

Wire Wrapping

The Original Cold Connection

One of the first manual skills we learned was how to tie our shoes—at least before the invention of Velcro. If we'd been using wire instead of laces, we could all call ourselves tinkers. Bending a wire around on itself to make a structure is both an ancient craft and a modern hobby. The definitions are loose, but since the techniques are often used to hold stones, crystals and organic charms, we'll include it here. For projects and more details, see any of the several books dedicated to wire wrapping.

Ornamenting Wires

Plain round wires are usually used for practice and sometimes in final work, but variations enlarge the range and provide contrast.

Square



Square, twisted.



2 wires twisted together

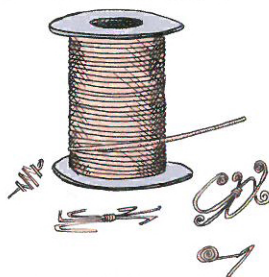


Wire wrapped with another wire



Practice

Use round copper or brass wire to sketch a piece. Make a note of all the dimensions and the sequence of steps. Repeat until you can make the piece with efficiency and confidence. Wire is simple, but unforgiving. It's better to avoid incorrect bends and unnecessary pliers bites and practice is the best way to do that.

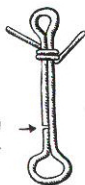


Constructing the Skeleton

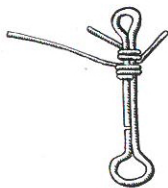
A frequently used approach is to create a central spine of several wires that can be opened out to create prongs, curlicues and spirals. Use this description of a setting for a cabochon to develop your own ideas.

1. Bend a barbell shape at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " taller than the chosen cabochon.

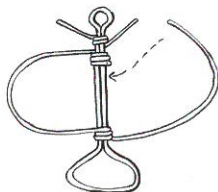
Note location of the ends.



2. Wrap a wire around the vertical axis; this will become the two prongs at the top.



3. Wrap another length of wire snugly around the spine, form a loop slightly wider than the stone, then wrap the wire around the axis again.



4. Complete another identical loop, trim to length and secure the end by bending it around the axis. Polish, add a jump ring at the top and set the stone by folding up the loops.

