

# Photo Tutorial: Crimping

by Laura Bracken

email@BrackenDesigns.com

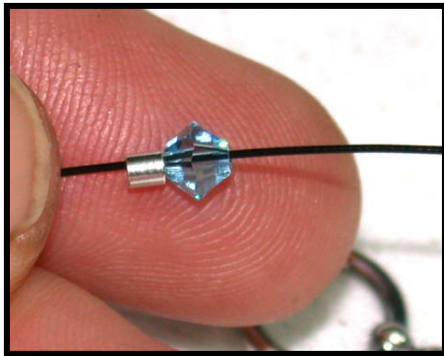
© 2005 Bracken Designs

## First, gather your supplies:

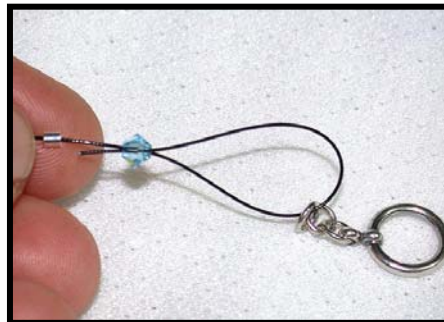
- **Wire** (I use Accuflex professional 49-strand .019)
- **Clasp** (only one side of toggle shown in this photo)
- **Beads that will go between clasp and crimp** (make sure the hole is wide enough to accommodate two thicknesses of your thread/wire)
- **Crimp beads** (please don't use plated... use either gold-fill or sterling silver; I use 2x3 or 2x2mm crimps... this one is a 2x2... keep in mind that you will have to use the appropriate size crimp covers for your crimps... for 2x2 crimps, the covers will end up like a 3mm round; for 2x3 crimps, the covers will end up like a 4mm round).
- **Crimp covers** (not shown in this photo)
- **Crimp pliers**



## Step 2: String crimp, then spacer bead, then clasp onto wire/thread...

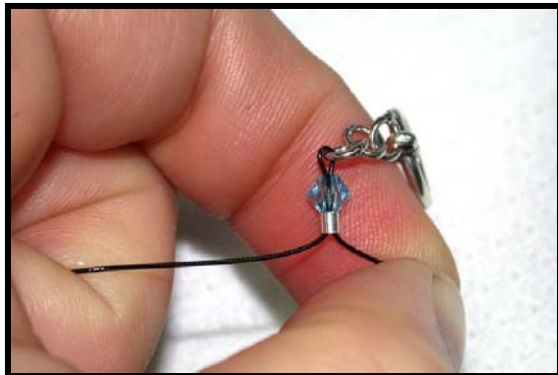


## Step 3: Loop the wire/thread back through the spacer bead... then the crimp bead...



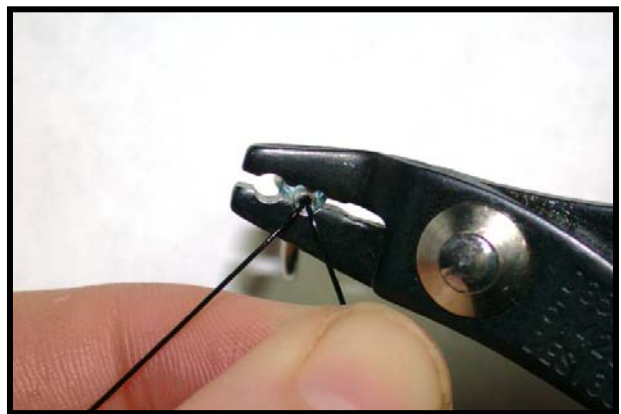
I do all that about an inch or so from the clasp.

**Step 4:** Then slide the short half of the thread/wire along with the two beads up to the clasp...



**Step 5:** Use the wonderfully dexterous fingers of one hand to pull the two lines of wire/thread in separate directions. At this point, don't wig out if your beads slide down the wire a bit (aren't tight up against the clasp)... try not to let them slip TOO far, but a little space isn't gonna kill ya... you'll see why in a second...

**Step 6:** Place the crimping pliers in a position so that your crimp bead is GENTLY resting in the SECOND set of indents on the pliers...



Now that it's in position, you use that very talented hand again to pull the wire/thread strands to the sides, and slide your two beads back up toward the clasp if you need to... don't press the pliers down yet... only enough pressure to slide the beads up...

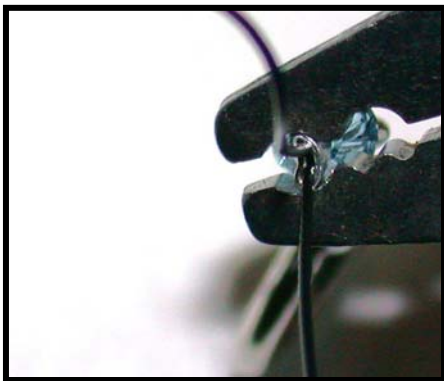
**Step 7:** Gently smooch the crimp pliers down, thus fulfilling the first portion of your crimping process...



If you did it correctly, you should see a "u" shaped crimp bead with one strand of wire/thread on each side of it (more or less)



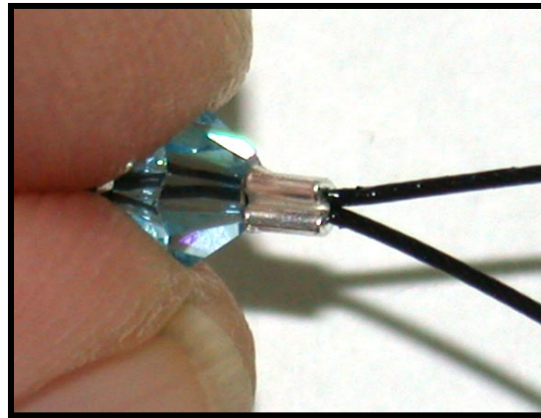
**Step 8:** Now you're going to do the second part of the crimping process. You're going to be smooching that U shape closed. Place the crimp **SIDEWAYS** into the **FIRST** set of indents on the crimp pliers...



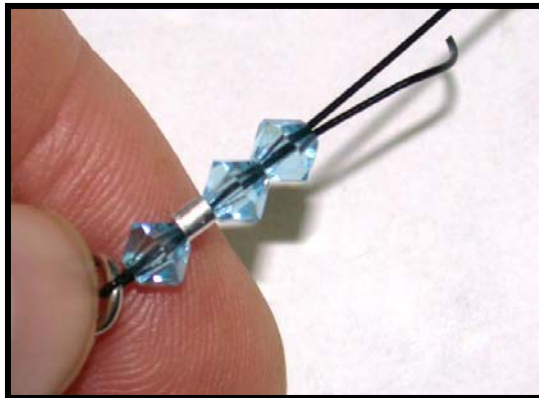
This is a step for which you must take extreme care. Go slowly... screwing up may wreck your entire piece of jewelry (unless you LIKE starting over from the beginning).

When you smooch the crimp bead in these first indents, make sure your bead doesn't slip (angle) and end up at a diagonal (or worse!). It must remain upright while you smooch! You must fold the U perfectly in half.

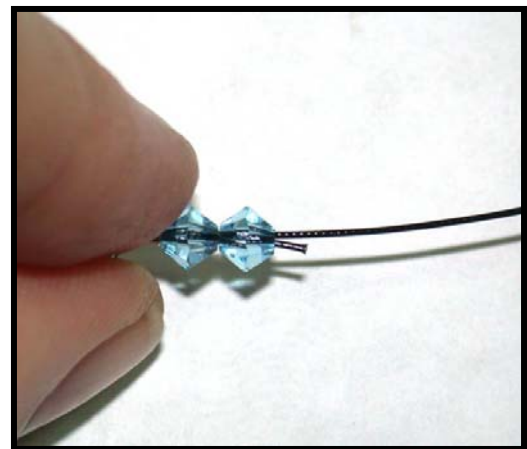
**Step 9:** Success should look somewhat like this...



**Step 10:** Put whatever beads on that go on next, making sure their holes are wide enough to go over two strands of thread/wire...



**Step 11:** Cut the wire so that the end would end up in the middle of the length of the next bead to be strung on. The only problem you will ever have with this is if you string very loosely; then you run the risk of having your "tail" bit of thread/wire poke out and not be nicely tucked into a bead. If you know you're going to string loosely, cut flush with a bead (see instructions for crimping the other end ... coming up)...



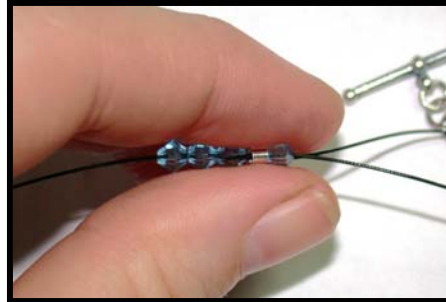
**Step 12:** Put your next bead on, making sure the tail of the thread/wire is tucked into it. All the rest of the beads (until the OTHER end of the piece of jewelry) will merely be strung onto this one thread/wire...



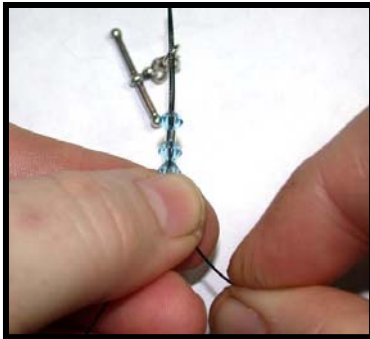
**Step 13:** Okay, now we're at the other end of the piece. You put on all the beads you were going to put on and you finish (most likely) the way you started (bead pattern wise). So... the last two things on are a crimp and (in this case) a 4mm Swarovski...



**Step 14:** Loop that end of the thread/wire through the toggle end of your clasp (or whatever is the OTHER end of your clasp), and then the 4mm Swarovski (your crimp...)



... and through two (or however many you decide) regular beads (see note at end of article)... You've got room to move around up there, y'know... 'cause that loop around the clasp is plenty slack. Slide the beads however you need to in order to do what you gotta do. We'll cinch it all up in a second...



**Step 15:** After you go through two or so beads past the crimp with the tail of the thread/wire, pull down on the tail while holding the last single-threaded bead. This keeps the beads on the necklace/bracelet in place, tight, and merely moves the thread/wire into its cinched up position.

... it is now cinched up...

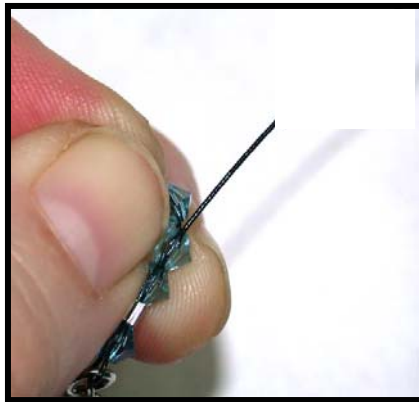


**Step 16:** Crimp this bead as you did the other one...

This is what you should end up with...



Under my thumb is the continuation of the bracelet/necklace.



**Step 17:** Now you will clip the short tail of the wire/thread as close to flush with that bead as you can, WITHOUT CUTTING THE LONG WIRE OR YOU WILL BE REDOING YOUR ENTIRE PIECE...

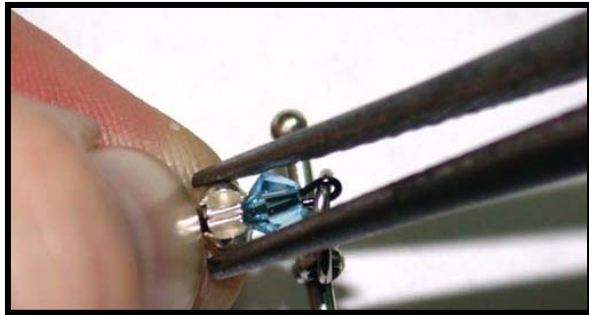
After you clip the tail, your piece should look like this...



**Step 18:** As a nice finishing touch, we're going to finish the crimp with a crimp cover...

**Step 19:** Place the crimp cover around the crimp (will not work with 2x3mm crimps or with crimps improperly crimped). I use my forefinger to hold the back of it up against the crimp while I do this.





Use needle nose pliers (or whatever works for you) to gently start smashing the crimp bead halves until they begin to meet (in a sphere covering your crimp). Now... I say "gently" here because these buggers seem to fall to the ground at least 10 times before I can complete my project. If it starts to slip and you

smash too quickly, you will end up with a very crooked affair.

I stop before the crimp cover is all the way closed... See why? It's slightly off center. But I don't wig out. All I was trying to do at first was close it enough so that it won't fall off as I'm trying to work with it.



**Step 20:** Bet you thought we'd never reach the end, eh? Now I just use my needle nose pliers to get a better "fit" on the straightening out and closing of my crimp covers (one on each crimp)...



That's it; we're done! If you have any questions about the process, feel free to email me (see cover page).

A couple of notes/tips:

- Don't do the crimps until you're piece is complete and checked for accuracy and correct length.
- I prefer to err on the side of having WAY too much thread/wire as opposed to the alternate which includes not having enough length to finish your project or having only just enough to fight and struggle with it during the crimping process.
- Practice and time will eventually teach you how tight or how loose to make your pieces. Crimping is the final step that determines the tightness of a piece. And sometimes a piece may SEEM loose enough until you bend it into the shape it will be. The only remedy for too tight is to TRY to find a fragile bead (glass bead beads are the best) and break it with some needle nose pliers. This isn't a recommended thing to do and should only be used as a last resort. If your piece accidentally ends up too loose, the only solution I can think of is to take a crimp cover and add it to the space (without a crimp).

No part or parts of this information may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the copyright owner: Laura Bracken, P.O. Box 20985, Oakland, CA 94620, Copyright 2005.

© 2005 www.BrackenDesigns.com