

## TOPSY-TURVY FREEFORM PEYOTE BRACELET – by Cathy Benton

Okay, so you're tired of same-old-same-old peyote bracelets but you're not ready to think TOO far out of the box. Here's a project to nudge you just a little bit...a *gentle* free-form peyote bracelet.

### MATERIALS:

First, choose your color(s), you might want a monochromatic theme, or monochrome with an accent color, or your favorite combination or, if you're having trouble, pick one multi-colored bead and choose seed beads in the colors you find in *that* bead. This bead can be your focal bead.

Focal Bead can be anything, any size, any color, any shape that's comfortable on your wrist...a bead of any material, a button, a wire-wrapped object, you get the picture. *It is NOT absolutely necessary to have a focal bead. This project works just fine without one.*

Seed beads in assorted shapes and sizes and finishes: Rounds in 6's, 8's, 11's, 14's. Delicas in 11's and 8's. Small bugles. Triangles in 8's and 10's. Transparent, matte, iris, pearl, silver-lined, color-lined, luster. You don't need to have every size and finish, but variety makes your bracelet more interesting. I've used up to 20 different seed beads in *one* bracelet and as few as six.

Accent Beads are not absolutely necessary but they can be added for interest. 4mm to 8mm fire-polish, crystals, Czech glass, art glass.... whatever turns you on.

Thread – One-G, K.O. Nymo D, Silamide or any other flexible stringing material that makes you happy with needles to match...usually 10's or 12's. (Note: Personally, I am NOT a fan of Fireline.)

Wax or Thread Heaven - you'll be using doubled thread and waxing is a *must!*

### TO BEGIN:

Thread a needle with up to six feet of thread. Double the thread. Treat it with wax. This *really* helps prevent fraying and also eases the backing-out issue, if necessary!

String on a 'stopper' bead leaving a 4" tail. (= 1 bead with thread looped through)

String on 10 size 8 or 11 beads. Then begin your basic peyote stitch. Remember the "mantra": bring the needle out of a bead; put a bead on the needle and forget about; look to see where your thread is coming out; skip over the very next bead; then, bring the needle and thread through the one after that; pull tightly so the new bead sits proudly on top of the skipped bead. Repeat after me....."OUT OF A BEAD, ADD A BEAD (and forget about it), SKIP A BEAD, GO THROUGH A BEAD, PULL." After your first pass, you can pull off your stopper bead and tie the tail thread to your working thread.

The next row is a pain. The third row is *always* a pain! See how your thread is coming out of the single bead? Well, put a bead on your needle and forget about it. Skip over that single bead and needle/thread through the next bead which is all popped up and ready for you! Continue to the end of the row. That's it! Pinching the piece really helps.

Okay, the fun part.... For a VERY simple Topsy Turvy, you can simply *bead a few whole* rows in your 11's and then switch to a slightly larger bead for a few rows and then a slightly larger bead for a few rows, etc. and work your way up and down and up and down your different sizes.

BUT, if you want to have more fun, after a few rows of 8's/11's, switch to smaller or larger beads *in the middle of a row*. Keep switching in the middle of rows whenever the mood strikes you. **NOTE:** When you change to larger beads, the piece bows *outward*. When you return to smaller beads, the piece bows *inward*. If you make drastic jumps between sizes, you'll get *ridges* and/or *arcs*. You may have to find ways to work around the ridges or to connect the arcs by adding or skipping beads. You can add some larger accent beads at any point. You may want to add your focal bead in one of these sculptural areas. When (not "if" because it *will* happen) you feel that you're getting out of control, try to return to five bead stitches per row. This really works!

*About that focal bead* – Remember, that focal beads *usually* goes in the center of the piece, so measure the piece against your wrist from time to time. *Sometimes* they just go right in and sometimes you really have to work to make them sit just right. There is NO one, absolutely perfect way to describe how to insert this bead. This is the intuitive part that you must figure out. Sometimes, you have to add beads or a bridge around them. Sometimes, they sit on top. So much depends on the choice you've made. Don't get frustrated. Get creative!

Continue until your piece is about 2/3 of the way around your wrist and begin to think ahead about getting back to size 8's or 11's for the last part of your bracelet. I make mine so that there is about a 1/2" gap between the ends of the bracelet when I wrap it around my wrist.

### **FINISHING:**

Yay! You're ready to make your toggle! Weave in that last bit of thread and put the bracelet aside for awhile. Your toggle is actually a peyote tube. Begin the same way you began the bracelet. You can make it 8 or 10 or even 12 beads wide if you want it to be really 'important.' Make a flat peyote piece 10 rows long (count the beads on the diagonal *or* make sure that the outside edges have the same # of beads...5 on each edge). Roll the piece up like a wrap and weave the ends together. They should just 'zip' up! If you'd like, you can weave through the beads again to strengthen the toggle. You can also add beads to the ends of the roll for a more finished look. Work your thread back to the middle of the toggle and do two or three rows of peyote with just the two middle (or close to the middle) beads. Then, line up those beads with the end of your bracelet and attach the toggle. It should look like this:



On the other end of the bracelet, attach a thread so that it comes out *near* an end bead. String on enough beads to make a strap to go around the toggle. **Now, the tricky part.....** You will be attaching the *loop* end of the clasp a few rows down, into the bracelet BUT you must test the length several times before committing. You want it to look like this:



When the length is right, you can attach it to the bracelet and then go back and do peyote stitch or netting or anything (or nothing) to decorate your strap. Make sure it's secure and YOU'RE DONE!

Congrats!