



the lure of charms

HOW TO MAKE A TEXT BEAD



by **Belinda Spiwak**

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by **Belinda Spiwak**

I am wild about charms! I love charms made from yardstick pieces, game pieces, Scrabble® tiles, domino pieces, fishing swivels, and safety pins, washers, wire, and leftover quiltie sandwiches. Charms can come in all sorts of shapes, sizes, and materials. They can be made of vintage materials, from hardware odds and ends, or even from sewing leftovers. The best charms are the ones that look great on your charm bracelet, earrings, or necklace. The charm's value depends on how much it means to you.

The most important thing about a charm is its wearability. A charm should be made of a durable material. It should not have sharp corners or barbs—you don't want it to stab you or catch on your clothes

After that, pretty much anything goes. I have a tendency to mix everyday objects with altered charms to my charm jewelry. Look in old toy boxes. Parts of board games and dolls make great charms. Look in the bottom of your sewing box. Take a look in your junk drawer. Clean out the garage boxes and tool boxes. Have your kids search for pencil stubs hiding in obscure corners of your house. "Borrow" some of those fishing lures and swivels. Inventory your jewelry box. Take apart any old costume jewelry you no longer wear and turn it into something new and funky.

Feel free to make some alterations. Do some innovative twisting and hammering with wire. Stack buttons or "age" pieces with ink. Don't dismiss a potential charm until you see it as part of an entire piece. What might not look so great by itself might look wonderful when mixed with other elements.

Once you've made your charms, you probably are going to want to attach them to something. Here are some of my tried and true tips for making a charm bracelet.

- Alternate short and long charms as you attach them, for visual appeal.
- As you are putting your charm bracelet together, try it on periodically to make sure it falls the way you want. If the charm is stiff and does not sit correctly, you might want to add on another jump ring so the charm will fall better on your wrist.
- Make sure the bracelet is comfortable. The charms add some weight to the base bracelet, and that can make the bracelet feel a bit smaller than it did originally. You should be able to easily clasp your bracelet and it should sit on your wrist with a little "give" so the charms can tinkle.
- Don't put as many charms near the clasp as the rest of the bracelet so you can find and use the clasp more easily.
- The jump rings should be secure, or you risk losing your charms. A diameter of 1½" or smaller seems to work best.
- Remember to move one end of the jump ring towards you and one end away from you when opening the jump ring. Do the reverse when closing. Never pull the jump ring apart or it will not close properly.
- Jump ring wire diameters can differ in size. Pay attention to that because you do not want your jump ring to be too fat for your charm hole. If your jump ring loses its shape, it's easier to use a new one rather than spend time trying to reshape a warped jump ring.
- Remember that your charms and charm bracelet should be fun and that your charm bracelet should have plenty of "jingle."



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MATERIALS

- Pottery bead or any oblong bead
- Book text
- Tim Holtz Distress Ink (available at interweavestore.com)
- Gel medium (available at interweavestore.com)
- Paintbrush
- Wax paper

DIRECTIONS

1. Tear strips of book text into thin strips shorter than length of your bead, about 1-1½" long.
2. Edge the strips of text with Distress Ink. Let the text dry.
3. Use a paintbrush or your finger to apply a thin coat of gel medium to the bead. Roll the text around the bead. Apply a coat of gel medium on top of the text. Lay it on wax paper to dry. Let dry completely.

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