

Bending Wire

STRAIGHTENING WIRES

Grasp both ends of your wire with flat pliers or parallel pliers and pull away from each other whilst giving it a gentle twist. This will work harden and straighten your wire. Or run a polished burnisher along the wire onto a polished steel block, repeat until straight. Or hold a soft cloth between the jaws of a pair of round nose pliers and draw the wire through several times. Roll short wires (i.e. ear posts) between a polished flat chasing hammer and steel block.

AVOID A STRAIGHT SECTION AT THE END

When making jump rings or any curved shapes with wire, make sure you have checked that the end of the wire is caught right between the jaws and does not have any metal sticking out. This is especially important when making spirals.

TRY YOUR SNIPE/CHAIN NOSE PLIERS TO MAKE CURVED SHAPES

It's perfectly fine to use snipe/chain nose (smooth not serrated) pliers to manipulate wire and sheet into curved shapes. Using pliers and your fingers to grip and move the metal into place is sometimes better controlled and less likely to be marked than using round nose pliers. This is true when making curved mounts or curved wire shapes. Start a spiral with your round nose pliers, similar to making a jump ring, then swap to flats. Grasp the circular shape of wire flat between the jaws and allow the pliers to act as a vice whilst you bend the wire with your fingers.

BENDING A RIGHT ANGLE OR TIGHT CORNERS

Use snipe/chain, flat or parallel pliers to manipulate the wire. If you need a very tight angle, use the chain nose to make a tight hairpin bend and gently prize the wire apart to the desired angle. For a crispy, perfect right angle remove some of the material from the inside edge by filing a 'V' groove with the pointed edge of a needle file, around half way to two thirds through. Use flats to bend, solder for strength.

ADJUSTING YOUR PLIERS FOR JOBS

When you buy new pliers, sometimes less expensive pliers they can have quite sharp edges that can mark your metal. To stop this use an emery stick (280 will work) to rub down the sharp edge - the idea is not to make it round but to keep it crispy enough to give you sharp bends without marking. Once sanded, polish both the flat jaws and the edges.

Alter a pair of old round nose pliers to make ovals or pill shapes. Use a grinding wheel in the pendant motor and make corresponding grooves on the outside of the jaws. You can make three sets of marks along the jaws. These can be sanded, polished and are ready to use by placing a soldered jump ring and opening the pliers.

USING STAKES, JIGS AND OTHER OBJECTS

If you want to make identical shapes then use something that can be repeatedly used without it's changing shape. Coiling Gizmos, Thing-a-ma-jig, steel punches and forms.



FURTHER INFORMATION:



Wire Wrapping Jewellery Tutorials

Find out what metal to use in your jewellery designs and the techniques needed to create wire-wrap...

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