



Beadwrangler's Thread Guide

<http://www.beadwrangler.com/threadguide.htm>

Beadwrangler Notes about Information in this Guide

I will continue to list various fibers and what type beads will work with them as I come across material of interest. More information will be added for brand name products below and other fiber name brands will be included as time permits and I receive the products for testing.

Also see my companion [Beadwrangler's Beads and Beading Techniques Guide](#) for bead types, finishes and other relevant data.

Only use beading thread or equivalent thin thread for beading; thicker threads will not go through the beads more than once nor thread through beading and sharps needles. Use a twisted wire needle to string beads onto thicker threads for embroidery, crochet, knitting, weaving beads as warp, braiding and other techniques that combine strung beads on thicker thread.

My definition of beading: Using small beads with thread or wire to create complex structures. I will also be adding wire material such as SoftFlex and other new wires on the market that are being used with beads. Sulky thread, Silk twist and other thin threads can be used for beading but the results are not as easily obtained as with beading thread and they often tend to fray with continued bead weaving back and forth.

Needle Information: I use sharps and beading needles size 12 for most of my beading from size 6/0 to smaller beads through most size 15/0 beads. My students like size 11 sharps needles for 11/0 and larger beads because the eye is easier to see. They use a 12 sharps for those beads with smaller holes. I use sizes 13, 15 and 16 beading needles for size 16/0 and smaller beads. The tiniest beads, 20/0 through 26/0 will not go through most needle eyes and will only fit over a twisted wire needle. I crochet with these beads and use them in weaving with thin fibers and taking them through a shed rather than taking a needle back through them. As far as I know, the smallest sharps needles are size 12. I wish they came in size 15. I use sharps needles (shorter) for beading complex forms such as peyote and square stitch which require short stitches and beading needles (longer) for bead weaving on a loom, dangles, bead loops and necklace strands. Sharps needles will go through thin leather and other fibers, beading needles tend to bend too much.

I use twisted/flex wire needles to pre-string beads for crocheting/knitting and loom weaving and the needle eye collapses when it goes through the bead and then reshapes itself after it is out of the bead. Extra fine size 6, fine size 8, medium size 10 and medium/heavy size 12 are usually found at most bead retailers. I use a 6 extra fine for size 18 and smaller beads. Size 20/0 and smaller will not work on most thicker twisted wire needles. I use a medium size 10 for most beads from 6/0 through 16/0. I have never needed to use a thicker needle. Thicker needles are usually for larger beads when bead stringing. Heavy twisted wire needles can be used with size 4/0, 6/0, and 8/0 beads. You can also string rice pearls with the extra fine and medium twisted/flex wire needles. The mediums are softer and somewhat difficult to see. The extra fine are like tiny hairs and can easily be lost. I keep mine in a needle case and put the one I am currently using on a magnet.

All of these needles are available at my [Needle Shop](#).

http://www.7beads.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Category_Code=N1

Do not use Kevlar thread for beading; the filaments will cut themselves where they meet in the beading. Do not use monofilament or invisible thread for beading, this includes weaving on a loom, the filaments will eventually become brittle and break apart from the stress of being twisted and moved back and forth through the beads. I used invisible thread to make a complex necklace of seed beads with larger pieces floating on the top. You could not see the thread because it was invisible so the larger pieces looked like they floated between the beads. I only wore it three times before all the threads began to break where I had beaded back and forth twisting the thread forward and then backward, a feat invisible thread was not meant to accomplish. I had spent 130 hours on this piece. I am an experimenter, so I expect messes sometimes, it goes with the territory.

The chart below listing thicker threads than beading thread is primarily for

- crochet, knitting, braids(Kumihimo), sprang and other techniques that once you have strung the beads, no needle is required to go back through the beads;
- loom weaving - taking the beads through a shed or moving the beads between warp threads so no needle is required to go back through the beads a second time and the warp and weft threads are worked into fiber on the loom or made into fringe;
- stitchery and embroidery including cross stitch and ;
- special effects depending on the surface where the beads are being applied.

I will eventually add more charts for other types of thread and their uses with beads. If you know of a website that has tables/conversion charts for various thread-to-thread sizing and brands, please let me know and we will add that link to this page.

Check [Tips & Techniques](http://www.beadwrangler.com/tips&techniques.htm) (<http://www.beadwrangler.com/tips&techniques.htm>) for more information on bead and fiber use in stitchery, bead stringing, crochet and loom weaving.

A note about vintage small beads, that is beads smaller than size 15/0. When you purchase a strand of vintage beads, they may vary in size significantly. Most of the bead strands I have, especially the ones identified as size 18/0 and smaller have several variations of size beads on a strand. A strand of 24/0 may have 20/0 and 22/0 mixed in. Many of the antique bead strands sold today are taken from antique purses and re-strung. Purses were often made of various size beads in a color because when crocheting and knitting, the difference in size is negligible, where as in beading, it often visually sticks out like a sore thumb.

Keep in mind a size 14/0 Japanese beads may have a much larger bead hole than a size 14/0 Czech bead, although they both may be close in overall size. A bead made in one country listed as one size may have a hole 2 or 3 times smaller than one from another country. Even the bead size will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, some being larger than others. This will make a difference in deciding which thickness of thread to use. Sizes such as 13/0 includes charlotte 1 cuts, 15/0 includes hex beads, all sizes below include cut beads and other small beads in addition to seed beads. If I do not have a particular bead listed here, it may mean I have not received any from bead companies or been able to find them locally. All beads and fiber should work the same for bead knitting as it does for bead crochet. When I say "equiv." under thread type, it means in thickness of the fiber. Here are the test results from my "laboratory" so far.

Thread
(type
and
brand)