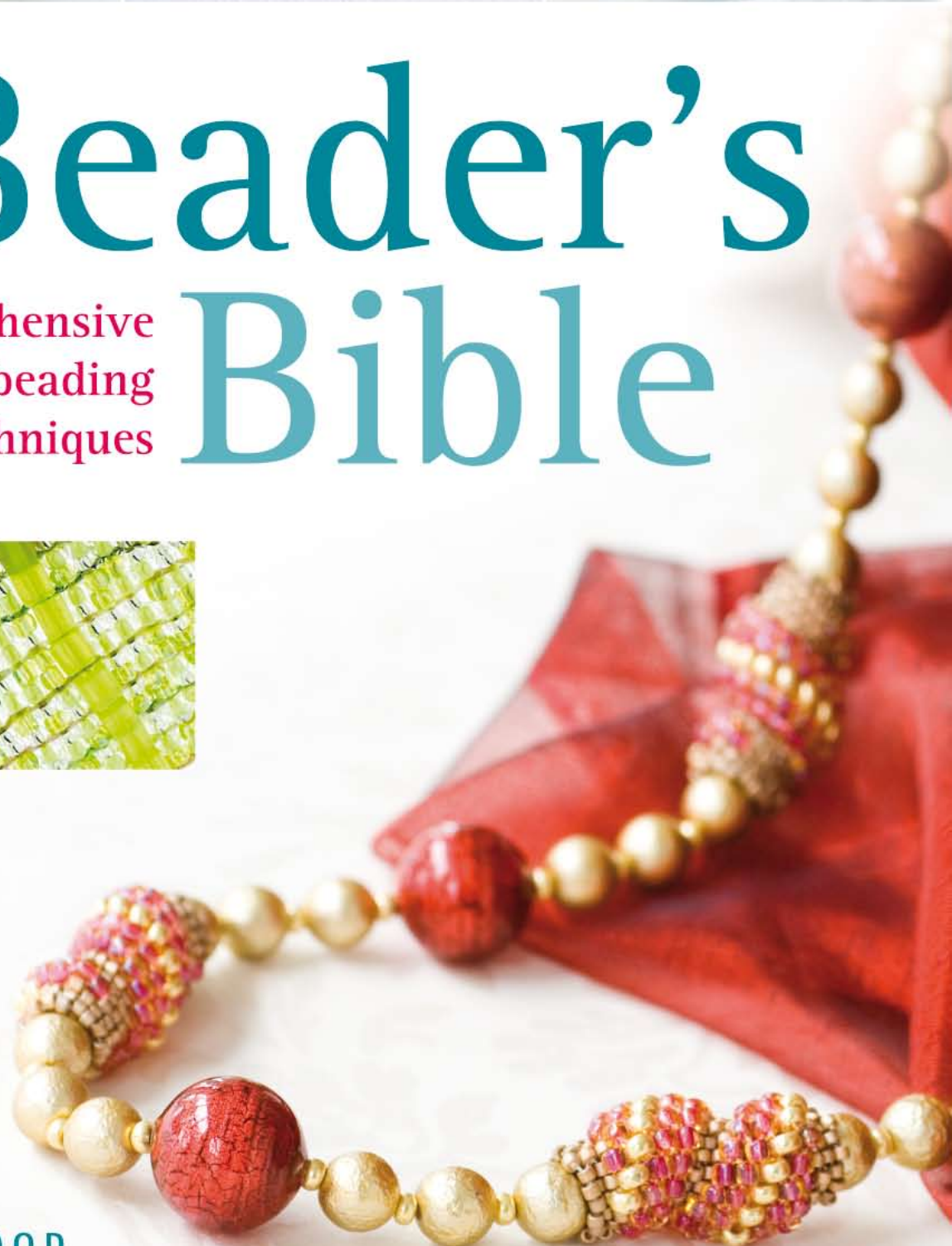
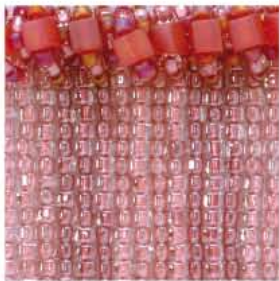




The Beader's Bible

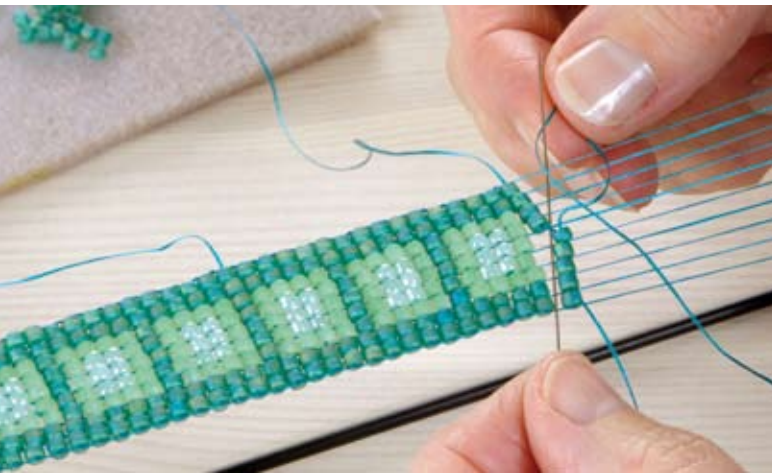
A comprehensive guide to beading techniques



DOROTHY WOOD

CHAPTER 1:

Bead Loom Weaving



Loom work is one of the easiest bead techniques to learn. It is used primarily to make simple bead bands for bracelets or pretty decorative borders that can be embellished to become quite ornate and intricate. Looms hold a number of tensioned warp threads so that beads threaded on to a weft thread can be 'woven' across them. In reality the beads are held in place by two horizontal threads going above and below the vertical threads. Bead loom pieces look best with evenly sized beads, although you can achieve interesting textures by using a variety of bead types of similar size. This chapter covers various techniques when using a bead loom, including setting up a loom, various warp methods, weaving on a loom, finishing off loom work, edging, fringing and netting, and other techniques.

Bead Inspirations

One of the most popular projects for bead loom weaving is a bracelet. It's quick to complete and you can experiment to create different textures and patterns. Based on the Bead Something Now Bugle Bracelet on page 25, these four pretty bracelet ideas should just be a starting point for you.



Pretty Plaits

A little forward planning is required when making a bracelet with inset plaiting, as you need to set up the loom with double warp threads along the slit lines. Work the main body of the bracelet and then complete the fastening at either end. The toggle is simply a square of loom work folded in half. Once the bracelet is off the loom, carefully sew in all the thread ends.



Prickly Pink

This funky bracelet makes up quickly using size 8 (2.6mm) beads. The bright pink fringing stands out against the silver-lined beads and a pretty pink border pulls both elements together. Make the fringing slightly longer towards the middle of each bundle for a slight dome effect and finish the bracelet with a simple loop, adding a large pebble bead for the toggle.



Chunky Charm

Picot edging adds an elegant touch to a simple bracelet made with triangle beads. These beads have a crinkly texture that contrasts with the metal beads added after the bracelet has been woven. As the beads are heavy, make sure you sew them securely using two strands of thread. Finish the bracelet with a woven thread panel at each end and attach bar ends and a clasp.



Sparkly Stripes

Mixing larger beads and smaller beads appears to be impossible but you simply choose small beads that fit in twos or threes across the width of the larger bead. In this design two small beads are woven between each warp thread. Create an interesting texture with matt cube beads and colour-lined triangle beads, then finish the bracelet with a blackberry toggle and loop fastening.

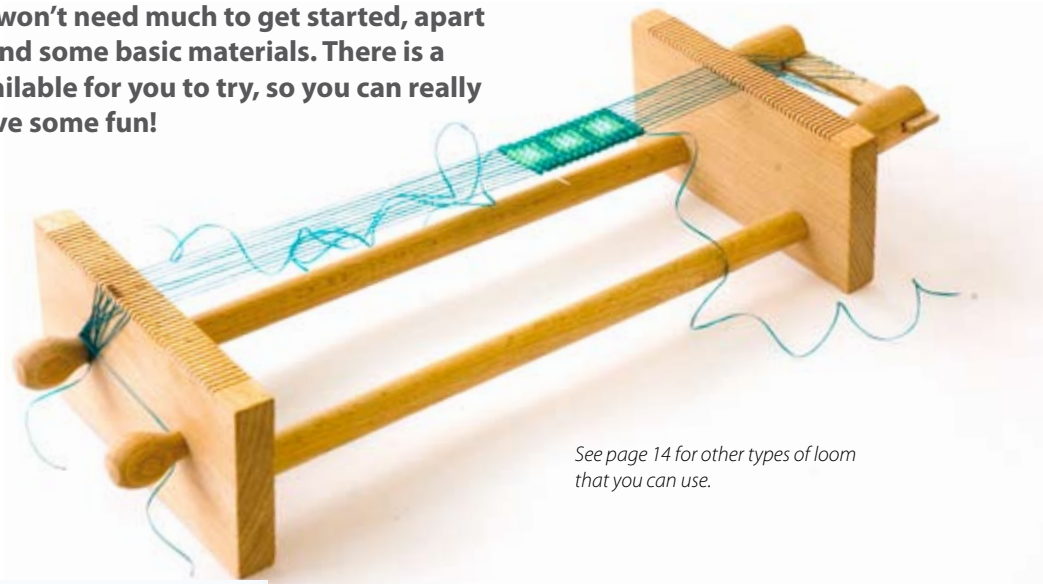


Basic Tool Kit

In this chapter you won't need much to get started, apart from a bead loom and some basic materials. There is a wealth of beads available for you to try, so you can really experiment and have some fun!

■ Bead Looms

Looms are usually made from metal or wood. Some looms have a roller at each end and others have extending side sections so that you can work a bead panel longer than the loom length. There are also small curved acrylic (Perspex) bead looms, known as tube looms (see page 25), that can be set up to work beading in a complete circle.



See page 14 for other types of loom that you can use.

■ Threads

Warp threads need to be quite strong so that they don't snap under tension or when the beadwork is complete. Nymo™ thread is a strong multifilament thread available in various sizes from 00 through 'B' and 'D' to 'G', the thickest. Fishing line monofilament threads such as PowerPro™ and Fireline™ are also popular, especially for the continuous warp method. You can experiment with different materials for warp threads: elastic to create stretch cuff-style jewellery; craft wire, which allows the piece to be shaped once woven, or decorative yarns for a completely different look. However, if using a thicker material for the warp, you may need to use a finer thread or wire for the weft as it must pass through the beads several times.

■ Needles

Beading needles need to go through the beads many times and so the size you choose will depend on the thickness of the threads and size of the bead hole. You can buy very long beading needles specially made for loom work or try a big eye needle, as it is less likely to break than a long beading needle. Use a tapestry needle, T pin or embossing tool to arrange the warp threads across the spring or coil.



■ Beads

Evenly-sized beads work best for bead loom work as the beads sit snugly side by side. For fine work cylinder beads, also known as delicas or antiques, are ideal. These beads are very uniform and have a large hole that allows you to pass threads through several times. High quality seed beads are also suitable if you discard uneven beads. Bugles and square beads add interesting textures or you can use more decorative beads such as bicone crystals and round beads, using more advanced techniques.

Getting Started

Once you have learnt the basic methods of bead loom work you can begin to start weaving your own projects. There are several ways to set up a loom, depending on the style of loom and the finished project. See below for advice on both flat and tubular techniques.

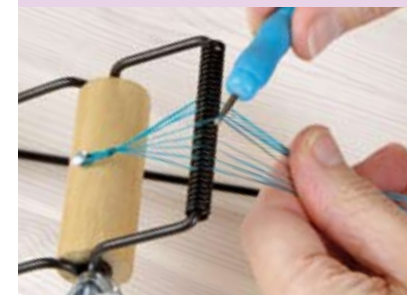
■ SETTING UP A LOOM

Bead work can be done on any firm structure that will hold the warp thread parallel and taut. You can use a purpose-made loom or a simple homemade structure. On traditional looms you can separate a bundle of warp threads along a coil or spring, or set up the loom with a single thread. Tubular looms use a single thread technique that allows you to bead all the way

round or you can set up a loom with an innovative method that eliminates the need for sewing in thread ends. The number of beads widthways varies, depending on the design, but it is often easier to create a pattern with an odd number of beads because there is usually a centre bead with an even number of beads on either side.

■ INDIVIDUAL WARP METHOD

Cut warp threads long enough to fit the piece of bead work, plus at least 20cm (8in) at each end to attach to the loom. Once the bead work is completed the extra thread is used for finishing off. Cut one more warp thread than the number of beads across the width of your work. For extra strength use a thicker thread for the two outer warps or you can add a double-length of your regular thread instead. Metal looms are sprung and help to keep the threads at an even tension.



1 Tie all the threads together with an overhand knot (see page 17) at one end and loop over a peg at the end of the loom. Hold the threads taut and separate them into the springs or coil. Separate the warps enough so that the beads you are using will fit between the threads.



2 Position the threads over the spring or coil at the other end of the loom so that the threads are parallel and equally spaced. Holding the threads taut, tie an overhand knot at the end and hook over the peg. Use a strip of low tack tape to prevent the threads jumping out of the springs while setting up the loom.



3 Turn the roller to take up the slack and then rotate the rollers at each end until there is an equal quantity of thread at each end. Tighten one roller then tension the threads by turning the other roller before tightening the screws.

■ SINGLE WARP

This method is similar to the individual warp method except you use one thread only. It is quick to set up, simple enough for children and ideal for small projects where there will be enough thread for finishing off at each end of the finished beading.



1 Tie the warp thread, straight off the reel, to the peg at one end of the loom. Insert the thread in one of the grooves on the nearest end and then take it over the corresponding groove at the other end.



2 Loop the thread around the peg at the other end and take it back across the grooves. Continue wrapping the thread around the pegs, fitting it into the grooves so they are spaced as wide as the beads. Once you have one more thread than the number of beads across the width, tie the end to the last peg. The threads should be taut but not too tight.

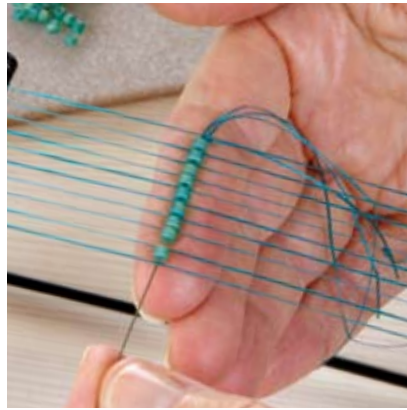
TIP THIS METHOD IS SUITABLE FOR METAL LOOMS AS WELL.

WEAVING ON A LOOM

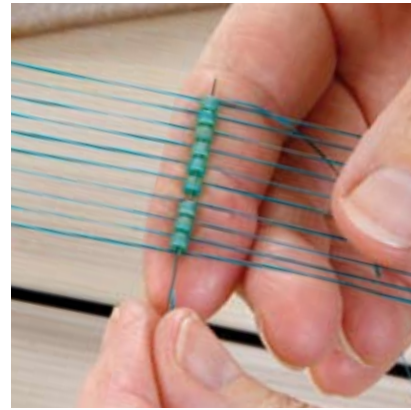
The thread used for the weft can be lighter in weight to that used for the warp. Check that you can pass the needle and thread through the beads several times. Cylinder beads are ideal as they are even in size and have large holes, but if you don't mind a slightly uneven finish you can use seed beads. Begin at either end of the loom – whichever is more comfortable for you.



1 Tie a length of thread to the outside warp on the side you have your bead mat and beads, leaving a 20cm (8in) tail. Use a simple overhand knot (see page 17) and as long a thread as you are comfortable with as it means fewer joins. Then thread the end into a long beading needle.

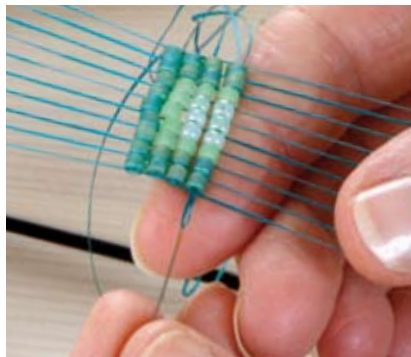


2 Pick up the beads for the first row on the needle and position under the warp threads so that there is one bead between each pair of threads. Hold the beads in place with your finger and pull the needle with the weft thread through the beads with your other hand.

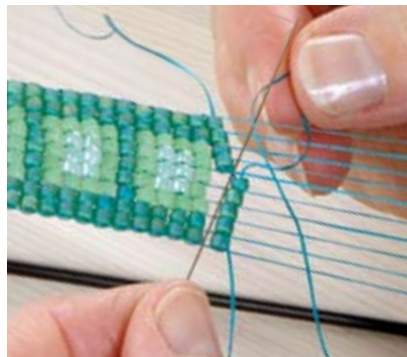


3 Keeping the beads in position with your finger, feed the needle back through the beads, making sure that it goes above the warp threads this time. For the continuous warp method, in particular, it is essential not to split the warp threads with the needle (see page 24).

TIP WEAVING A FEW ROWS WITH THE WEFT THREAD BEFORE YOU BEGIN WILL STABILISE THE WARP THREADS, BY HELPING TO SPACE THE THREADS AND MAKING IT EASIER TO POSITION AND SLOT THE FIRST ROW OF BEADS INTO THE THREADS.



4 Pick up the beads for the second row and repeat steps 2 and 3. It becomes easier to weave as more beads are added. If you have a chart pick the beads up in the order required and push the beads rows together snugly.



5 When you get near the end of the working thread join on a new thread. Feed the needle between two beads near the opposite edge and pass through several beads. Work a half hitch (see page 17) and then pass the needle through the remaining beads out to the edge where the other tail has been left. Sew the tail in later.

TIP BEGINNING OR FINISHING A THREAD BETWEEN TWO BEADS IN THE BODY OF THE WORK IS NEATER AS THE TAIL END IS INVISIBLE WHEN TRIMMED.



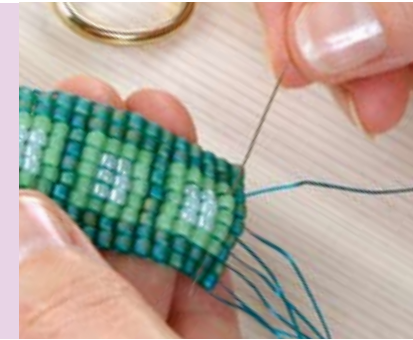
6 If you are working on a loom with rollers, loosen the rollers and wind the work further along until there is enough length of warp thread to complete the beading. On long pieces tuck a piece of card in between the peg and beadwork to prevent it getting damaged.

FINISHING OFF BEAD LOOM WORK

There are lots of different ways to finish off loom work, depending on how you are going to use the bead panel. You can either sew in the ends or weave the ends, as explained below.

SEWING IN THE ENDS

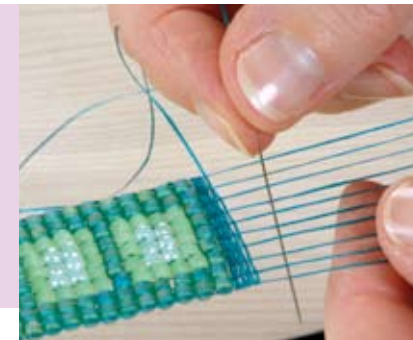
Tails on the side edges are sewn back through the beads and secured with a half hitch knot (see page 17). You can also sew warp threads into the loom work in the same way. To keep the work looking neat avoid trimming threads, making knots or oversewing on the outer edges.



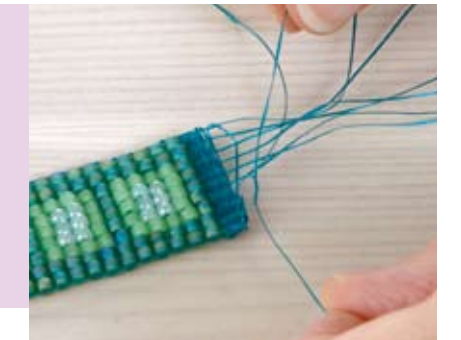
Thread the tail on a needle. Take the thread over the warp thread at the edge then go back through a few beads. Work a half hitch (see page 17) between the beads, taking the needle under the warp thread, pass through a few more beads then trim the thread ends close to the beadwork. With warp threads, weave down one or two rows between the beads first and then secure in the same way as the side tails.

WEAVING THE ENDS

You can simply fold the warp threads to the reverse side and attach to a backing but a tightly woven thread panel holds the beads in position. Although it takes a little time to weave, the beadwork is more secure. Fold the panel to the reverse to hide.



1 Weave the tail end of the weft thread through the warp threads until it is 6mm (¼in) deep. Weave a similar panel at the other end. Loosen the roller screws and lift the bead panel off the loom, releasing the threads from the pegs at both ends.

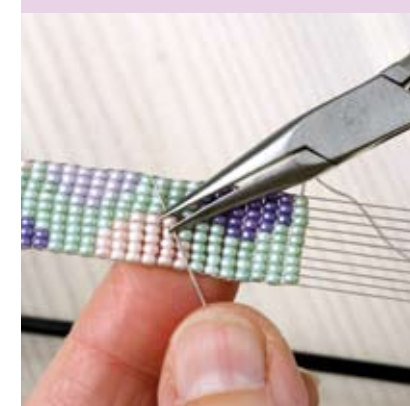


2 Tie the warp threads together in pairs or groups of four, using a surgeon's knot (see page 17), and then trim the ends close to the knots. This woven panel can be folded back and the beading attached to a backing or you could attach a crimp style of bar fastener to make a bracelet or belt.

CORRECTING MISTAKES

If you make a mistake in the pattern and have noticed fairly quickly, unpick several rows and replace the wrong bead. If the bead is further into the work it is fairly easy to crush the bead with pliers and sew in a replacement, although this is risky as you can snap the thread.

CRUSHING A BEAD



- Carefully crush the bead with snipe or chain-nose pliers from end to end, avoiding the thread altogether.
- Before you crush the glass bead put a needle in the hole to prevent the thread from snapping.
- For beads further in you can also insert the needle through the row of beads and carefully crush the offending bead with a metal punch and hammer.

Missing a Bead

The most common error when bead weaving is to pass the needle under some of the warp threads rather than over them in a row. This isn't always obvious while the beadwork is on the loom but if you notice soon enough unpick a few rows and rework. Once the beadwork is off the loom and not tensioned it can be quite noticeable as the beads tend to drop below the surface of the beadwork.

To correct the mistake, weave a thread through the offending beads with the needle above the warp threads and then sew in the ends.

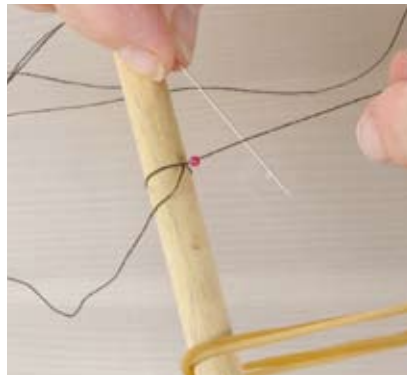
CONTINUOUS WARP METHOD

This new innovative technique allows you to pull the warp thread through the bead fabric so that there are only two ends to sew in. It is essential the warp threads are not pierced with the

needle as you work otherwise it will not pull through freely. Use a monofilament thread to set up the loom and a blunt needle to add the beads.



1 Set the loom up with two dowels across a suitable box or structure. The elastic bands provide the tension to create the bead work. To attach the cords that support the dowels, use a slip knot or wrap the cord around the dowel twice and tie a couple of half hitches (see page 17) to secure the cord. The distance between the dowels should be slightly longer than the finished piece.



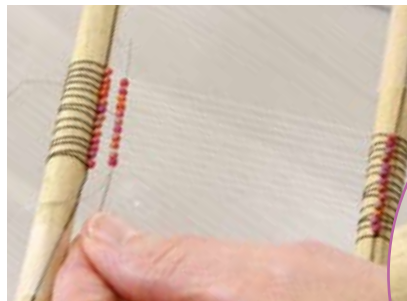
2 Tie a 2m (2yd) length of strong thread around the dowel at one end of the loom with a surgeon's knot (see page 17) and thread the other end in a needle. Pick up a seed bead and drop it down to the dowel. Take the thread behind the dowel. Bring it over the front and through the loop next to the bead. Pull taut.



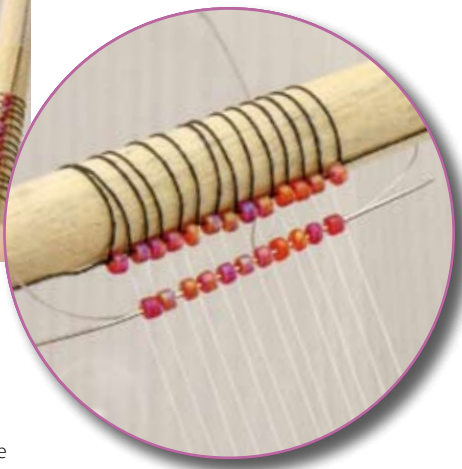
3 Work along the dowel, adding enough beads to complete the design and then add two extra beads. Attach the same number of beads along the dowel at the other end of the loom in the same way.



4 Using the thread straight off the reel without cutting, thread a needle onto a monofilament thread such as PowerPro™ or Fireline™ and sew through the first bead at the top of the loom. Take the needle through the second bead at the bottom of the loom. Miss the second bead at the top and go through the third. Continue along the bead rows, taking the needle through alternate beads. Pull the thread through as you go until you reach the end.



5 You should have one more thread than the beads across the design. Leave about 60cm (24in) at each end and tape out of the way. Then attach a new thread and weave the beads, taking care not to catch the warp thread with the needle as it passes back and through the beads.



To prevent the needle piercing the warp threads you can rub the tip of the needle on fine sandpaper to blunt it slightly. Make sure the needle passes above each warp thread as it passes back through the beads.

Bead Something Now Bugle Bracelet

In most bead loom pieces the beads are all the same size but this pretty bracelet mixes short bugles and hex beads to create a delightful texture. This is a great project to experiment with the bead loom weaving technique as there is no chart to follow. The beads have different diameters but are both the same width so can be woven in different rows. Depending on which beads you choose you can create a whole selection of bracelets that all look totally different. Once the bead band is complete, a panel of thread weaving secures the beads at each end (see page 23), so that you can attach the simple elegant bar end fastenings. Full instructions on how to make the bracelet are on page 152



TAKING THE BEAD PANEL OFF THE LOOM

This technique for bead loom weaving is finished in a different way to traditional methods. Its success depends on the weft threads being separate and not going through any of the warp threads – as a result it is often known as the 'pull and pray' technique.



1 Once the bead panel is complete snip the loops of thread going over the dowels to release it from the loom, alternate beads on the top will drop out. Remove any cut threads and then tape the bead panel on to the work surface going across the beads.



2 Beginning in the centre, begin to pull the warp threads through the beads, one column at a time. Work to the edge then begin in the centre again and pull the threads out to the other edge. Sew in the replacement beads on the end rows then sew in the two ends.

TUBE LOOM

These small acrylic looms are ideal for making amulet purses, bags and bracelets. The looms are available in a range of sizes and allow you to bead all the way round to make a piece of tubular beading. The threads are secured in a similar way to the continuous warp method but without the beads. Weave until the gap is filled and then move the beading round to the next section. Once complete, squeeze the sides of the tube gently to release the loom work. Full instructions come with the looms.



1 Tie the end of the thread to the anchor hole at one side of the loom. Wrap the thread around the loom and bring the bobbin under the thread again to form a half hitch (see page 17). Work several half hitches to secure this first loop. Position the loom by holding it with your index finger extended and pass the thread over your extended finger and around loom.



2 Pass the bobbin through the loop formed by finger and pull thread taut. Add threads until you have one more than the number of beads and secure with half hitches. Weave beads in the gap until filled. Snip the thread tied through anchor hole and rotate the beadwork to bring the next section of threads into the gap.