

Star earrings
by
Paula Caddick

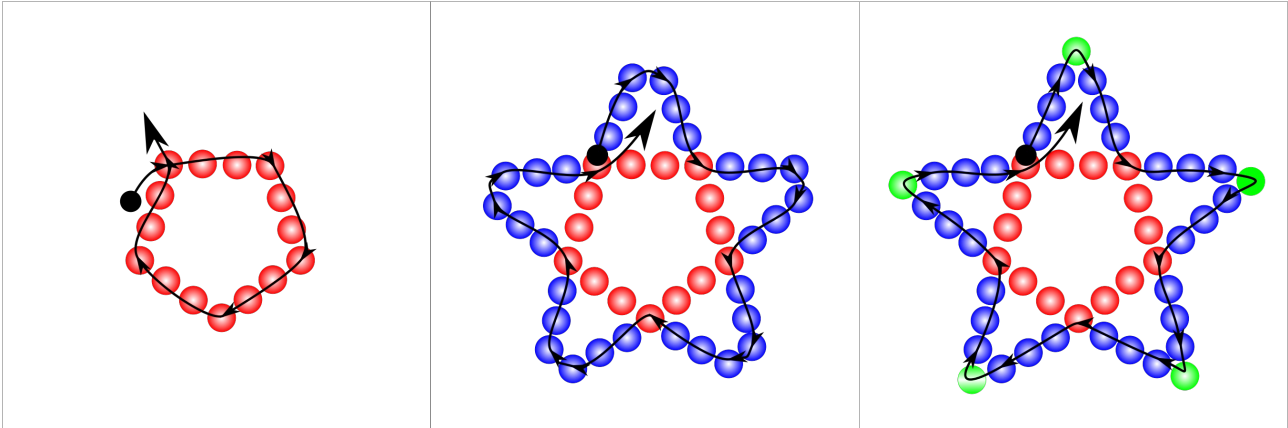


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Friends are like stars – you may not always see them, but you know they're always there.

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Thread path



Thread

Thread is a personal choice. There are lots of brands. My current favourite is 10lb woven fishing line (no, not the brand you're thinking of) and I also like loom thread, but you can use pretty much anything. If you're buying fishing line, stick to 0.14mm or thinner or you'll have a lot of trouble threading the needle plus if you're using size 11 seeds you won't be able to fit through the beads enough times, and don't go below 7lb strength.

Work with a single thread, not doubled. It's much easier to get the tension right and you'll get a lot fewer tangles.

Needle

Use the smallest beading needle you can thread, and don't worry if it bends as it definitely will. If it gets too bad you can straighten it up gently with pliers, but very often the curve will actually help anyway and make it easier to access out-of-the-way beads.

Beeswax

I like beeswax if I'm using thread but never use it with fishing line, though it can be handy to wax the very end of fishing line to make it easier to get through the needle. Beeswax looks like a bar of yellow soap and you run the thread lightly over the bar to pick up a thin layer of wax. Make sure you've got proper beeswax and not the paraffin wax sold in plastic circular cases (which is sometimes labelled beeswax even when it's not). Buy it online from a honey supplier, it'll be about £2 plus postage and lasts for absolutely ages because you use barely any.

Weaving in the thread ends

In general I don't like knots. They're too easy to come undone and they also take up valuable space inside the beads. I like to weave through the work as much as possible, and make sure some sections are going round in rough circles so it doesn't pull pack through if the finished piece gets snagged. Then when I am pulling the thread through the very last bead and it is almost all of the way through, I usually put a tiny blob of glue or clear nail varnish onto the last few millimetres of thread so that it disappears into the bead once I pull it through. Apply glue with a cocktail stick, a cotton bud or a match. But if you prefer to knot your thread, go right ahead - it's your work.

Step-by-step instructions

I made this pattern using size 11 seeds, though it would work equally well with larger beads.

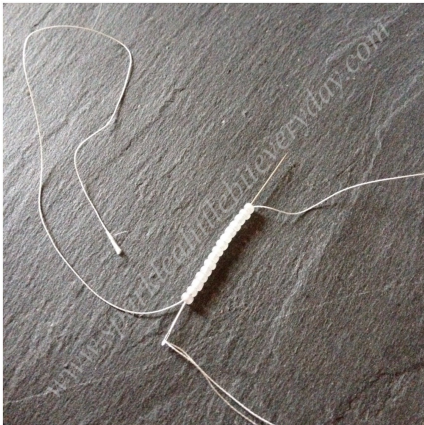
Cut about two feet of thread (or more if using larger beads) and thread your needle. Work with single thread, not doubled.



1

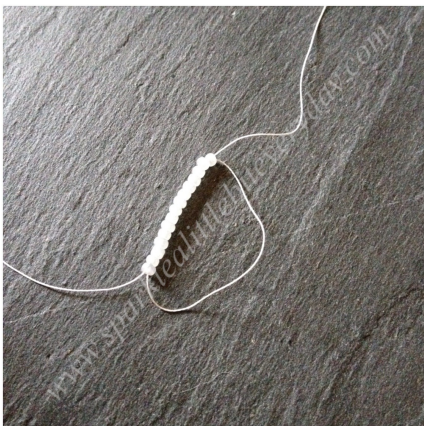
Pick up 15 beads with your needle and move them down the thread to leave a 6" tail.

When using small beads such as seeds, you don't actually pick them up with your fingers. Leave them lying on your work surface and use just the needle to pick them up, pushing the point of the needle down into the hole without touching them yourself.



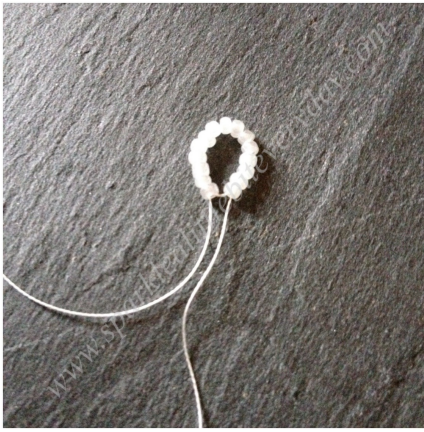
2

Pass your needle through all the beads again in the same direction.



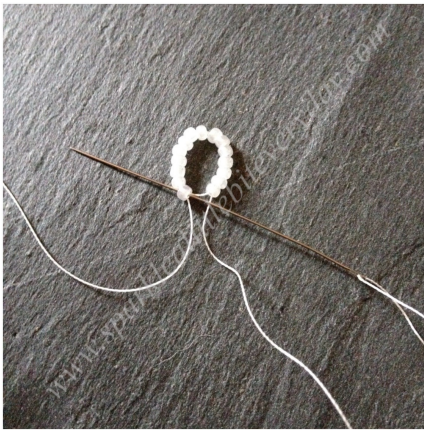
3

Pull the thread through the beads to form a loop.



4

Continue pulling the thread through until the beads snug up together to form a circle.



5

Pass the needle through the first bead in the circle. This is the first bead you added in step 1.



6

Pull the thread through to close the circle.

Your working thread and tail thread are now exiting from opposite sides of the same bead.



7

Flip the beads over so you're working anti-clockwise.

Pick up six beads onto your needle.



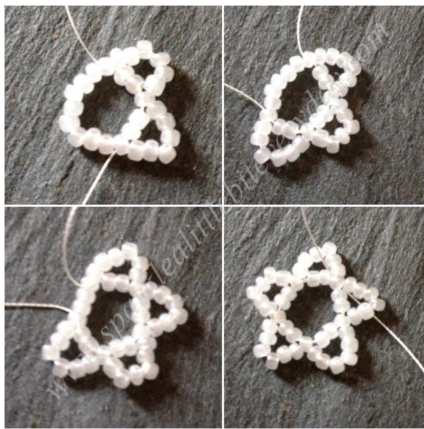
8

Miss two beads in the circle and pass through the next bead.



9

Pull the thread through so that the beads snug up together to form a loop.



10

Repeat the last step all the way around the circle.



11

Thread the needle through the first three beads of the loop of six.



12

Pull the thread through.



13

Pick up a seed bead.



14

Thread the needle through the next four beads, which are the final three beads of the loop of six and the next seed on the centre circle.



15

Pull the thread through the beads. Pull very firmly so that the seed you have just added slots in the centre of the loop to form a point.



16

Repeat the previous step all the way around the circle.



17

Follow the thread path again around the outside to reinforce the star. You may wish to do this more than once, depending on the thickness of your thread and the size of your beads. Take care not to overfill the beads on the centre circle with thread as you'll need to use those again in a minute.

If you want to, before the last bit of thread goes through the last beads, put a bit of glue on the thread so it goes inside the bead. Don't let any get into the beads on the centre circle. End the thread.

Now thread your needle onto the tail end of thread and go around the centre circle twice to reinforce it, and end the thread. Glue if desired before ending.

Using the stars

Attach the stars to earring hooks using either one or two jump rings, depending on which way you want the stars to face.

You could use two or more of them together and attach each one to the end of a different size length of chain, or use them as charms on a bracelet or necklace.



To make a six pointed star, start with 18 beads instead of 15 in the first step, then follow all the other instructions as normal.

Pattern 5

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