

Making Bead Dangles

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You may have noticed that I use a lot of beaded dangles as embellishments on my ornament and craft projects. I make these myself with 18-gauge craft wire, jump rings, head pins, and beads.



Depending on what I'm embellishing, I might add several beaded elements, or only one. I like the extra "eye candy" effect and the additional movement

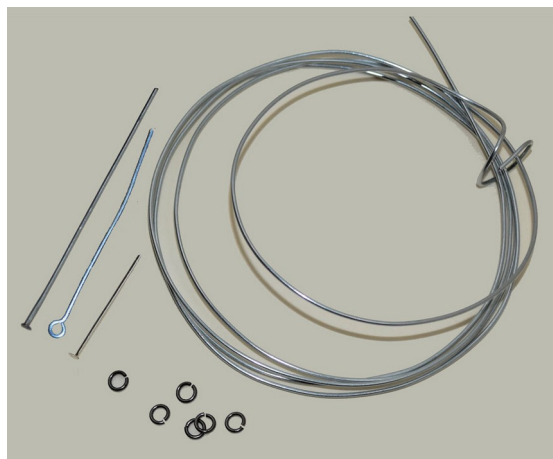
that the beads add to my ornaments. The dangles may be an essential design element, as they are on the German bell and the puzzle ornament (above, left and right); or just an accessory, like the top hat dangle on this Michigan Frog ornament, in which the main focal point is the poster of the frog dancing.

Either way, the dangles not only add visual interest to my creations, but they're also a great way to use up interesting or random beads from my stash.

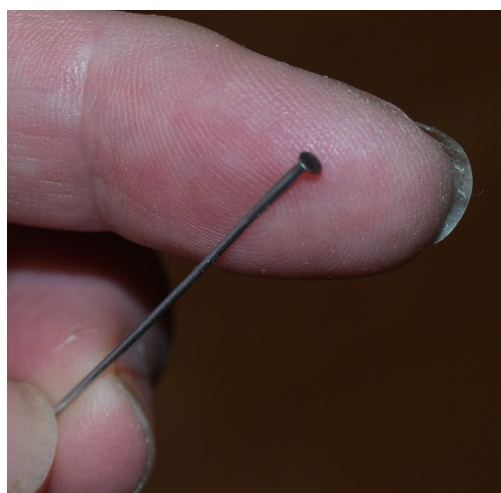
Read on to learn more about how I make them.



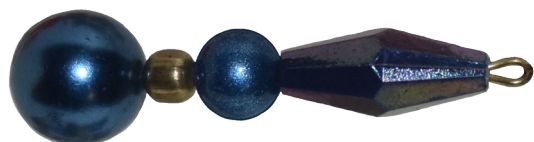
The dangles can be made with purchased head pins and eye pins, but I usually make my own using 18-gauge craft wire in silver or gold colour. In addition, you'll also need jump rings in various sizes to attach the baubles to the ornament once they're completed.



An eye pin makes a finished bauble with loops (eyes) on both ends, while a head pin produces a bauble with a loop on one end only. This style is typically attached to the ornament as a dangle.



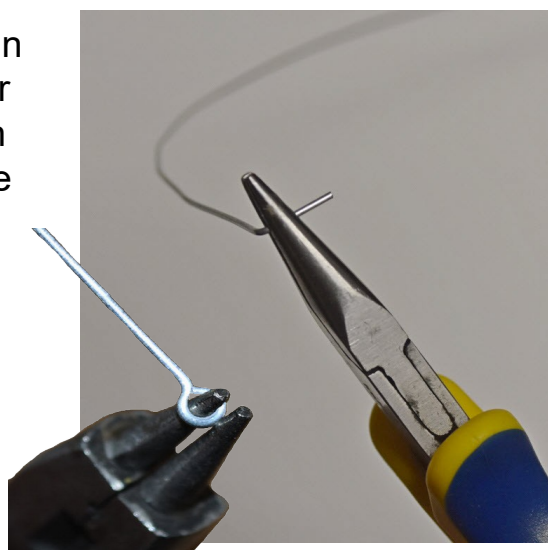
To build either beaded unit, select some beads that coordinate with your project. Although there is no hard and fast rule, I typically use a feature bead, framed by a couple of smaller complementary beads, and finish with tiny spacers or seed beads. This arrangement works for both kinds of beaded units.



make a sharp bend in the end of the wire with flat pliers, then use round-nosed pliers to shape the bent end into a loop.



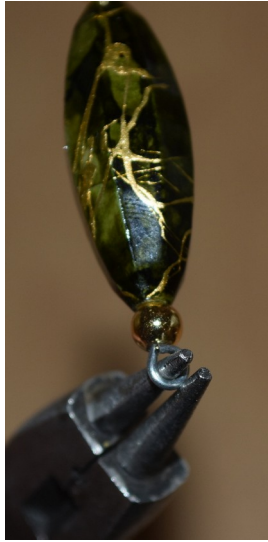
To make the two-eyed dangle, begin with an eye pin, or form your own from the 18-gauge wire. To do that,



You will create the dangle itself by threading the beads onto the wire, then closing the opposite end with another loop, as shown on the next page.



String the beads onto the pin in your desired order (in the example, I'm showing a head pin, but the process is the same for an eye pin.) Trim the wire to about 3/8" and then bend the wire end sharply to hold the beads in position while you make a loop with the round-nosed pliers. Done! I use jump rings to attach the dangles to the ornament, or to connect two together.



Most of my ornaments feature an eye-pin bauble at the top, while the head-pin baubles dangle from the bottom of the ornament. On the puzzle ornament at left, I've connected several baubles together, to add lots of movement. You can also make a tassel-like embellishment like the ones shown below, by connecting several dangles to a single jump ring. Or for a different look, incorporate some jewellery chain.



A cluster of beads, bells, and --> Christmas lights adds a festive touch to the bottom of this Henery Hawk button ornament.



The rhino ---> bead bauble echoes the other wildlife images on a pretty oyster shell ornament.



<-- Two small baubles link the ice cream cone and burger to the sign; the ornament is topped with a heart bead.



<-- I added gold paillettes to the beaded dangles on this German bell, echoing the gold elements in the bell itself.

I used two metal buttons and a small round bead to make a UFO- shaped dangle for the bottom of this Marvin ornament. How hilarious is that?!



You can also use this same technique to make earrings like the ones at right: just attach an ear hook.

Making your own baubles is a fun way to use up random beads from your stash, and they make useful embellishments for all kinds of crafting.

