

Braiding with beads

Materials needed for this project

- Size 11 Seed beads
- 2 x End caps
- 2 x Eye pins
- 1 x Needle and Thread
- 2 x 4mm Closed Jump rings
- 1 x Lobster clasp
- 2 x Jump rings

Before you start

Make sure you have everything you need and read through the instructions first. It is beneficial to have some Cellotape or some clips on the side, just in case you need them to give you an extra hand, holding something down or together. You will also need a couple of pliers, one being round nose pliers.

As a guide for sizing plaited Jewellery so you can calculate the finished piece - you will lose about 25% - 35% in length of the beads you have strung up at the beginning. This depends on your tension over the course of doing the plaiting. So if you string up 80cm for each strand of thread, you will end up with approx 55cm - 60cm necklace. Try not to join threads with this project, so make sure you use 1 piece of thread for 1 strand of seed beads. If you have a bead spinner, it is a great tool to speed up the process of adding beads to your thread, however the project can be done without it.

When plaiting, make sure there is no bare thread showing at all times. You will need a little flexibility with the thread as the beads will start to tighten up once you have started plaiting. This is when the last bead with the looped thread on your strings come in handy, as you can easily move it down to give you more thread and loosen your beads slightly.

Decide on your colour combination and the amount of strands you would like your plait to be - we have given the instructions for 3 Strand, 5 Strand or 7 Strand plaits.

3 Strand Plait

Step 1. Working with 3 long threads, tie all the threads onto a small closed ring. To make your knot extra secure, you can dab the knot with some glue or clear nail varnish and trim ends.

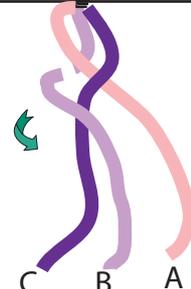
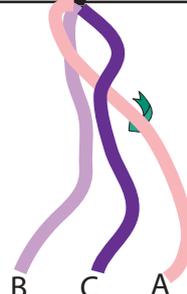
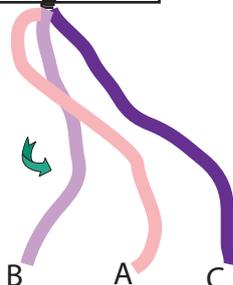
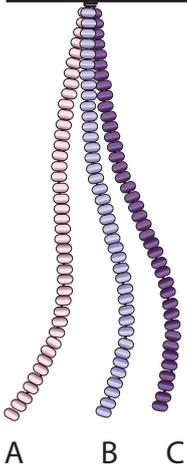


Now, start threading each piece of thread with your choice of seed beads until you have reached approximately 80cm in length. Secure each strand by looping your thread back through the last seed bead as in the image. It needs to be 1 loop only so you can easily remove or add beads to your plaiting.

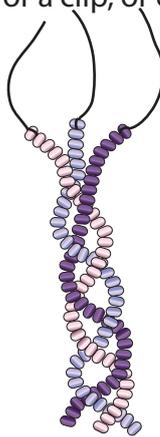


Step 2. To help you keep your plait even and with a good tension, you might want to tape the closed ring to your work surface or tie the closed ring to any hook or handle with a piece of thread - make sure it is easily removed.

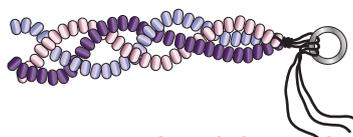
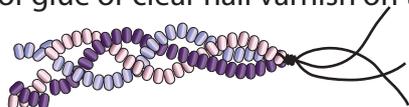
Now, pick up **Strand A** and take this over the top of **Strand B** into the centre, then take **Strand C** over the top of **Strand A**, again into the centre. Next, take **Strand B** over the top of **Strand C** into the centre. Continue to do this pattern, taking the outside strands into the centre, alternating from side to side. Make sure you keep a reasonable tension in your plait, but not too much as the plait will start to twist.



You might have excess beads on your thread which you will have to remove now. It can be tricky to try and hold the strands together with one hand while trying to adjust with the other hand - don't be afraid to use some tape or a clip, or even a peg to hold your ends while you do the adjusting.

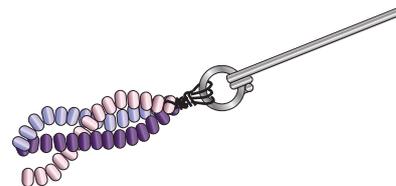


Step 3. Once you have reached your desired length (a standard necklace is 18"/45cm),secure your plait by knotting all 3 strands together, then pull your thread ends through a closed ring and knot again in the same way as you did before - trim ends. For extra security, dab a small amount of glue or clear nail varnish on the knot.



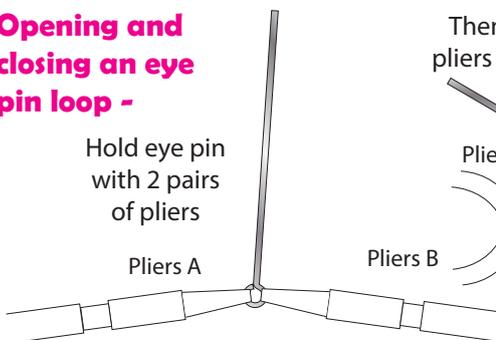
Step 4. Attach an eye pin to the ring at one end and then take the eye pin through a bead cap. Make sure you pull the pin as far through the bead cap as possible, then using round nose pliers, create a loop from the eye pin and trim ends, (see technique below). Your thread ends, knot and closed ring should be hidden inside the bead cap.

Top Tip. - To ensure your closed ring is hidden inside your bead cap and for added security, curl the loop on your eye pin so it is tightly closed around the closed ring.

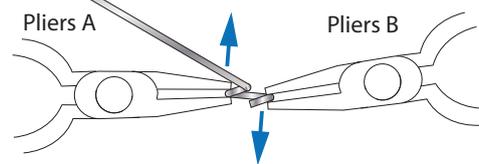


Opening and closing an eye pin loop -

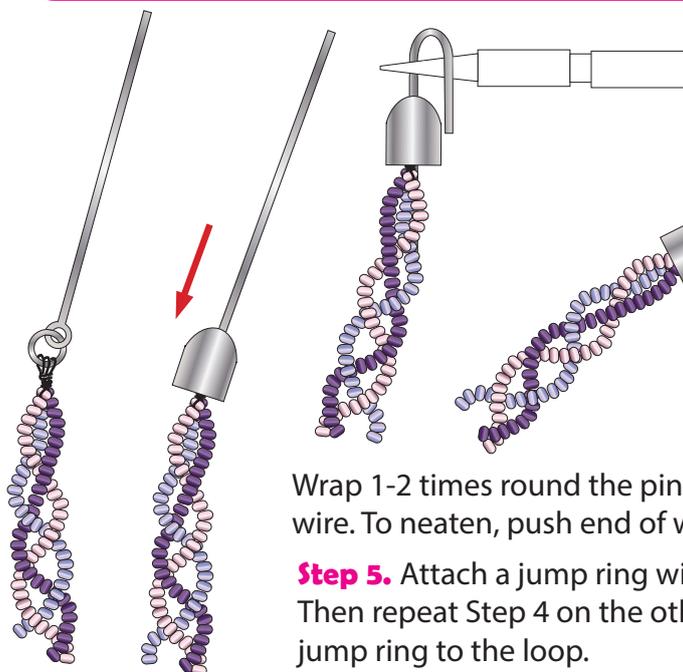
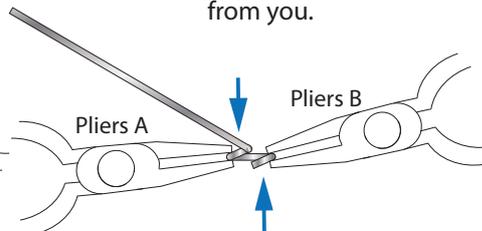
Hold eye pin with 2 pairs of pliers



Then push pliers A away from you and pliers B towards you. Slide on your closed ring.



Now reverse the action - pull pliers A towards you and pliers B push away from you.



Hold the pin 5mm above the bead cap with round nose pliers. Wrap top of pin into a loop, curling it around the pliers. Then twist the wire back around the pin just above the bead cap.

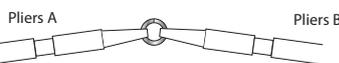
Wrap 1-2 times round the pin, then trim excess wire. To neaten, push end of wire inwards.

Step 5. Attach a jump ring with a lobster clasp to your loop. Then repeat Step 4 on the other side and finally attach just a jump ring to the loop.

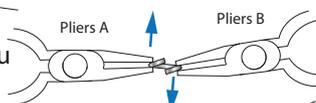


Opening and closing a jump ring -

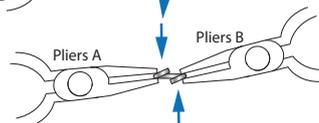
Step 1. Hold Jump ring with 2 pairs of pliers.



Step 2. Gently push the Jump ring apart, moving Pliers A away from you and pliers B towards you.



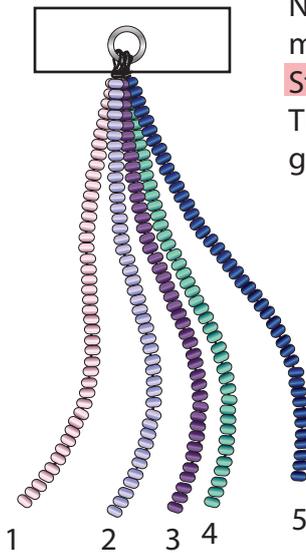
Step 3. With the pliers in the same position, reverse the action in Step 2, pulling pliers A towards you and pushing pliers B away from you.



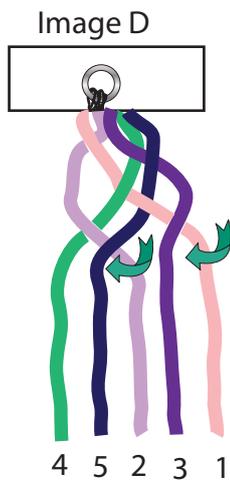
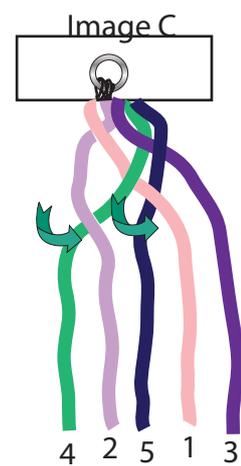
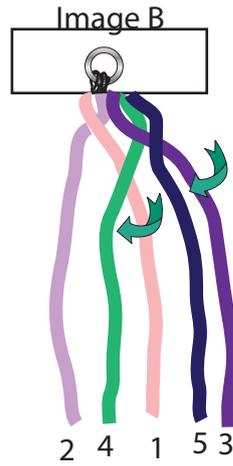
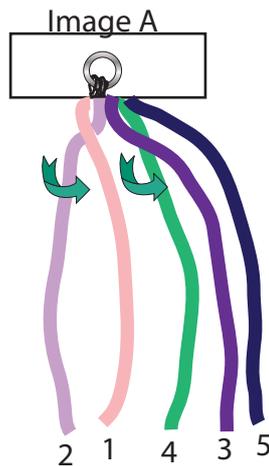
5 Strand Plait

Follow Step 1 on the previous page, but with 5 strands of seed beads.

Step 2. Once again tape down your ring on your work surface or ask a willing helper to hold the ring.



Now, to start your plait, **Strand 1** moves to the right over **Strand 2**, then **Strand 3** moves over **Strand 4**. **Strand 5** stays where it is, (Image A). Move **Strand 4** over **Strand 1** and **Strand 5** over to the top of **Strand 3** - **Strand 2** stays where it is. (Image B) Then go back to the left side - **Strand 1** goes to the right over **Strand 5** and **Strand 2** goes over to the right, over the top of **Strand 4**, (Image C)



Strand 5 moves to the left over **Strand 2**, then **Strand 3** moves over **Strand 1** - **Strand 4** stays where it is, (Image D).

Continue with your pattern until you have reached your desired length - , Here is how the pattern works in numbers, this should help you keep track of your plaiting -

Strand 1 2 3 4 5
 Strand 2 1 4 3 5
 Strand 3 2 4 1 5 3
 Strand 4 2 5 1 3
 Strand 5 4 2 3 1
 Strand 5 4 3 2 1
 Strand 5 3 4 1 2
 Strand 3 5 1 4 2

Remember to keep a good tension so your plait does not become loose, but also not too tight that it starts to twist.

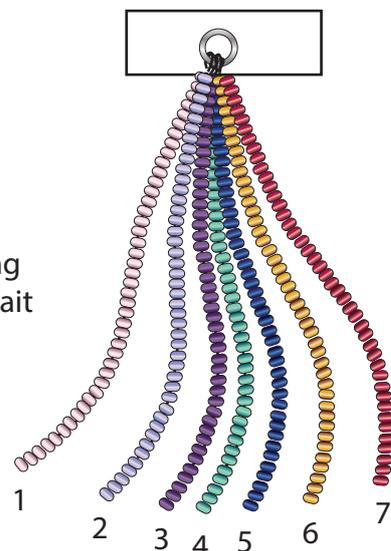
Follow steps 3, 4 and 5 on page 2 to attach your end cap and clasp.

7 Strand Plait

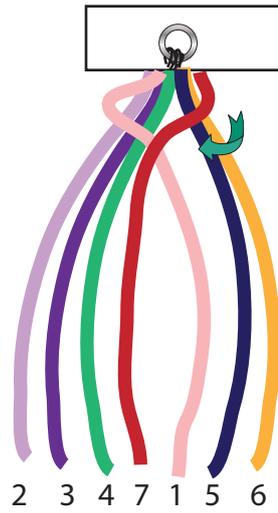
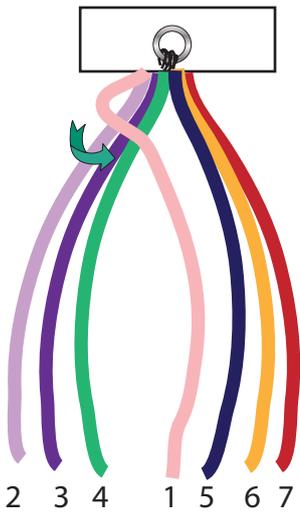
Follow Step 1 on the previous page, but with 7 strands of seed beads.

With the 7 Strand plait, there are 2 variation of plait design - the Chevron/fishtail plait or the Double row plait, once you have the hang of the pattern, both are quite simple to follow. We have included both plait designs, so you can have a go at both.

Step 2. Once again tape down your ring on your work surface or tie the closed ring to any hook or handle with a piece of thread - make sure this is easily removed.

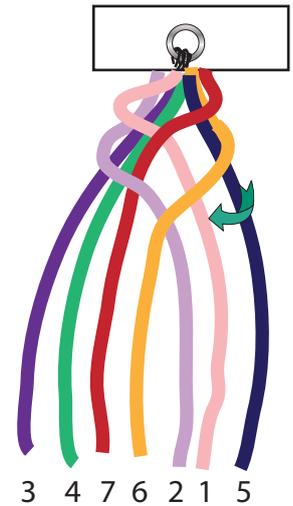
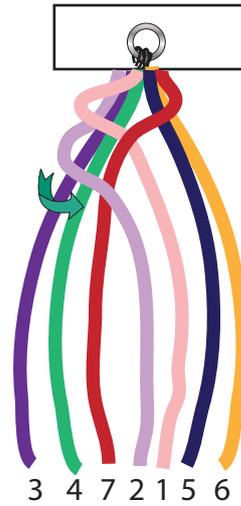


Chevron/Fishtail Version

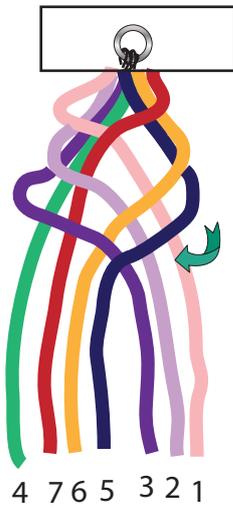
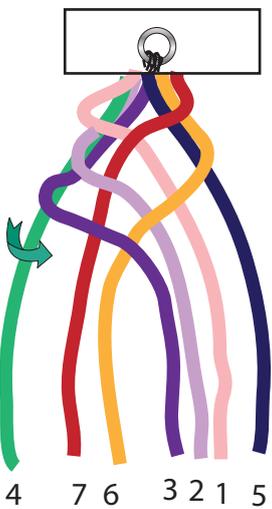


Step 3. Start by laying out you 7 strands so you can easily start to plait them together. Take Strand 1 and take it over Strand 2, Strand 3 and Strand 4. Then take Strand 7 and take it over Strand 6, Strand 5 and Strand 1.

Take Strand 2 and take it over Strand 3, Strand 4 and Strand 7. Then take Strand 6 over Strand 5 and then over Strand 1 and Strand 2.

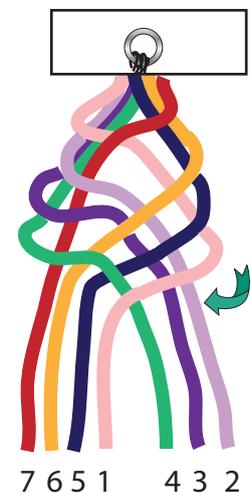
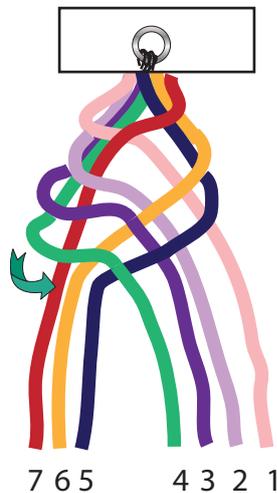


Take Strand 3 and take it over Strand 4, Strand 7 and Strand 6. Then take Strand 5 over Strand 1, Strand 2 and Strand 3.



Take Strand 4 and take it over Strand 7, Strand 6 and Strand 5. Then take Strand 1 over Strand 2, Strand 3 and Strand 4.

Continue with this pattern, taking the outer Strand over the inner 3 Strands on one side and then take the outer Strand on the other side over the inner 3 Strands.

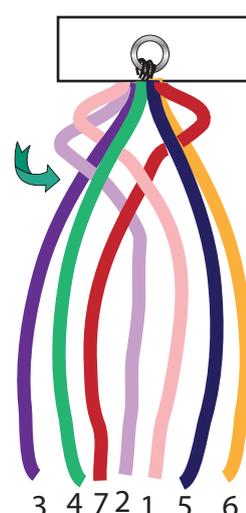
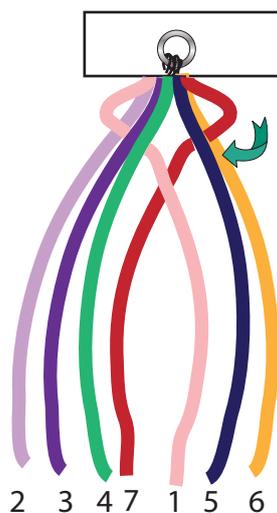
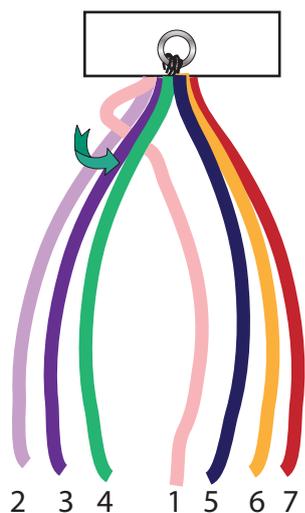


Remember to keep a good tension so your plait does not become loose, but also not too tight that it starts to twist.

Follow steps 3, 4 and 5 on page 2 to attach your end cap and clasp.

Double Row Version

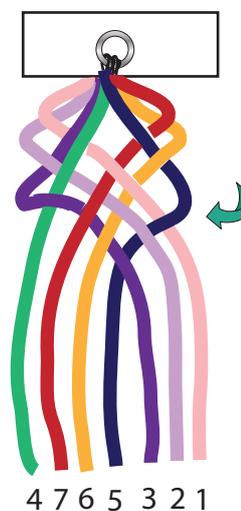
This 7 Stranded plait looks like 2 plaits sitting next to each other. Start by taking **Strand 1** over the top of **Strand 2**, then under **Strand 3** and **Strand 4**. Then take **Strand 7** over the top of **Strand 6**, then under **Strand 5** and **Strand 1**. Now, with **Strand 2**, take this over **Strand 3** and then under **Strand 4** and **Strand 7**.



Take **Strand 6** over the top of **Strand 5** then under **Strand 1** and **Strand 2**.

Next, take **Strand 3** over the top of **Strand 4**, then under **Strand 7** and **Strand 6**.

Continue with taking **Strand 5** over the top of **Strand 1**, then under **Strand 2** and **Strand 3**.



Continue with this pattern, taking the outer Strand over the the top of the strand next to it and then under the next two Strands , then repeat on the other side.

Follow steps 3, 4 and 5 on page 2 to attach your end cap and clasp.

Enjoy

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