

## Elegant Bangle Bracelet

A bangle bracelet using beads and sterling silver wire.  
by Connie Fox

**Skill level**  
●●●○○

Intermediate project

Bangles are without a doubt my favorite piece of jewelry. Only when my shoulder is sagging due to the weight of my bracelets do I consider removing a bangle. Just kidding, of course. This elegant bangle is a great companion with other bangles in your collection and is easily worn alone. I do think, however, that multiple bangles are far more interesting than one alone.

This design presents you with at least three challenges: forming a coiled focal bead, creating a swan clasp, and making the bangle fit your wrist properly. This last challenge is made easier if you make a "template" or practice piece with copper wire before you dive into the more expensive silver.

Only the 12-gauge mandrel and the coiled twisted wire need to be practiced in copper. If you don't have easy access to twisted copper wire, use coiled 14-gauge round wire instead. Once you have your template made in copper, you'll know the exact length of your silver mandrel and the length of coiled silver twisted wire to get a good fit. The following factors affect sizing in this bangle: length of the mandrel, length of the focal bead, size of your silver beads, and lengths of your coiled twisted wire. In other words, a template is a really good idea.

To view more of Connie's work, visit the new Gallery of Designers.

### Step by Step - Part I

#### 1 Mandrel measurement.

Measure your wrist at the wrist bone with a soft measuring tape. Check the list below to determine an estimate for the length of your mandrel. With wire cutters suited to deal with heavy gauge wire, cut the desired length of 12-gauge wire. Blunt-cut both ends. When in doubt, cut your mandrel a little longer — you can always cut off a piece of the mandrel later.

#### Wrist mandrel approximate lengths

Wrist measurement	Mandrel length
5.5"	8.5"
6"	9"
6.5"	9.5"
7"	10"
7.5"	10.5"
8"	11"

#### 2 Coiling twisted wire.

If you've purchased pretwisted, 20-gauge sterling silver wire, you're ready to coil. If you're a wire-bending purist, you'll reach for that wire twister and make your own. Cut 8' of 20-gauge sterling silver wire, dead soft. Lock the two ends of your wire in the jaws of your wire twister. Place a nail upright in your bench vise and at the wire's halfway mark (4'), place it over the nail. Begin twisting by pulling the chrome knob, allowing your tool to spin. Keep on spinning until you've achieved a nice, tight twist.



With your twisted wire in hand, you're ready to make a coil. Wrap the 4' of twisted wire snugly around your 1' length of 12-gauge mandrel wire. Make sure each coil is close to its neighbors. 4' of 20-gauge twisted wire will yield about 6" of coil on a 12-gauge mandrel. Remove the coil from the mandrel and set it aside.



#### 3 Focal bead.

I learned to make this type of focal bead from Lynne Merchant. Making this bead the first few times is a little tricky, so please persevere — eventually you'll be very pleased with the results.

Cut 14" of 14-gauge silver wire to create a mandrel. Straighten the wire by running it through your fingers. With a plastic mallet, strike the wire on an anvil multiple times to harden the wire. Save your 14" mandrel for future projects. Cut 3-1/2' of 14-gauge half-round wire and coil it around your mandrel, wrapping away from your body. Place each new coil next to the one previously wrapped until you've used all the wire.

**Hint: Leave a tail hanging to grasp with your other hand while you wrap. Also, make sure you keep the flat side of the wire next to the mandrel.**



Remove your coiled half-round wire from the mandrel. Cut 15" of 16-gauge silver, dead soft wire and insert it into your newly formed coil. Grasping the end of the 16-gauge wire with your round nose pliers, rotate your hand away from your body to form a loop. The loop should be large enough to accommodate 12-gauge wire, but not much larger. Make 3-4 coils.



With your round nose pliers still in place, grasp your half-round coil 2 coils in from the end and continue to wrap.



Keep wrapping at the same position on your round nose pliers. You may find it easier to mark your pliers with an indelible pen to get uniformity.



Wrap until you reach the end of the half-round wire coiling.

Grasp the other end of the 16-gauge mandrel wire, and wrapping away from your body, coil until you reach the end of the 16-gauge wire.



Bring your round nose pliers into the opposite end of the 16-gauge wire coil. Grasp the mandrel wire in between the first and second half-round wire coils.

Rotate your pliers hand towards your body until the little coils are sitting in the middle of your focal bead. At this point I prefer to clip off one or two of the little coils at either end of the bead.



Next month we will put the bangle together, make the clasp, and patina the finished piece.



### what you need

- 4 sterling silver beads with holes large enough to accommodate 12-gauge wire (approximately 2mm)
  - 10 silver spacers with holes large enough to accommodate 12-gauge wire
  - 1' 12-gauge sterling silver round wire, dead soft
  - 2' 14-gauge sterling silver round wire, dead soft
  - 2' 16-gauge sterling silver round wire, dead soft
  - 4' 20-gauge sterling silver twisted wire\* or 8' 20-gauge round wire if twisting your own
  - 8' 20-gauge copper round wire for practice (if twisting your own)
  - 4' 14-gauge sterling silver half-round wire, dead soft
  - 1' 12-gauge copper round wire for practice
  - Semi-flush or flush cutters suited for cutting 12-gauge wire
  - Round nose pliers with extra long jaws
  - Flat nose pliers
  - Chain nose pliers
  - Anvil or steel bench block
  - Chasing hammer
  - Plastic mallet
  - Liver of sulfur
  - #000 fine steel wool
  - Polishing cloth
  - Soft measuring tape
- Optional:** Wire twisting tool if twisting your own wire  
\* Check with your wire supplier to make sure you get two 20-gauge round wires twisted together.

**For information on supplies, please see the Annual Buyers' Directory.**

Always ask for the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) for any materials you buy, which will give you reactivity, health hazard, and safe handling data.

Connie Fox is a psychotherapist by night and an artist by day. She combines her experience in ikebana, or Japanese floral design, and floor loom weaving with her love for working with wire to create wonderful wire art jewelry. You can view her work and contact her through her Web site, [www.conniefox.com](http://www.conniefox.com).

To view more of Connie's work, visit the new Gallery of Designers.

Try your skills with more [step-by-step projects here!](#)

More projects available for purchase through [StepbyStepJewelry.com](http://StepbyStepJewelry.com) Instant Article Reprints

Looking for supplies? Check out our Online Classifieds for great deals. Or, search for suppliers by keyword in our Product & Dealer Search.