

Brick Stitch Basics

with Diane Fitzgerald



Freeform Brick Stitch Bracelet
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Freeform Brick Stitch Pendant
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Brick Stitch Basics

Brick Stitch Base Row

There are many ways to make a base row for brick stitch. Five methods are illustrated. You may use the one you prefer, or the one that works best for your design. You may also substitute the edge of fabric or a fold in fabric for the base row.

Prepare Thread

This method of thread preparation is used for all techniques in these instructions. Thread needle with 2 yds (2 m) of Nymo D thread, Fireline or your preferred thread. Bring ends together with the needle in the middle. Wax well so the strands adhere to each other. Knot the ends together with an overhand knot, clip the tails 1 mm from the knot. Melt the tails slightly by holding them near a disposable lighter flame...not in it.

Method One: Single-Needle Ladder

String on 2 beads and push them to within 1 inch (2.5 cm) of the knot. Separate the strands between the beads and the knot. Pass the thread between the strands and pull tight.

Pass up through the bead on the right (Fig. 2). Add one bead. Pass down through the bead to the left, then up through the new bead just added (Fig. 3). Add a bead, pass up through the previous bead and down through the new bead (Fig. 4). Four beads are now connected and your thread should be exiting the top of the fourth bead (opposite the side where the tail is). Continue to add stacks of beads to make the base row as long as you wish, repeating the steps in Figures 3 and 4.

Definitions

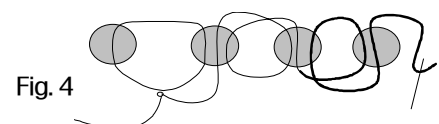
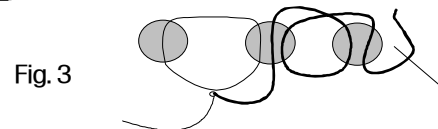
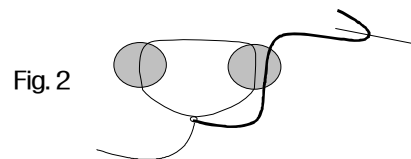
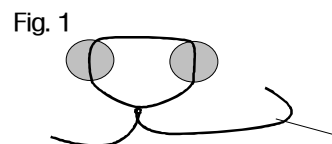
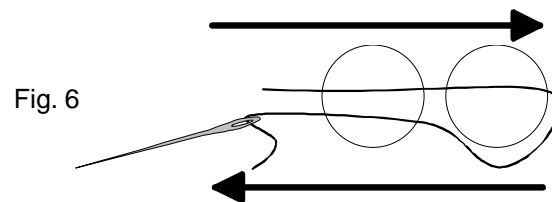
Stack: refers to the unit of beads used to work a row of brick stitch, that is, a stack may be one or more beads tall.

Loop: A loop is the thread bridge between two stacks of beads.

Pass Through (PT): **Pass Through:** insert the needle in a bead and pull it out the other side (Fig. 5).



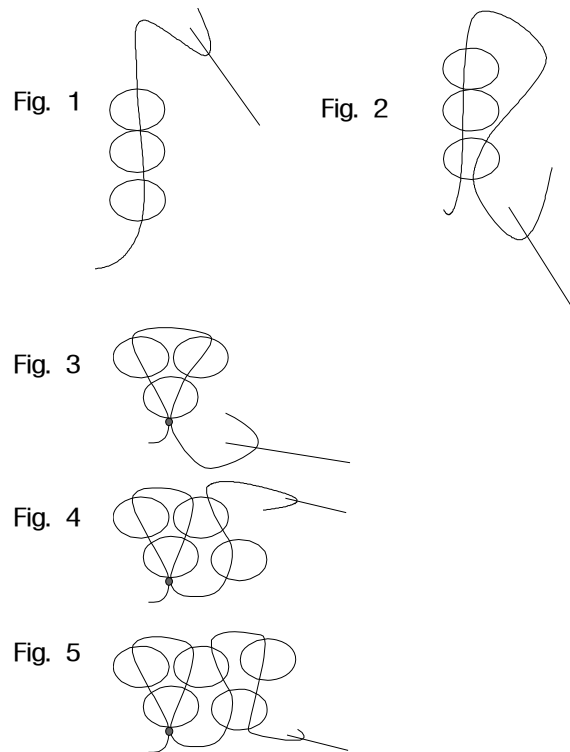
Pass Back Through (PBT): Insert the needle into a bead going in the opposite direction of the previous pass and pull it out the other side (Fig. 6).



Method Two: Double-Row Base Row

This method of making a base row may remind you of peyote stitch. It is an efficient way to start brick stitch because two rows are completed at the same time. The instructions are given for rows with stacks one bead tall, but you may use it for stacks of any height.

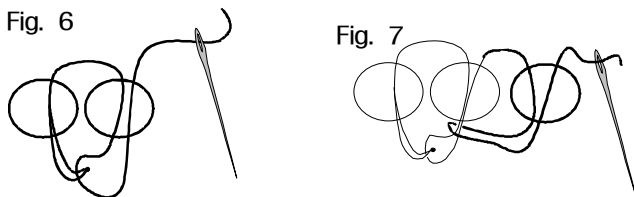
1. String on 3 beads (Fig. 1).
2. PBT the first bead (Fig. 2).
3. Place the beads so they form a "T" and tie working thread to tail (Fig. 3).
4. Add 1 bead and PT second bead added in Step 1 (Fig. 4).
5. Add 1 bead and PBT the bead added in the previous step (Fig. 5). Continue adding 1 bead and passing back through the last bead added.



Method Three: Catch the Loop

This method works well if you wish to create a curve with brick stitch.

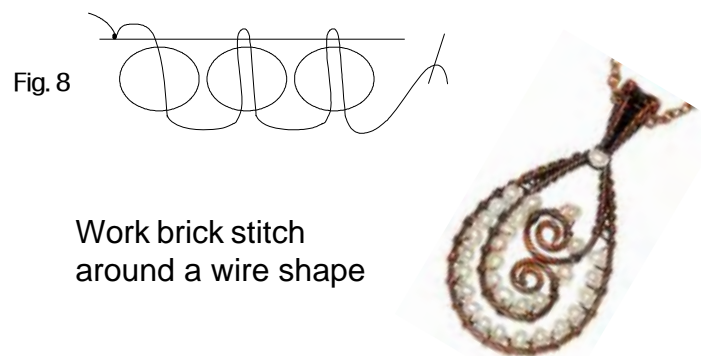
1. Tie two beads in the end of your thread with a square knot or use the double thread method to start (Fig. 6).
2. PBT the right bead(s) (Fig. 7).
3. Add one bead, pass around the loop of thread between the first and second bead, then PBT the new bead. Continue to add one bead and pass around the loop between the previous two beads.



Method Four: Fabric or Wire Edge

The bead hole is perpendicular to the fabric edge. With thread anchored from the wrong side of the fabric, add two beads. Pass the thread through the edge of the fabric, then back through the last bead added. Continue by adding one bead at a time, sewing through the edge of the fabric, then back through the new bead (Fig. 8).

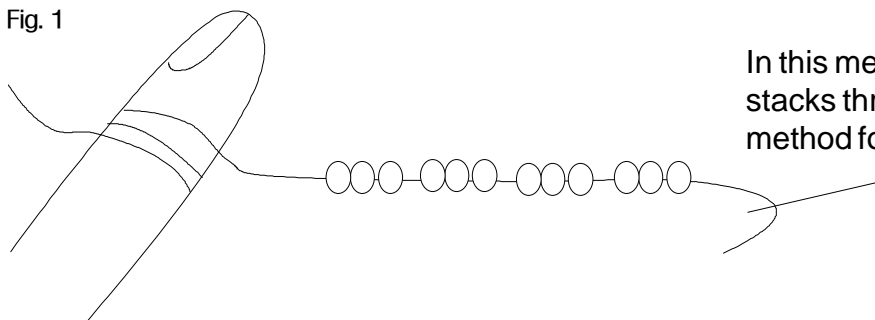
This method may also be used to add beads to wire, a thread or cord or to work off the side edge of flat peyote stitch.



Work brick stitch
around a wire shape

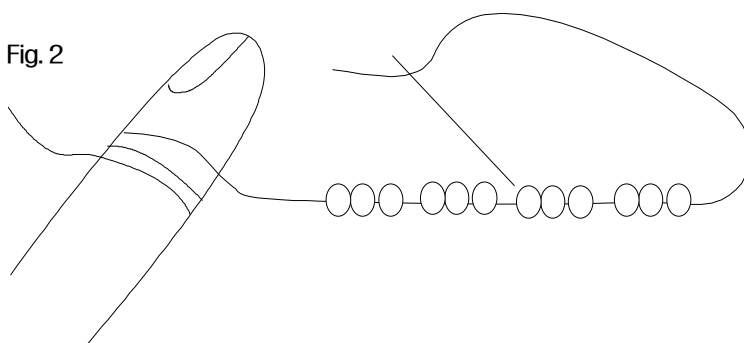
Method Five: Back Stitch Base Row

Fig. 1



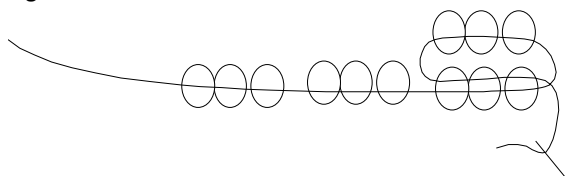
In this method, we will make a base row with stacks three beads tall but you may use this method for stacks of any height.

Fig. 2



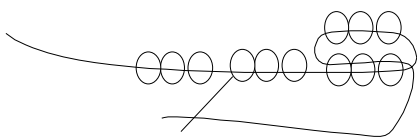
1. Thread needle with 1 1/2 yds. of thread. Do not knot. Wrap tail around left forefinger three or four times. (If left-handed, do the opposite.) String on enough stacks of beads for your base row (Fig.1). Remember, a stack of beads can be one or more beads tall.

Fig. 3



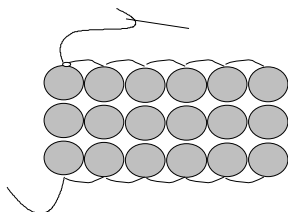
2. Go forward through the second last stack of beads (Fig. 2). If your stacks are three beads tall, you would go through the sixth, fifth and fourth beads from the end.

Fig. 4



3. Pull beads up tight so the two stacks lie next to each other (Fig. 3).

Fig. 5



4. Go through the next stack of beads on the string, again going forward and pull into place (Fig. 4). When all the beads are lying in stacks next to each other, knot thread around the last loop (Fig. 5). Leave tail to be buried later.

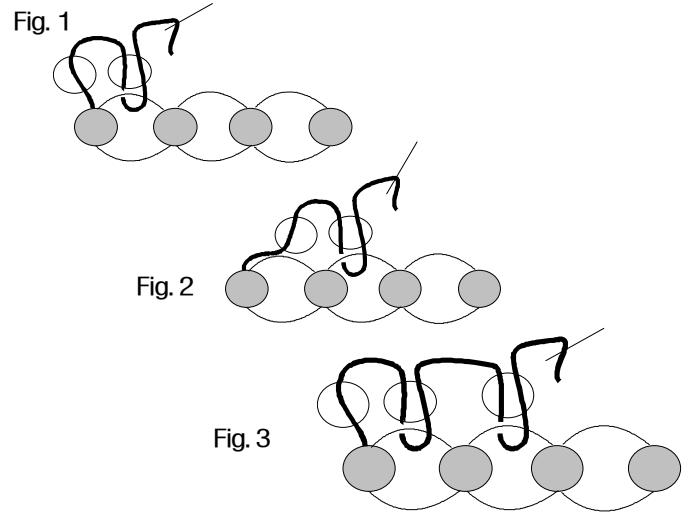
Brick Stitch

When beginning a row of brick stitch, you always have two choices:

1) to pass under the first loop which will make your row extend beyond the beginning of the row below. (Fig. 1) or

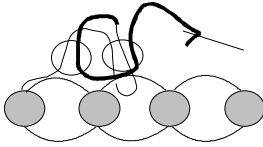
2) to pass under the second loop, which will make your row indented (Fig. 2).

The actual brick stitch is done as follows: with thread exiting the top of a bead in the base row (or existing row), add two beads (or two stacks of beads), pass under the loop between two beads in the previous row, then back up through the last bead (or stack of beads). After that, always add one bead or stack of beads, pass under a loop, and back up through the last bead or stack (Fig. 3).



Decreases: At the Beginning of a Row

Fig. 1



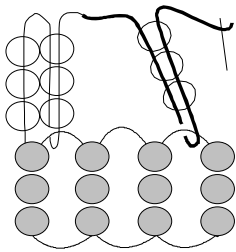
To make the beads sit straight without tilting, a decrease stitch at the beginning of the row must be "locked" .

Lock the Stitch

Add two stacks of beads. Pass under the second loop. Pass back up through the second stack, then pass down through the first stack and up through the second stack again. (Fig 1). See how the beads snap to attention!

Decreasing

Fig. 2

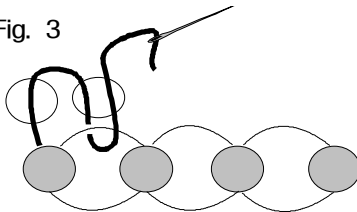


Skipped-Loop Decrease

1. Skip one loop when adding the next stack of beads (Fig. 2)

Increasing

Fig. 3



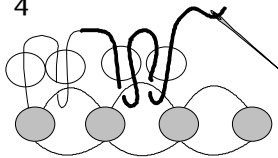
1. Increase at Beginning of Row

To increase on the beginning edge, add two stacks of beads, pass under the first loop (between the 1st and 2nd stack of the previous row), then pass back up through the second stack (Fig. 3)

2. Increases Within a Row

Connect two or more stacks to any loop. A somewhat looser tension may be necessary to allow the stacks to fit in (Fig. 4).

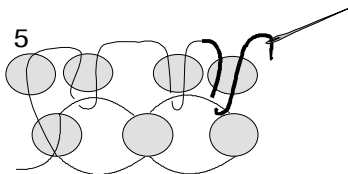
Fig. 4



3. Increase at the End of Row

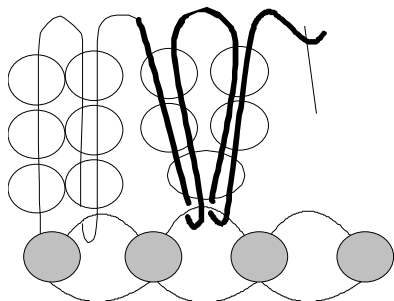
To increase at the end of the row, squeeze two stacks onto the last loop, doing one at a time (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5



Shared-Bead Increases and Decreases

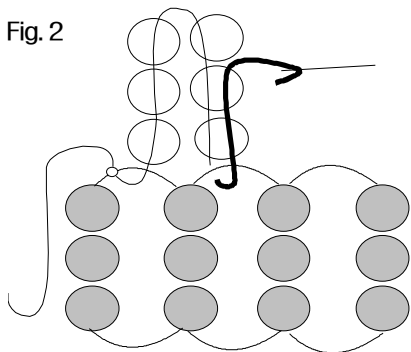
Fig. 1



Shared-Bead Increase

With stacks of beads two or more beads tall, the bottom bead may be shared between two stacks to reduce the number of beads and to allow your work to flare or ruffle. To do a "shared-bead increase," work the first stack in the usual way. Then for the second stack, add only two beads and go down through the bottom bead of the previous stack, catch the loop and back up through all three beads (Fig. 1).

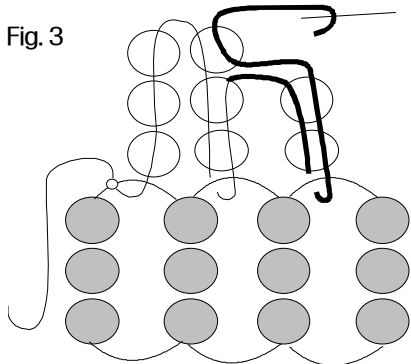
Fig. 2



Shared-Bead Decrease

Using the Skipped-Loop Decrease may sometimes result in a hole in the beadwork. To avoid this, do a "shared-bead decrease" when working with a stack two or more beads tall. After adding a stack of beads, catch the loop and come back up through all beads except the top bead (Fig. 2).

Fig. 3

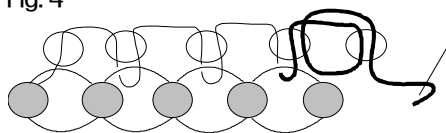


Add another stack as tall as the last one, less one bead. Catch the loop and come back up through the beads just added, plus the top bead from the previous stack (Fig. 3). The top bead is shared between two stacks.

Edge Extensions

When it is necessary to extend the end of a row further than an edge increase at the end of a row, do so as you would make a base row.

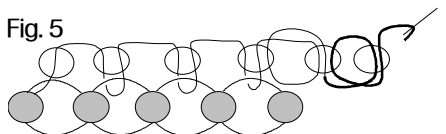
Fig. 4



1. With thread exiting the last bead added, add one more bead and come up through the last bead again. Then go down through the new bead (Fig. 4)

2. To continue, add one bead, go down through the previous bead and up through the new bead (Fig. 5), then repeat the previous step.

Fig. 5



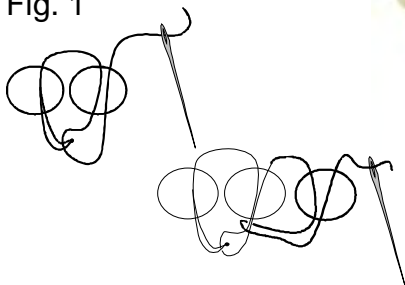
If the edge extension requires an odd number of beads, first do an ending edge increase. Then continue as above.

You may also do edge extension using Base Row Method Four: Catch the Loop.

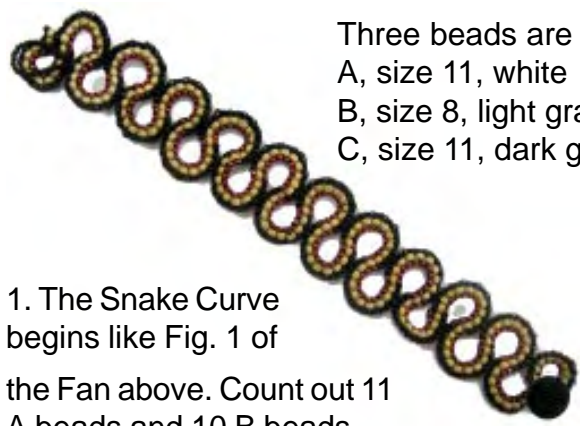
Fans

Begin with the Method Three: Catch the Loop, then work increases as necessary to achieve the curve you wish.

Fig. 1



Snake Curves



Three beads are used:
A, size 11, white
B, size 8, light gray
C, size 11, dark gray

1. The Snake Curve begins like Fig. 1 of

the Fan above. Count out 11 A beads and 10 B beads.

Work the double row base row method as shown in Figure 1. End exiting a B bead.

2. Make the second curve: count out 11 C and 10 B. String on 2 C and pass back through the B (Fig. 2).

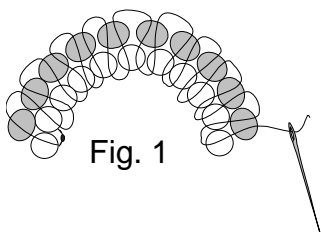


Fig. 1

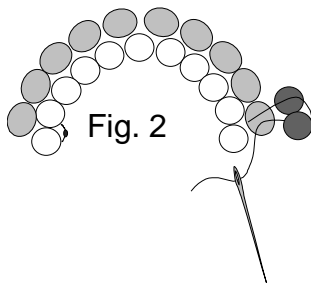
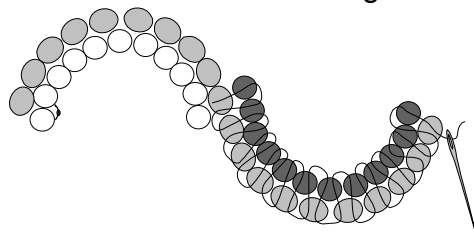


Fig. 2

3. Continue with the double row base row method (Fig. 3). End exiting a B bead. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the desired length.

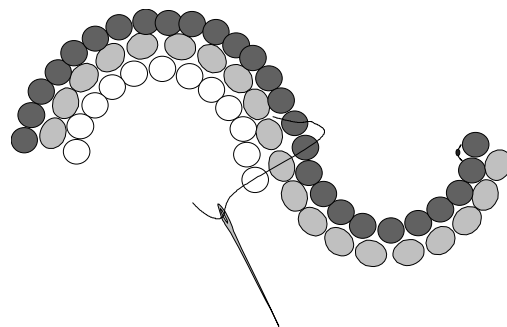
Fig. 3



4. Fill in: Turn piece over so your needle is exiting a bead on the top left. Work brick stitch with C until you meet the inner part of the curve. Pass through the first bead of the inner curve, then the B and the A (Fig. 4). It is

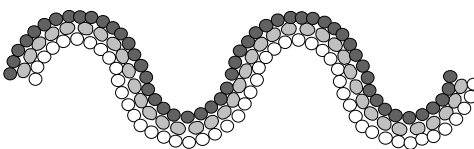
usually necessary to increase to keep the piece flat.

Fig. 4



Make as many curves as you wish (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5





Bead Around A Bead

Beading around a bead is an easy way to start brick stitch. Select a large bead and prepare a double thread with the ends knotted together and waxed. Pass through the large bead and push it to within an inch of the knot. Separate the strands between the bead and the knot and pass the needle between the strands. Pull tight (figure 1).

Next, pass through the bead again from the opposite end where your thread exited. Pull tight and knot (figure 2). Continue with brick stitch.

figure 1

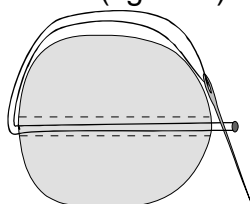
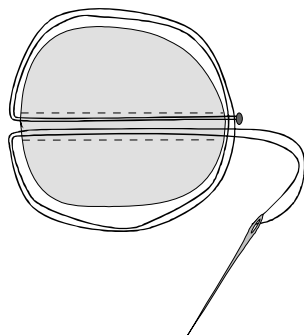


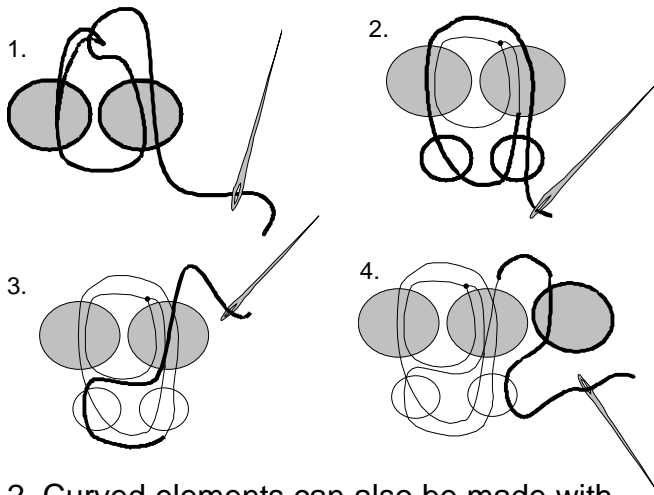
figure 2



Increase as you continue around the bead, keeping it flat if you want the beading flat or not as you wish.

Curves and Rings

1. The double-row base row (Method Two) works well for making a curved element using either size 8 and size 11 seed beads or size 8 and size 5 or 6.



2. Curved elements can also be made with only one size seed beads using Method Three by pulling tight after passing around the loop between the previous beads and allowing the thread along the top to stretch out (Fig. 5 and 6). The next row of brick stitch will define the curve.

Fig. 5

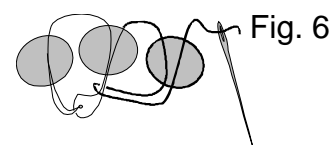
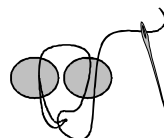
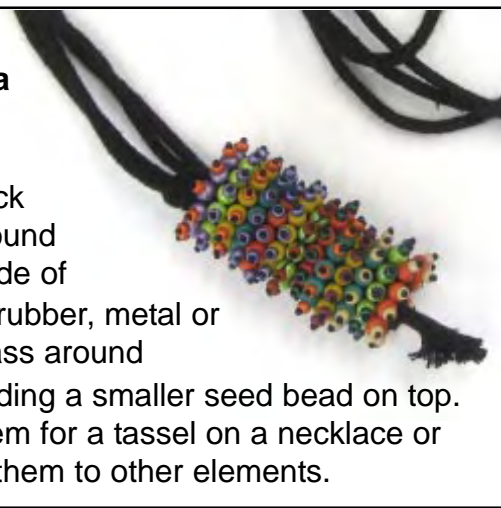


Fig. 6

Bead Around a Ring

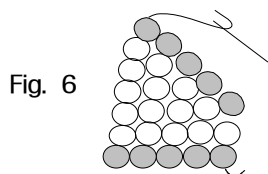
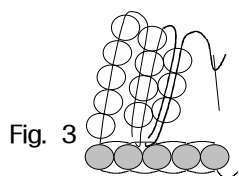
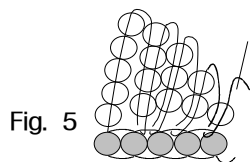
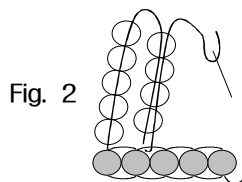
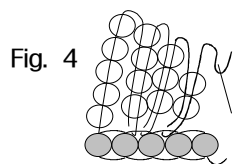
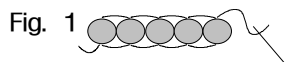
Work brick stitch around rings made of silicone, rubber, metal or glass. Pass around again adding a smaller seed bead on top. Stack them for a tassel on a necklace or connect them to other elements.



Wedges

Use two or more colors, but use the same beads for Color A.

1. Make a base row 1 bead high and 5 beads long with color A (Fig. 1).
2. Add 9 B. Pass under the second loop, working left to right. BT the last 4 B (Fig. 2).
3. Add 3 B. Pass under the second loop again (same loop as in the last stitch) and PBT 3 B (Fig. 3).
4. Add 2 B. Pass under the next loop and PBT 2 B (Fig. 4).
5. Add 1 B. Pass under the next loop and PBT 1 B (Fig. 5).
6. Work a row of brick stitch one bead tall and passing the first stitch under the first loop, then adding 3 more stitches (fig. 6).
7. Turn the piece over and repeat from step 2, except on alternate rows, work the stacks from short to tall. Always add one plain row between each pie-shaped row. A contrasting color may be used on alternate rows.



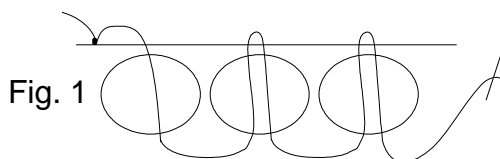
For this necklace, the circle at the center is made by working six wedges without alternating between short and tall stacks. Each new wedge at the center begins with tall stacks.



Continuous Spiral: Follow the basic pattern but do not reverse from short to tall stacks on alternating wedges.

Brick Stitch Edges

No. 1: Single-Bead Edging (bead hole perpendicular to the fabric) Additional rows of beads may be added to the first row similar to the way the Comanche or brick stitch is done (Fig. 1).



No. 2: Pyramid Edge

In the second and successive rows, the beads are connected by anchoring the thread around the thread loop between the beads of the previous row. Like row one, the second row begins with two beads. One less bead is added for each row. The last bead lies on its side, perpendicular to the other beads. To end, bring the thread back down through the beads to the fabric and knot (Fig. 2-4).

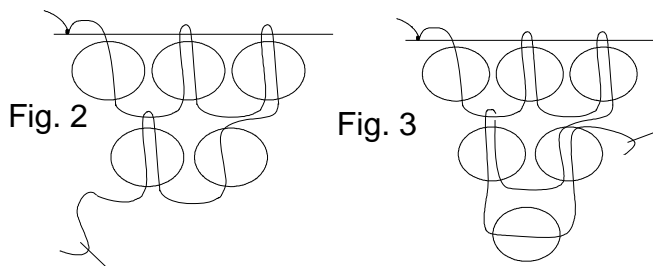
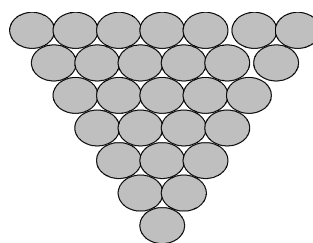
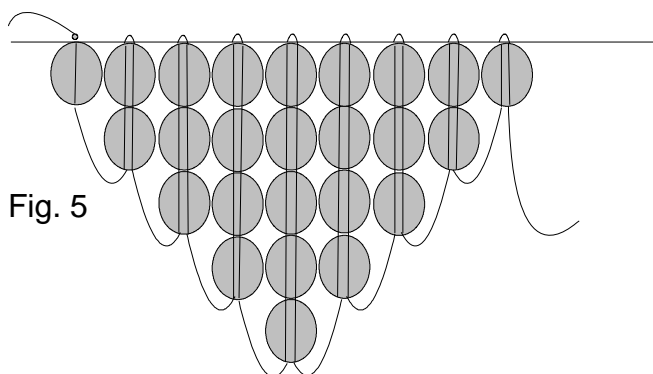


Fig. 4



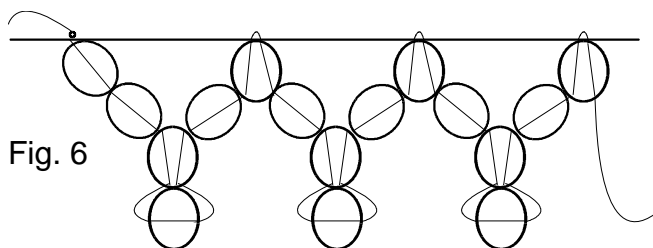
No. 3: Triangle Edge

Begin by adding three beads, anchor thread in fabric and come back through the last two beads. Add three beads, go into fabric and come back through the three beads. Continue increasing the number of beads, then decrease (Fig. 5).



No. 4: Picot Edge

Anchor thread, add four beads. *Back through second last bead. Add two beads and catch fabric. Back through last bead. Add three beads. * Repeat from * to * (Fig. 6).



These are some pieces I've made with the techniques shown.



Pick a picture of a flower garden, then try to recreate the look of the garden with free-form brick stitch using different size beads, increasing and decreasing. Make a button and loop closure using a curved brick stitch with embellishing beads.



Above: Just couldn't stop making brick stitch fans!



Left: Brick stitch around a donut letting your thread become a design element. Curved elements and tubular beads continue the bold colors in this necklace.