and the incredible number of tools they own; these stories often precede them. This poses many questions, such as: Why?, What early life trauma led them to this? And have they ever considered seeking help?

When watching a wire artist choose their hand tools, you will notice their nimble fingers expertly sliding up the handle and over the jaws while the vinyl cushion grips slip into their waiting palm. These artists are adept with their hands, but some careful observers have reported seeing a quick, frisky pinch of the vinyl. You might hear a soft exhalation and a just-audible moan as their eyelids flutter for an instant, or you may see them replace the pliers with a "hmph" and an air of dismissal.

What are they looking for? As a general rule, not much. But that "not much" is sure hard to find. For example, when evaluating round-nose pliers, the wire artist is looking for a truly ROUND jaw -- not one that is oval, or has ridges or flat spots, because they know all of their loops, coils and circles will reflect whatever they have seen and felt on the surface on the jaw. This jaw must be smooth so as to not scratch the surface of the metal. The artist will also judge the space between the jaws, determining whether the wire will be held securely; if the space is too wide, the wire will slip.

**Inexpensive pliers**

It is very likely that the first pair of pliers ever purchased by our wire artist friend were inexpensive ones that didn't last because of their construction. Box-joint construction outlasts and out performs all other types; it keeps its precise alignment, never loosening or wobbling, and opens and closes smoothly.

Knowing the long hours they will be holding the pliers, the artist tests how it feels in their hand; the tool must feel comfortable. Manufacturers understand this need, offering plastic- and foam-grip handles. This not only provides grip but gives some insulating qualities.

The same criteria apply when evaluating flat-nose pliers but, because the pliers will be used for different purposes, a few more attributes are added
to the "wish list." For example, flat-nose pliers come in different sizes; the size will determine their application. Wide-nose pliers could be used to bend over the end of the wire when you begin your bindings, but wouldn't work well for tight spots such as those in many of the ring designs. Tapered, slim, flat-nose pliers would work well for these. As the inside surface of flat-nose pliers may be either smooth or serrated, the wire artist makes sure that the surface is smooth.

Cutter and nippers may be purchased as side cutters or end cutters. The shape of the edges of the jaw will determine how the ends of the wire will be cut, allowing for either a flush or semi-flush cut. A flush cut is one in which the edge of the wire is cut off squarely, whereas a semi-flush cut leaves a point on the end of the wire. Depending on the need and the desired end result, both types of pliers and both types of cuts are useful.

These are the three basic tools required to start a career as a wire artist jeweller. There are combinations of these, such as pliers that have one round-nose jaw with an opposing flat-nose jaw, rosary pliers (which are round-nose pliers with a side cutter) and so on.

**Specialty pliers**

There are, as well, specialty pliers such as coiling pliers or bent needle-nose. When an artist needs the tapered jaw of a needle-nose plier but the flat surface of a flat-nose plier, they may use chain-nose pliers, appreciating that the jaw edges are beveled to prevent the marring of soft wire. The choice made is a matter of personal preference and technique. All one has to do is check out catalogues of tools, supplies and equipment for technicians and craftsmen to see all the variations and choices available.

Complementary to these hand tools, wire artists frequently use pin vises, ring mandrels, jewelry (or bench) vises, calipers, rulers, pocket- or penknives, jewelers' files, ring sizers and an opti-visor.

In defense of all the many plier enthusiasts you may meet, wire art is really a study of how wire is successfully manipulated into a certain shape. The tool used to do this is just an extension of the artist's hand and should be used to guide the wire into place without undue pressure or force. Because the tool is so critical, it comes under scrutiny. As an artist becomes more involved with the art form and begins to play with design, it is inevitable that specific tools begin to find an exact use; ergo, the 101 pliers.
Intimate relationship

Oh, remember that frisky pinch? It's just an invitation to a more intimate relationship! And how do I know that (you might ask)? Let's just say that I, too, have been observed.

Now do you understand? I don't really need help. Honest . . .

Wire Artist - Project Ideas
That Come In the Magazine
an illustrated gallery of all our available advanced/intermediate projects
an illustrated gallery of all our available
Just for Fun projects

Splat-Frog Animal
September 2001

Spiral Bead Necklace
October 2001

Itty Bitty Bugs
November 2001

Candy Cane
December 2001

Three-in-One Bracelet
March 2002

Happy Face Pin
April 2002

Sarah’s Button Bracelet
May 2002

Your Alivi Ego
February 2002

Silver Swirl Necklace
June 2002

Jewellery Box
July 2002

Simple Two-Bracelet
August 2002

Simple Heart Earrings
September 2002

Monkey Pin
October 2002

Unity Chain Bracelet
November 2002

Guardian Angel
January 2003

Sorry, issue Sold Out
But project is available as a printout