

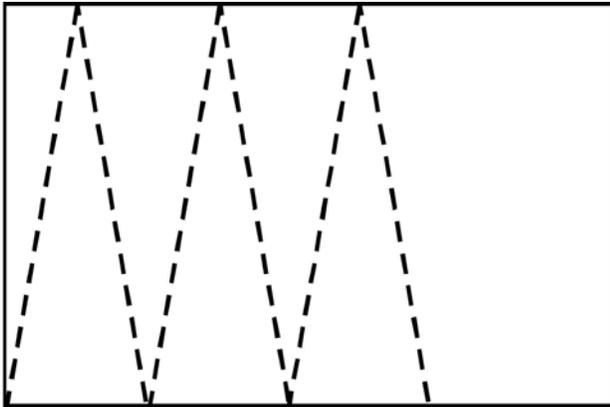


## Paper Beads: They're Colorful, Unique, Interesting and Waterproof!

Directions to make a basic tapered bead that can be strung, put on a head pin, added to a fringe, or become part of another project.

Use a sheet of paper approx letter size, and has some sort of pattern, photo or decoration on one side. For maximum durability, use 20# copy paper. When you dip the rolled bead in to the sealer, the paper fibers will bond tightly.

**STEP 1:** cut the paper in a series of "v" shapes across the page. Allow at least 1/2" for the widest end and taper your smallest end to a point. (see diagram below) Try not to make your bead wider than 1 1/2" for stability. (unless you are going to have some sort of reinforcing core, like a pen refill, a straw or a cardboard tube) Use decorative edged scissors for a more interesting look.



**STEP 2** Beginning 1/8" in from the widest end, apply a water-soluble glue stick to the unprinted side of the paper. Smear it all the way to the tip. This will give you a temporary bond until you apply the glaze.

### STEP 3

**TOOLS:** If you have a cotter pin (similar to a bobby pin, but thicker), thread the unglued part of the wide end through the two sides to hold it

while you wrap. OR you can use 2 thick wires joined at one end, wood skewers, even long-nosed pliers if they are not tapered. Whatever you use, it needs to hold the unglued edge tightly while you wrap the rest of the paper around to make a bead. If you want a larger hole, you can use a straw or chopsticks.

**Step 4** Starting at the wide end, tightly roll the paper towards the narrow end, wrapping each layer around the previous one tightly (and centered) to create a nice taper. Use the glue stick to hold the point shut if necessary. Carefully remove the wrapped bead from your wire and put it aside. If you find that the bead sticks to the wire when you try and pull it off, then allow 1/4" before you start your glue stick coverage.

To create a Cylinder shape, cut the paper into long rectangles instead of a "v" shape.

## **MIX YOUR DIPPING LIQUID:**

In a tall, resealable plastic container, mix about 1 cup of water and 1/2 cup of a water-based sealer made for wood or paper. If your mixture just barely drips when you dip your finger in it, then the proportions are correct. Most polyurethanes or acrylics work...liquitex acrylic medium, mod podge, anita's gloss finish-just make sure it is a water-based sealer in liquid form. Choose a matt or gloss finish.

I recommend using a water-based polyurethane designed for finishing outdoor decks – it provides the most durable result and you can buy it in a quart can. How much water you mix into the sealer depends on how thick the mixture is. You want it thick enough to coat well, but thin enough not to leave drips on the beads.

Shake often to keep mixture suspended. Using a smooth aluminum or plastic tube, slide the beads on, keeping them apart from each other with tape or plastic wrap. About 3-4 beads per "stick" is best. You can spray WD-40 very lightly on the rod to keep the beads from sticking to it before you put them on. Dip the beads into the mixture and let dry for at least 10 minutes. For best results, I recommend that you dip the beads no less than 5 times, allowing 10-15 minutes drying between them.

The paper will become brighter and the color more saturated as you go. If you want to feel a smooth bead with no ridges, then you may need to dip the bead 8 or 9 times. The bead will feel very hard when it is dry.

## **Hints, tips and tricks:**

When mixing your dipping liquid, try adding pearlescent pigment additives (pearl-ex), or a bit of powdered metallic eye shadow.

When making cylindrical beads (rather than tapered beads) try these treatments,

Using a small hand-held punch, punch random holes in the papers so that when rolled, the lower layers show through. When finished, the beads will not be completely symmetrical, but if you layer several different papers or choose a design that changes, the result will be very exciting.

After rolling the bead and before beginning the dipping process, wrap metallic or variegated thread around the bead. You need to use a thread that will lay fairly flat, so use a fine gauge. Tie small knots and work from one end to the other.

Using your beads in jewelry: Hints for stringing.

It may take a while to perfect your beadmaking skills, so that the bead's natural ends look good, and the hole size works well with your headpins or whatever you are using for stringing your beads, so here are a few tips on how to compensate for irregularities:

- After dipping and drying, you can, with a sharp x-acto knife, slice your bead's end to make it flush. A very nice effect is to roll a long tapered bead (2" or so), then after dipping and drying, slice it in half and string it with a rondel or large square glass bead in the middle. Makes a nice centerpiece for a necklace or a bracelet.
- If the hole in the end of your bead is irregular, you can use either bead caps, or, if your bead is a cylinder, then a small sequin makes a nice end as well. For a tapered bead, a very small (4mm) glass or metal bead can fit nicely in the hole and stabilize the bead.
- Your bead's stability will depend on the number of times you've dipped it and on how tightly you've wound the paper. Make sure it is strong enough to withstand any structural demands you put on it in your design.



### **What else can you make?**

There's a whole lot more you can do with your digital design papers and the paper beads that you make with them than string them into necklaces or earrings.

### **Your own pen!**

Roll a large cigar-shaped bead onto a plastic straw. After the dipping process, you'll have a hole big enough to put a ball point pen refill inside and have a unique custom-designed pen. Make your cap out of part of the bead or just coil some wire to protect the pen's ball point from accidentally writing. Most ball points (as opposed to gel points) do not need a tight cap & can work well for months, even years without a problem with a loose, or even no cap.

### **Lampshades:**

Use your favorite lampshade kit, or dip the paper in the glue mixture until it is "crunchy" then run thru a paper crimper & fasten.

### **Decoupage and fans:**

Decoupage the design paper onto a wood blank or a small box or cut the paper into 1" x 2" rectangles and pleat the paper into a fan shape. Dip the fans into the same glue mixture & make an unforgettable mobile.

### **Great with baskets & wreaths:**

Paper beads make a great accent when weaving baskets. Their texture is similar to the materials used in basketweaving and the color makes a nice accent. They also work well on floral wire as accents in wreaths and flower arrangements.

Make beads using designer-created papers: [www.notjustpartz.com/beading-papers.htm](http://www.notjustpartz.com/beading-papers.htm)