

A Beginner's Guide to Wire Wrapping

Findings are the connective components of a piece, such as clasps, earwires, crimps, jumprings, linklocks and boltrings. Findings can be made from virtually any metal and you will find [silver findings](#), gold findings and copper findings commonly used to enhance a piece of wire wrapped jewellery.

Wire wrapping tends to be confined to smaller-scale production; and as a technique is more often associated with hand crafted pieces. The individual craftsmen and artisans use their skills to create interesting and intricate items combining wire with findings, beads or other adornments.

In its basic form, wire wrapping uses looping to link the components of a piece of jewellery. Loops can vary in complexity from a simple 'O' shape, to 'P' loops and 'eye' loops. By their very nature, these are open loops, meaning they can be opened to accommodate another component of the piece. P loops are a wire loop formed in the shape of the letter P, whereas eye loops are more intricate; a tennis-racket shape is achieved with a full circle of wire centred over the stem of the loop.

Closed or wrapped loops are also used to create more permanent links; the end of the wire is wrapped round the stem of the loop, so that it cannot be opened. This method of looping gives wire wrapping its name. In essence, it describes a method of creating jewellery using mechanical, rather than soldered, links. Open loops, such as P loops and eye loops are commonly found in handmade ear-rings, whereas closed loops are used in necklaces and bracelets, so that the links do not open should the jewellery become snagged or caught.

Most craftsmen and artisans will use three basic tools in their work: a flush cutter, a pair of round-nosed pliers and chain-nose pliers. The flush cutter achieves a cut in the wire that leaves one end flush or flat, so that the sharp or pointed end that remains can be discarded. Round-nosed pliers have a conical shape that allow easy manipulation of the wire into loops, whereas chain-nose pliers have flat, smooth jaws for gripping and bending wire. As well as these three basic tools, craftsmen are likely to have loop-closing pliers, an anvil, a chasing hammer, step-jaw pliers, nylon-jaw pliers, a cup bur and a good, old-fashioned ruler. Many artisans also employ a jewellery-making jig, which is an open frame that is used to establish a pattern for use in the shaping of wire or sheets of metal.

There are various types of wire available to the craftsman, in different alloys (Silver, Gold), carats (9ct, 18ct), styles, shapes and diameters. With advent of enamelled wires the design can even incorporate a variety of vibrant colours. Each type of wire allows the designer to achieve different effects, offer different levels of malleability and build something unique into their designs.

Whether you are a professional jeweller, a student or hobbyist, the quality and cost effectiveness of your materials will always impact on the finished work. For a wide selection of wire and findings, it's worth searching for a company that specialises in supply direct to the jewellery trade – many companies now sell online, so it's worth searching either for "jewellery supplies" or the specific item you are looking for.

About the Author

Adam Hunter – E-commerce Marketing Manager of [cooksongold.com](#). Cookson Precious Metals offer a choice of supplies from over 10,000 products including gold and [silver wire](#), jewellery tools, findings, precious metal clay and precious metal sheet - gold, silver, platinum and palladium plus technical information for jewellers, jobbers, designer, craftsmen, artisans and students.

Contacts

For interviews, quotes, images or comments contact:

Adam Hunter

E-commerce Marketing Manager

Tel(DDI): +44 (0) 121 212 6491

E-mail: adam.hunter@cooksongold.com

Source: <http://www.spivo.com/articles>