



**BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE
LEVEL**
-- Bead Weaving Sequence
----- Necklace

Greek Key Pattern Chain Necklace

*Today we will learn
to make a bead woven necklace using a Greek Key
Pattern.*



**Good Jewelry Design seeks to
answer the question:**

***Why Do Some Pieces Of
Jewelry Draw Your
Attention,
... And Others Do Not?***

--- Warren Feld

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Greek Key Pattern Chain Necklace

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Greek Key Pattern chains, as well as other styles of chain, were widely used in the early half of the 20th century as the "stringing" material in necklaces and bracelets. Chains and wire were the only durable stringing materials at that time. Jewelry artists either dangled charms and beads from the chain, or used the chain as the base from which to create a pattern or composition.

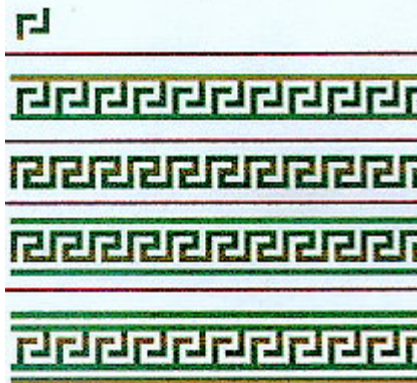


Miriam Haskell Jewelry, early 1950s

In my Vintage Revival Jewelry class, I challenge my students to see what kind of Greek Key Pattern chain they can create, using either bead weaving and/or wire working techniques.

A Greek Key Pattern is based on a decorative border motif widely found in Greek art and architecture. There are many Greek Key Patterns. They vary by the number of turns the pattern makes, the shapes of these turns, such as a T-shape or U-shape, the directional character of the turns, and the angles or circular curves which orient the lines. There is a great sample Greek Key Pattern generator online at

<http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/greekkey/index.htm>



This Beginner Level Project teaches how to create one such Greek Key Pattern Chain, using bead weaving. Three lengths of bead-woven “chain” are made, and attached to a clasp on one end, and a dangle-pendant in the middle.



In this project, we learn to

- Bead weave a Greek Key Pattern chain
- Attach the chain to a clasp and to a dangle-pendant

This necklace takes about 20 hours to complete.

PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

Bead weaving involves using needle and thread to connect beads into a pattern.

With this project, we are going to use a bead-weaving pattern I developed. *After you have completed this project, you might try to test your skills to see if you can create your own Greek Key Pattern chain.*

A. Conceptualizing the piece

Ask yourself these questions:

What length do I want the necklace to be?

How many strands do I want it to be?

What types and materials of beads do I want to use?

What kinds of stringing materials do I want to use –a flexible cable wire, a cable thread, or nylon beading thread?

What will the clasp assembly look like, and where and how will I attach the clasp? Do I want to use a single-strand clasp, or a multi-strand clasp accommodating the number of strands I plan to create?

If creating multiple strands, do I want each strand to be the same or different? If different, to what degree? How – color or size of beads or pattern?

What colors do I want to use? Metal colors? Glass bead colors?

What kind of dangle-pendant drop do I want to use?

What is the Context/Setting the necklace might be worn in?

How easily will the necklace, once the project is finished, conform to and feel comfortable around the neck and on the chest?

I wanted the necklace to be near the neck, using 3 strands which would show some graduation in lengths. I wanted to use a simple pendant drop, and a 3-strand clasp and colors reminiscent of vintage revival styles.

I used size 11/0 seed beads, but could just as easily gone smaller or larger in size. With the seed beads are sizes #1 and #2 Japanese bugle beads.

I strung the piece on ONE-G nylon beading thread (size D). This thread is strong, especially to make the corners using the bugles, and has some give to it. I'm pulling beads tight and keeping them tight within a box shape. I did not want my stringing material to fight me here, or work against maintaining this tension. Another alternative that would work here is FireLine, but this cable thread does

not come in enough colors. I wanted the thread color to match my beads because some thread does show on the corners.

I wanted a necklace that could easily be worn in informal settings as well as semi-formal settings.

B. Measurements

Ask yourself these questions:

What length necklace do I want to end up with?

Do I want multiple strands?

Should each strand be a different length, or the same length?

Do I want each strand to be the same or different?

How much more length will clasp attachment create?

What size do I want my pendant drop to be?

How much more length will attaching a pendant drop add to the necklace?

The first strand of the necklace I designed, and the pattern we'll follow today, is 17" long, and is made up of 24 links. The second strand is 17 1/2" long, and is made up of 26 links. The third strand is 18" long, and is made up of 28 links. Each strand is attached on one side to the clasp, and in the middle to a round soldered ring, about 8mm in diameter.

The crystal drop is 1" in length.

The clasp adds an inch and the pendant drop adds an inch to the length.

C. Selecting Materials

- Stringing material –Size D ONE_G thread, Nymo, C-Lon or FireLine, in a color matching the predominant color of the beads.
- Beads – 15/0, 11/0, 8/0, 6/0 seed beads or delicas, 3mm (Size #1) and 6mm (Size #2) Japanese bugle beads
- Pendant Drop, about 1"
- Clasp: filigree or push/pull clasp, with vintage revival
- Soldered ring, about 8mm in diameter
- English Beading Needles, size #10 or size #12
- bees wax
- work surface
- necklace cone
- scissors
- pen/pencil, paper, ruler

For our example project, an 18" Greek Key Pattern Chain Necklace, we will be using the following materials:

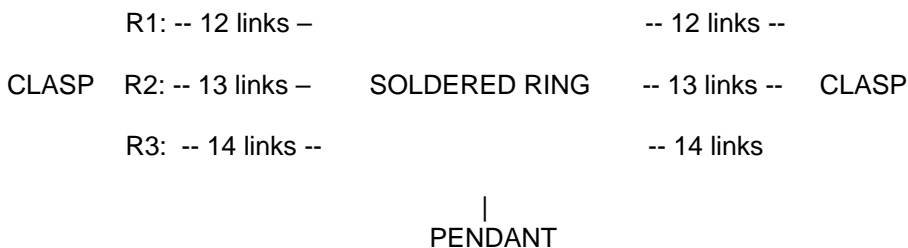
- Seed and Bugle Beads
 - 11/0-462 metallic gold iris (14 grams)
 - 11/0-615cut metallic gold iris cut (14 grams)

Create a seed bead mix of 75% #462 and 25% #615cut

- Size #1 (3mm) Japanese bugle beads, color #462 metallic gold iris (14 grams)
- Size #2 (6mm) Japanese bugle beads, color #462 metallic gold iris (14 grams)
- 15/0-462 seed beads for bail (2 grams)
- Cosmic Swarovski Pendant (top-drilled), crystal-copper, 24mm
- One-G thread in color that blends with the #462 beads.
- 3-strand clasp
- Soldered ring, about 8mm, in gold-plate, gold-filled or 14KT gold
- Bees wax or microcrystalline wax
- necklace cone, scissors, paper and pencil, ruler, work surface

D. Sketching a Pattern

I've envisioned a 3-graduated-strand necklace with a center pendant drop.



Identify points of potential weakness, that will need reinforcing. In this necklace, points of potential weakness include:

*The points where each strand is connected to the 3-strand clasp and the soldered ring.
The bead-woven bail that extends from the crystal pendant to the soldered ring.*

Within each link, bugle beads tend to have sharp edges around their holes. Where each link's loops interconnect, the pulling and tugging on the links as the necklace is worn make

these points of potential weakness. As we create each link, we pass through each bead at least twice. We tie frequent knots as we create the link. We take a nonlinear path through the beads.

Identify how you want to secure the clasp.

In this piece, I bead-weave through the loops on the clasp.

[In an ideal situation, if your clasp has open loops, then use a soldered ring. Attach the soldered ring to the clasp, and the bead-woven links to the soldered ring.]

E. Visualizing The Process

Working and Holding the piece. I work mostly on a velvet pad. We will be making one link at a time. For strand 1, I will make two 10 link interconnected lengths. Then I will make a link on one end and concurrently attach this to the top loop on the clasp. I will repeat this for the 2nd chain length. Then I will make a link on the other end and concurrently attach this to the soldered ring. And, again, repeat this for the other length.

For strand 2, I will make two 11 link interconnected lengths. Then I will make a link on one end and concurrently attach this to the middle loop on the clasp, and repeat for the other side. I will make a link on the other end and concurrently attach this to the soldered ring, under where I attached the first strand, and repeat for the other side.

For strand 3, I will make two 12 link interconnected lengths. Then I will make a link on one end and concurrently attach this to the bottom loop on the clasp, and repeat for the other side. I will make a link on the other end and concurrently attach this to the soldered ring, under where I attached the second strand, and repeat for the other side.

I like to use the necklace cone to see how the lengths of each strand lay and hold up. I want to see a natural graduation of lengths, but with each strand close in position to the one above it.

Finally, I make a simple bead-woven bail, and attach the pendant to the bottom of the soldered ring, between the left and right connections of the third strand.

Points of weakness. These are areas of your piece that will need reinforcement. I try to fill the bead holes with as much thread as I can in these places.

In which direction do you want to work. The left side of the link and the right side of the link have a different pattern. You want to maintain this pattern, so that a left connects to a right, and a right connects to a left. You want to maintain the same directionality of the pattern for all 3 strands.

Staging:

In this necklace, I am going to stage the assembly in this order:

1. Making Links and Interconnecting Them Into A Chain
2. Attaching the link/chain to the clasp.
3. Attaching the link/chain to the center soldered ring.
4. Creating a Pendant Bail and attaching this to the center soldered ring.

F. Organizing Your Work Space

Get your beads, stringing materials, necklace cone, tools, work surface, scissors, handy pen and paper, ruler, and the like, altogether in one place.

G. Beginning Your Project: The Basic Steps**G1. Making Links and Interconnecting Them Into A Chain**

I like to begin with an arm to arm's length of thread. This should do 3 links, possibly 4 links. Wax your thread.

We are going to make 1 link at a time. When we make the 2nd link, it's left side will be interconnected with the right side of the previous link.

We will make these sections in this order:

For Strand 1,

- 10 interconnected links
- 10 interconnected links
- 1 link to connect to the top loop of the clasp, and to the left-side of the 10-link section
- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 10-link section, and then to the soldered ring
- 1 link to connect to the soldered ring, and to the left-side of the 2nd 10-link section
- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 2nd 10-link section, and to the other side of the clasp assembly.

For Strand 2,

- 11 interconnected links
- 11 interconnected links
- 1 link to connect to the middle loop of the clasp, and to the left-side of the 11-link section
- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 11-link section and then to the soldered ring at a point below where we connected Strand 1
- 1 link to connect to the soldered ring at a point below where we connected Strand 1, and to the left-side of the 2nd 11-link section

- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 2nd 11-link section, and then to the other side of the clasp assembly at a point below where we connected Strand 1.

For Strand 3,

- 12 interconnected links
- 12 interconnected links
- 1 link to connect to the bottom loop of the clasp, and to the left-side of the 12-link section
- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 12-link section, and then to the soldered ring at a point below where we connected Strand 2
- 1 link to connect to the soldered ring at a point below where we connected Strand 2, and to the left-side of the 2nd 12-link section
- 1 link to connect to the right-side of the 2nd 12-link section, and then to the other side of the clasp assembly at a point below where we connected Strand 2.

Then we will attach the pendant drop to the soldered ring in the middle of our necklace.

STEP 1: Make A Square

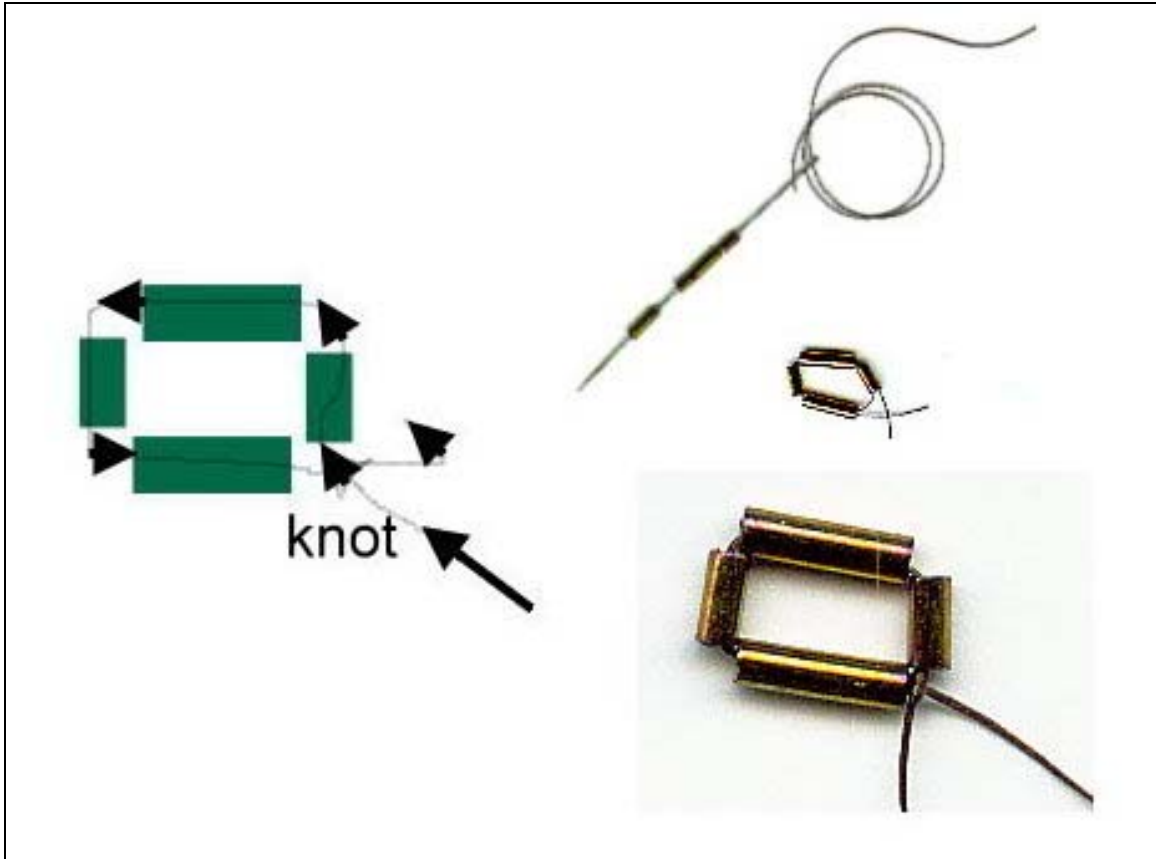
Using your needle, pick up 1 bugle #1, 1 bugle #2, 1 bugle #1, and 1 bugle #2.

Go back through all the beads with your thread, to make a squared-circle.

Tie a knot between the last bugle #2 and the first bugle #1.

Using your fingers, push on the beads to square up this circle, before starting the next step.

Reposition this square so that the active thread is coming out the bottom right side of the square.



STEP 2: ADDING MAZE LEGS

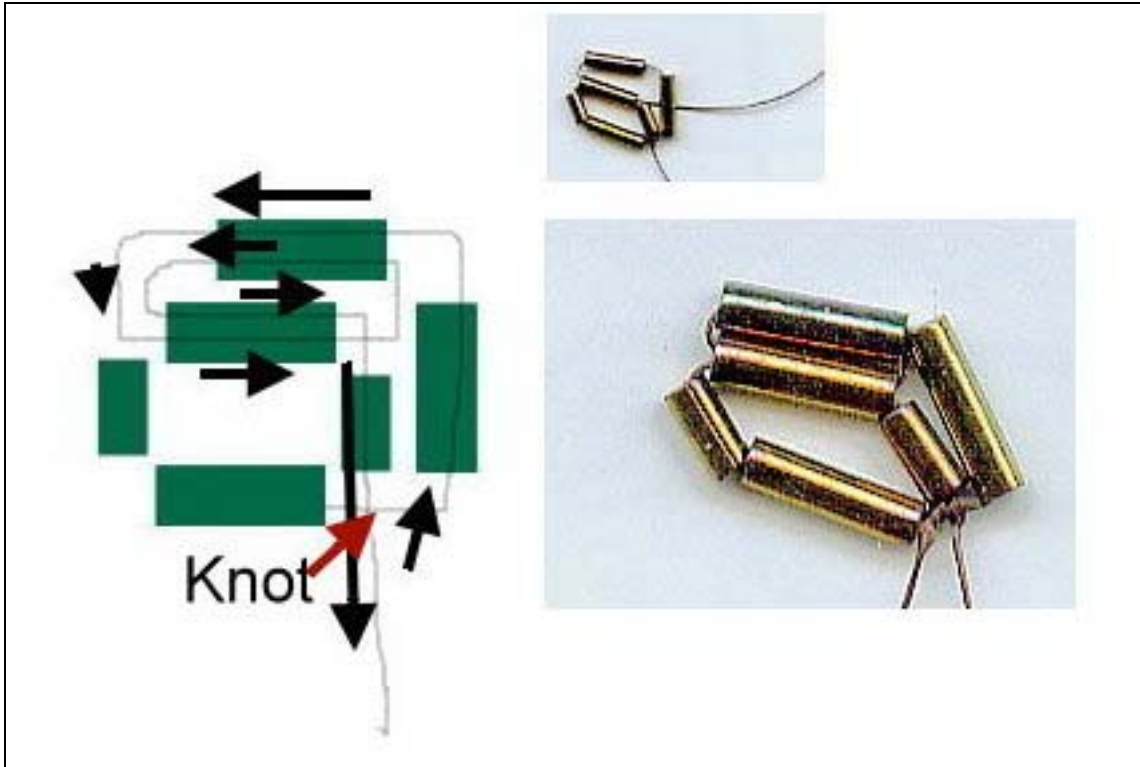
Pick up 2 bugle #2 beads.

Line the first along the right side of your square, and the second over the top of your square.

Bring your thread from left to right through the bugle #2 that makes up the top of your square (and is now sitting below your new bugle #2 bead).

Pull tight so that all these beads are touching each other. This will force your square to become a little more diagonally oriented.

Snag a thread in the corner between the #2 and #1 bugles, keep the beads tight and aligned in their diagonal square, and tie a knot.

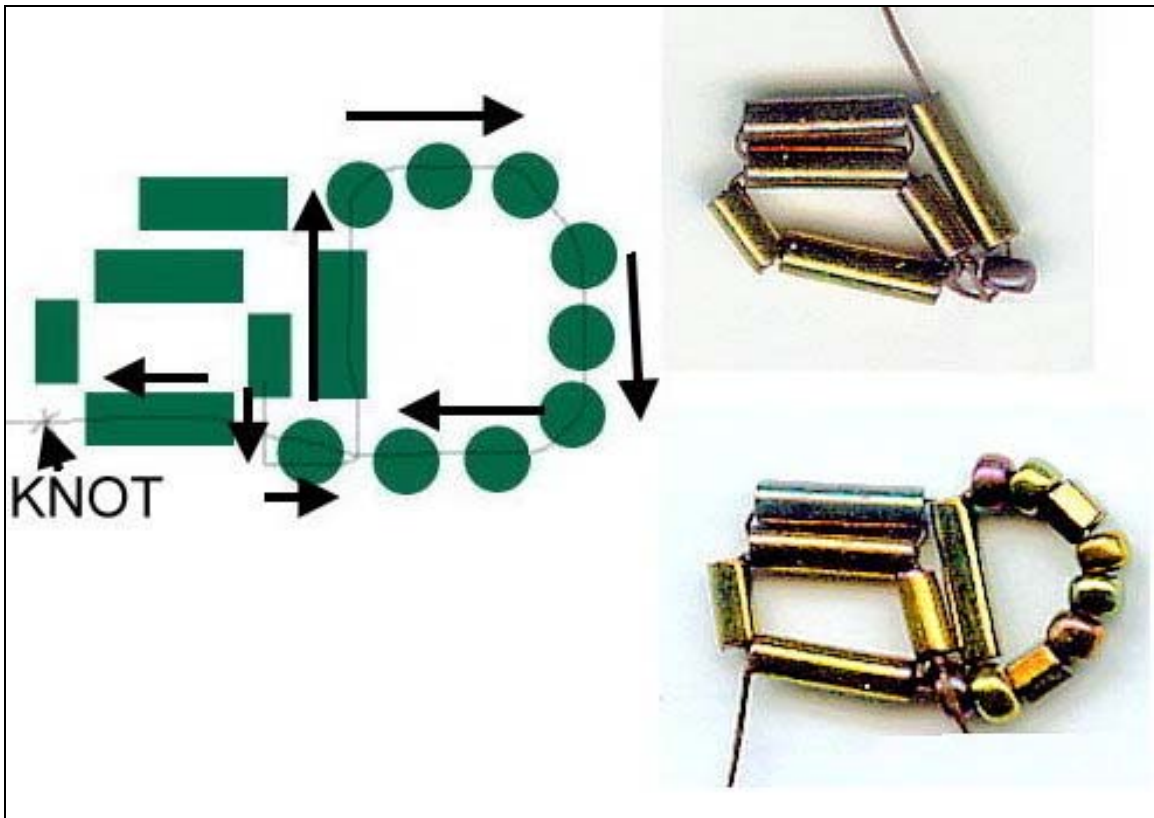


STEP 3: MAKING THE RIGHT-SIDE LOOP

Pick up an 11/0 seed bead.
Go up through the right-most size #2 bugle.

Add 8 11/0 seed beads.
Make a half circle, and return through the bottom 11/0 seed bead, and continue through the bottom horizontal size #2 bugle bead, now coming out on the left side of the link.

Snag a thread, and tie a knot.



STEP 4: MAKING THE LEFT SIDE LOOP

For the First Link You Make:

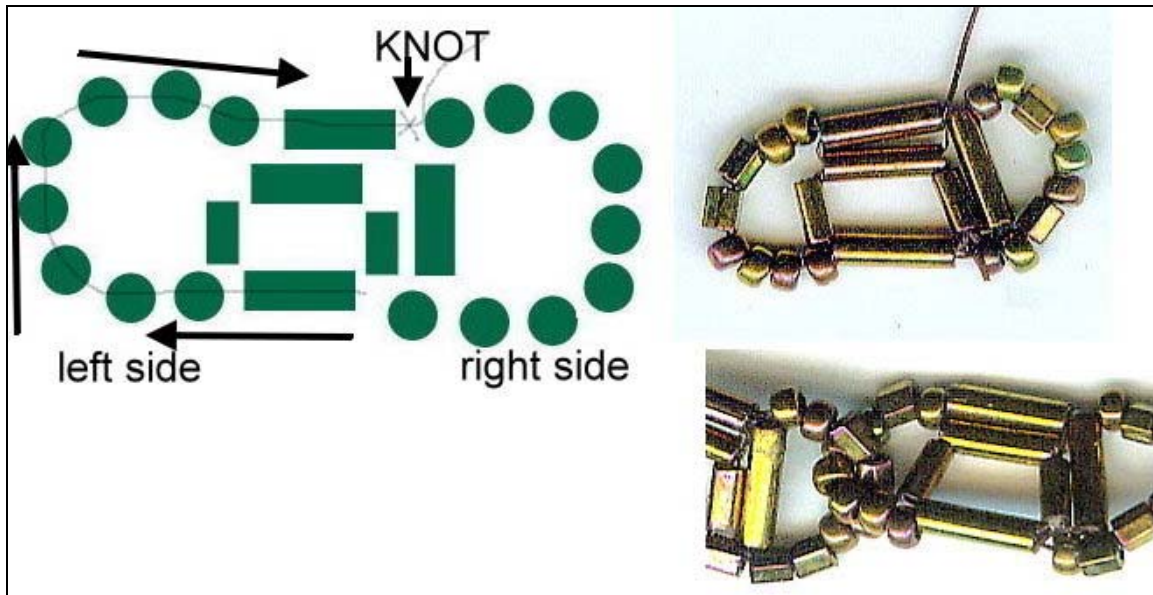
Pick up 8 11/0 seed beads with your needle, and come back through the top-most size #2 bugle. Pull tight. You don't want the thread to show on this loop. Snag a thread and tie a knot.

For Subsequent Attached Links You Make:

Pick up 8 11/0 seed beads with your needle. Take your needle through the right-loop from the previous link. Then come back through the top-most size #2 bugle. Pull tight. Be sure the two loops are resting on each others beads, and NOT each others threads. Snag a thread and tie a knot.

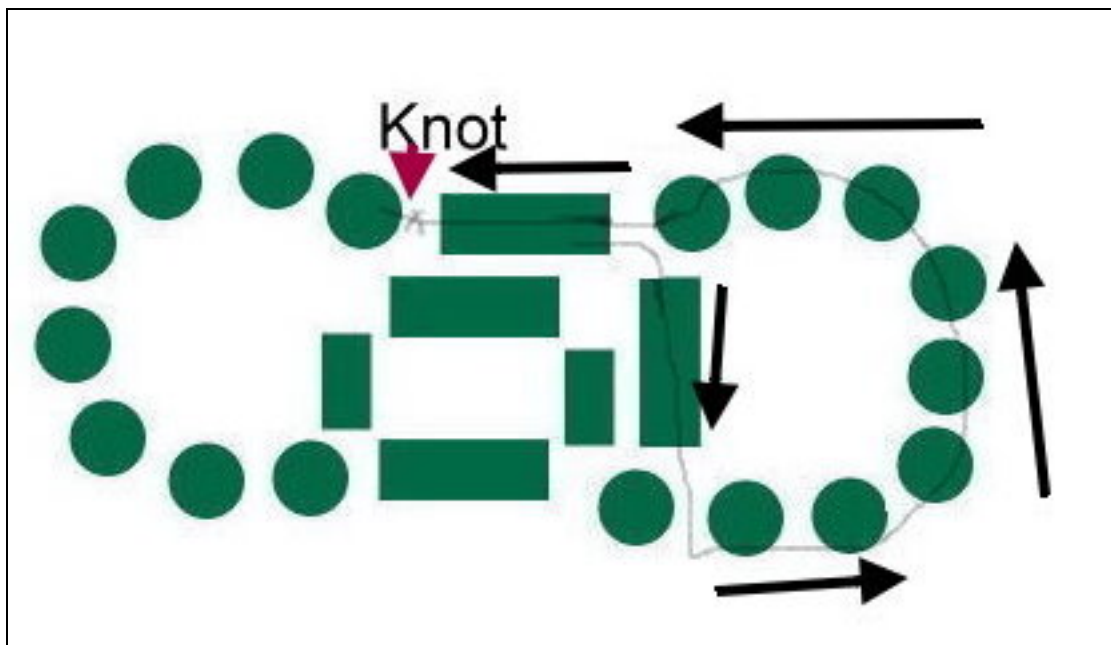
NOTE: When you get your beads tight, use your forefinger (easel) and thumb (clamp) to hold everything tightly in place, while you tie that securing knot.

NOTE: Be sure you keep the right side loops all on the right side, as you chain up all the links.

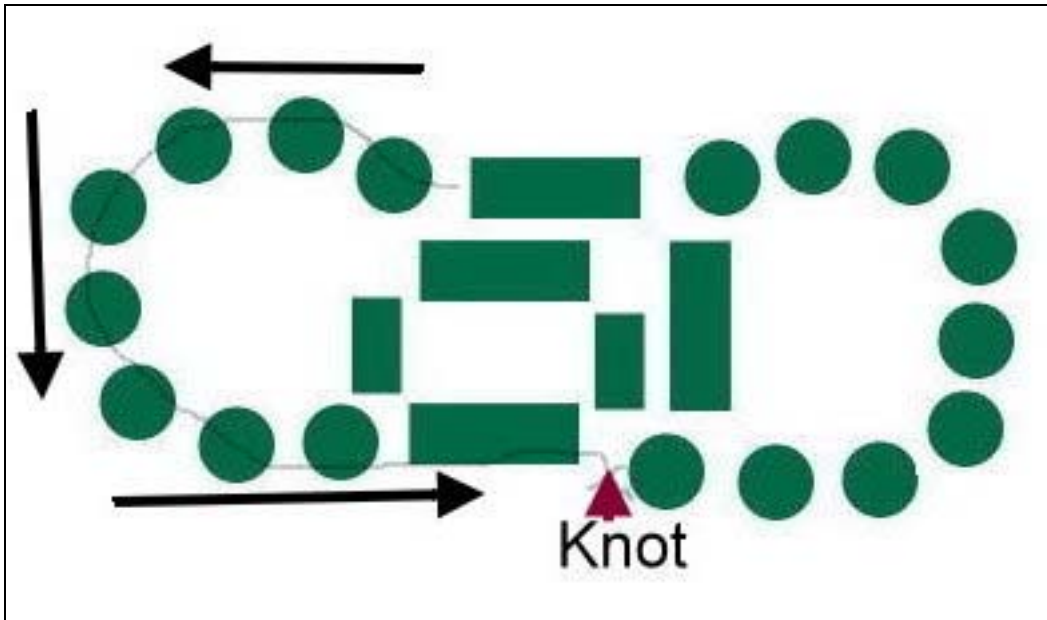


STEP 5: ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENT

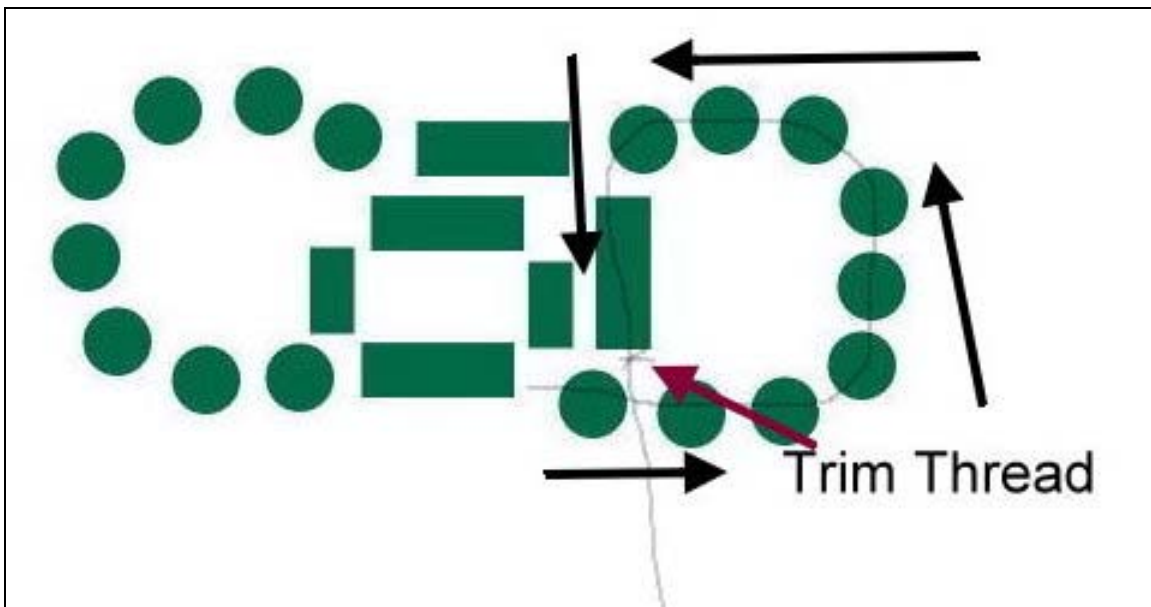
Take your needle down through the #2 bugle on the right side.
 Come out between the left-most 11/0 and the 2nd to the left 11/0 seed beads.
 Continue with your needle through the 2nd left most 11/0 seed bead and around the half circle towards the top of the link.
 Continue with your needle through the top-most #2 bugle bead.
 Pull tight.
 Snag a thread and tie a knot.



Continue with your needle around the left-side loop, headed downward. Pass through the bottom size #2 bugle.
Pull tight.
Snag a thread and tie a knot.



Continue around the right-side loop.
Come back down the vertical size #2 bugle on the right side.
Trim your active thread.



STEP 6: GETTING RID OF THE TAIL

At this point, you can either trim the tail off as close to the bead as possible.
Or, you can put the tail on the needle, and work it's way around the link a bit, and then trim it.

G2. Attaching the link/chain to the clasp.



When attached your chain sections to the clasp, you will need to make a link, where you interconnect one side of the link to the section of link-chain, and interconnect the other side to your clasp.

If your clasp has smaller loops, you will want to add 4 beads to your semi-circle, go through the clasp, and add another 4 beads, continuing on to complete your link.

Then you want to work your way back to the clasp, and reinforce your semi-circle loop. Go through as many times as you can get thread through the holes of your beads. Snag a thread and tie a knot.

NOTE: BE SURE THAT STRAND 1 IS ANCHORED TO THE TOP LOOP, STRAND 2 IS ANCHORED TO THE MIDDLE LOOP, AND STRAND 3 IS ANCHORED TO THE BOTTOM LOOP.

G3. Attaching the link/chain to the center soldered ring.

Here, you do something similar as when you attached the sections to the clasp.

Add 1 link. One side of the link will have to interconnect with the link-chain. The other side of the link will interact with the centered soldered ring.

NOTE: BE SURE THAT STRAND 1 IS CONNECTED ABOVE STRAND 2, and THAT STRAND 2 IS CONNECTED ABOVE STRAND 3.

G4. Creating a Pendant Bail and attaching this to the center soldered ring.



Here I have used 15/0 seed beads. Using the ladder stitch, I create a 2-bead wide length of beads, and reattach the ends to create a bail-loop.

I want this length to be long enough so that it can go through the hole in my pendant piece, and around the soldered ring, and still allow the pendant to freely flow. I don't want to pull my pendant all the way up to my ring.

H. Dealing with Contingencies – Things that may happen

Cannot Get Beads Through Holes/Loops On Clasp

You can use 15/0 seed beads on those sections of the left side or right side of the link which need to go through these loops.

Links Interconnected and Resting On Threads, Rather Than Beads

If you don't get the left and right sides of the links tight enough, the links will lock up on the threads. You want them to rest on the beads, so that the links move fluidly as the wearer moves. Here you can take an independent thread, anchor it, reinforce the thread-tension on the loops, anchor the thread again, and trim it off.

Length of Necklace Too Short

If it's only slightly short, you can add a longer extender chain, or use a 3-strand choker clasp.

If you want to create a longer necklace, you can also add more links. Be sure to use your necklace cone to coordinate the graduation of each strand's length, so that it lays appropriately.

Adding Thread

I like to start and finish each link using one thread.

Thread Showing

Sometimes, you won't be able to snip the thread tails close enough to the links. Snip as close as you can. Hold up a BIC lighter close to the threads so that they curl up and melt. Or use a thread zapper.

I. Finishing Touches

11. Signature bead or embellishment

I think it is always a good idea to use a signature bead in your projects. This might be a unique bead added near the beginning or end of the piece, or incorporated within each link, or an engraved tag added as part of the clasp assembly. You want your signature bead to identify the piece as your own, but you don't want your signature bead to compete with or detract from your piece.

The general structure of this Greek Key Pattern Chain Necklace was created by Warren Feld. Any personalization you might do – choice of beads, choice of patterns, choice of stringing material, choice of clasp, choice of color scheme, choice of embellishments – are your own touches, and deserve your signature.

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For Warren Feld, Jewelry Designer, beading and jewelry making endeavors have been wonderful adventures. These adventures, over the past 25 years, have taken Warren from the basics of bead stringing and bead weaving, to wire working and silver smithing, and onward to more complex jewelry designs which build on the strengths of a full range of technical skills and experiences.

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