

Simply Barbara!

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1. Ceramic face bead, jade, amber chips, and pearls with moss green FFF bead cord and Bali silver clasp.



2. Faceted and carved lapis lazuli with Bali silver and natural FFF bead cord.



3. Imitation antique black and white bird beads from Java, with translucent disks, red spacer beads, and Bali silver cones and beads using red FFF bead cord with small black beads inserted in the knotting.



4. Apple coral, turquoise, pumtek beads, and Bali silver beads and bead caps with red FFF bead cord.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

My friend and neighbor Barbara Meacham has a real fondness for beads. She began traveling in 1954 and over the years has added a wide variety of beads to her collection. After she strings them, she displays them on suction hooks attached to her closet doors—she enjoys the pleasing array whenever she enters the room.

Barbara has developed a simple style of necklace that anyone can duplicate. Sometimes she uses only a single bead, other times she uses five to a dozen or more beads on a necklace. Instead of searching for the right “filler” beads, Barbara has solved the problem with a simple half knot, which, when repeated over and over, forms a lovely chain-like spiral.

Barbara first plans the arrangement of her beads. She often adds bead caps or groups two or more beads together. She especially likes small flat Bali silver stars at each end of a bead; the stars accent the beads like exclamation points and give the necklace a finished look without detracting from the beads.

Barbara feels her design has several merits. First, without filler beads, her necklaces are lightweight and the multiple cords provide a strong secure support



5. Blue cord with tiny gold beads in the knotting and a contemporary art glass bead on a tassel.

Necklace

DIANE FITZGERALD

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for all the beads, especially the larger, heavier ones. She also likes this design because it separates the beads, giving each a chance to stand on its own. Finally, the cord color unifies the necklace and adds a fiber dimension. She can vary the distance between beads with the number of knots. It usually takes her about six to eight hours to complete a necklace.

MATERIALS

1–5 large-holed beads (large enough to fit 4 strands of bead cord or Conso)
10 yards of FF or FFF bead cord or Conso #18 cord
Duco cement, watch-crystal cement, or white glue

NOTIONS

Pinning board
Scissors
Big-eye needle

MEASURE

Step 1: For a 26" necklace, measure 1" for the clasp, 8" for the knotting from the clasp to the first bead, 7" for the total length of beads, for a total length of 16".

Step 2: Subtract this 16" from the total necklace length of 26", and you have 10" rem. This will be the length you have for knots between the beads. Next, take the number of beads less one and divide the 10" by this number. For five beads, there are four spaces between the beads: 10 divided by 4 = 2½. The result is 2½" of knotting between each of the five beads.

KNOTTING

Step 3: From the ten yards of cord cut one 84" piece. Fold both cords in half and attach them at their midpoints to one side of the clasp with a lark's head knot (Figure 1). Pin the clasp to a knotting board (available at bead or craft stores) or foamcore board (available from office supply stores).

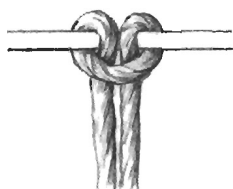


Figure 1

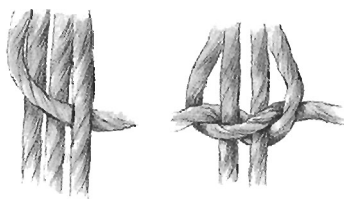


Figure 2

Step 4: Lay out your strands with the two ends of the shorter cord (carrying cords) in the middle and one of the longer cords (knotting cords) on each side. Take the left cord and lay it across the pair of carrying cords. Take the right cord and lay it over the left cord. Pass the right cord under the carrying cords. Bring the left cord through the loop formed by the left cord and the carrying cords. Pull tight to position the knot (Figure 2).

Step 5: Knot for the distance planned to the first bead, usually about 4"–5". String the bead (or group of beads) on all four strands and continue knotting for the interval to the next bead. If the bead hole is small, pass only the pair of carrying cords through the beads and leave the knotting cords on the outside.

FINISHING

Step 6: When you've added all the beads and have knotted to within 2" of the other side of the clasp, bring the carrying cords through the clasp and fold them back; knot around all four strands of carrying cord to the clasp. Place a dot of glue on the last knot. Clip the ends or thread them in the large needle and weave them back in for a few stitches. You now have a strong, durable and lightweight necklace to enjoy wearing. ❁

Diane Fitzgerald is a nationally known teacher and artist who lives in Minneapolis where she runs her store, Beautiful Beads. She has written several books, including Counted and Charted Patterns for Flat Peyote Stitch, Sea Anemone Beadwork, and Zulu Beaded Chain Techniques. Her latest book is Beading with Brick Stitch from Interweave Press.

BARBARA'S DESIGN TIPS

If the bead holes are too small to fit four strands of cord, put two strands through the bead and two on the outside.

All three types of cord specified below come in a range of colors, but the FF and FFF bead cords are smooth and flexible, pleasant to work with, and comfortable to wear. If you're uncertain about color, use black or natural—they will go with most beads.

While you're knotting, add a series of tiny beads or stone chips to one of the knotting cords for texture.