

Wire Types & their Uses

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Gauge

Gauge is the thickness of wire. Remember: the higher the number, the thinner the wire.

You'll see gauge often notated with "ga" after the number, i.e. 18 ga.

Gauge	Common Uses
10 - 12 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Popular for bangle bracelets• Use heavy duty wire cutters or jeweler's saw and heavy duty tools
14 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thick and strong, used for structural components
16 - 18 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used for structural components• Clasps• Jump rings
20 - 22 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good for all-purpose• Can use with most beads• Chain• Earring wires• Jump rings• Lightweight Clasps• This is the most common gauge I use for most of the tutorials I share, including in my eCourses
24 - 26 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use with beads with small holes
28 - 32 Gauge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very thin• Intricate work• Viking knit

Wire Shapes

Shape	Common Uses
Round	Most common and standard for wire wrapping
Square	Will lay flush and useful for stacking wire or placing next to each other
Half-round	Used for banding square wires – connecting several pieces of wire together
Twisted or fancy	Used for aesthetic qualities. You can purchase it twisted or twist it yourself

Wire Hardness

You can find wire in the following hardness:

- Dead soft
- Half-hard
- Hard

Most of the time I suggest half-hard for my tutorials and in my eCourses for wire wrapping.

If you're using sterling silver and some other types of wire, you will find a hardness notated. However, for a lot of craft wires or artist wires you will not. I use Parawire, which is silver plated wire, and there is not a hardness indicated. Often these wires are very similar to half-hard wire.

Memory Wire

Memory wire is great for bangles or loops; however, it is not for wire wrapping. Also you'll need heavy duty wire cutters to cut memory wire.

What I use the most:

For most everything I make and teach I use 20 gauge, half-hard round wire. For clasps I'll use 18 or even 16 gauge wire. Occasionally I'll use 22 or 24 gauge for wrapping onto a structural piece or with beads with smaller holes.



Now that you know wire types and uses, why not put them to use?

Take my Wire Wrapping for Beginners eCourse and learn how to make jewelry components like headpins, jump rings, chain and clasps and then get the "recipes" to put together the components to make earrings, bracelets, charm bracelets, necklaces and wire wrapped rings!

Learn more and sign up here: <https://kimberlie-kohler-designs.teachable.com/p/wire-wrapping-for-beginners-ecourse>