

How To; - Wire Frames

You will need: -

0.8mm (or thicker) wire

Marker Pen / items to shape wire around

Side cutters

Round Nosed Pliers

Snipe Nosed Pliers

File or emery board

Optional - hammer and solid block



Tip - These wire frame/s can be used for earrings, or for pendants, or elements of bracelets and can be made any size or shape to suit your design ideas. Hang items from them, embellish them with beads in many different ways, hammer and texture them - there are endless opportunities.

Starting Off

First decide on the shape and scale of the frame you'd like to create - you could create a large pendant for a necklace, or smaller ones for earrings or a bracelet.

A teardrop or a circle is easiest, but you could try another shape like a heart or star.

For smaller shapes - around a 50p size - 0.8mm wire is fine, if going larger, then I would recommend to scale up the wire diameter as well to keep the frame shape from getting too distorted - up to 1.2mm or even 1.5mm if you're making much larger shapes.

Cut your wire length - around 15cm of 1mm wire will give a medium-large earring frame (or a small pendant), and use a file or emery board to smooth any sharp edges on the ends.

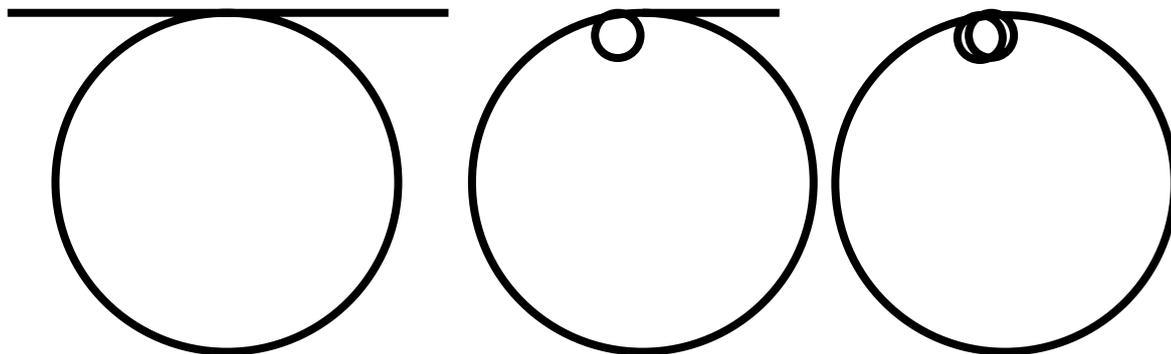
Making Round Frames

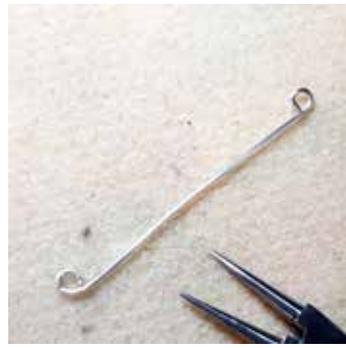
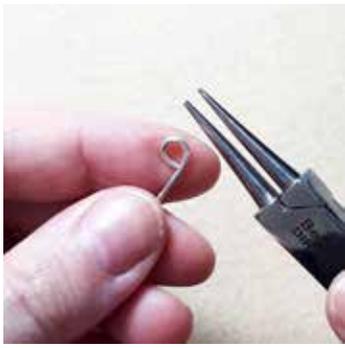
Firstly create your frame shape, either using your fingers, or by wrapping the wire around a former - anything will do - if you don't have a steel or wooden mandrel, a bottle, a cup, a marker pen - anything that is the size and shape you are looking for.

Start from the centre of the wire and smooth the wire round by hand. Allow a cross over at the ends of approx 1cm.

If needed trim the ends down and file again to ensure they are smooth.

Use your round nose pliers to make a loop at each end of the wire - grip the tip of the wire and carefully curl it in so that





it is centred on your frame, then repeat from the other side. These loops will need to be large enough to fit at least two jump rings through them easily. Adjust the loops by hand so that they are aligned. You can choose to curl them both to sit inside the frame (as in the diagrams), or on the outside as in the photos.

Making Teardrop Frames

Cut a 15cm length of wire and smooth the ends. Use round nose pliers to make a medium sized loop at each end of the wire. Adjust them so that they match.

Find a chunky pen, or ring mandrel and hold the centre of the wire against this - smooth the ends of the wire around this from each side until they meet, and then gently adjust so that the loops are aligned.



Making Other Shapes

Drawing out the shape you'd like to make first to help you think through the measurements - where you need to make corners, curves or flat sections of wire and where you would like the loops. Use a ruler string, or tape measure and measure around your shape. Add around 1.5-2cm to the overall length to allow for making the loops - smaller loops and thinner wire will use a smaller length of wire to make the loops.

Cut your wire to length and smooth off the sharp ends as usual. It might be helpful to use a marker pen to mark where you need to make any corners (allowing 8mm at each end for the loops). If you are making a pair - mark them both out the same.

Depending on the shape - it may be easier to start at the centre of the wire or from one end, and work along from there - using formers or your hands to create curves, and your pliers to create corners. Gripping the wire with your flat pliers can help straighten out unwanted lumps and bumps



Work Hardening

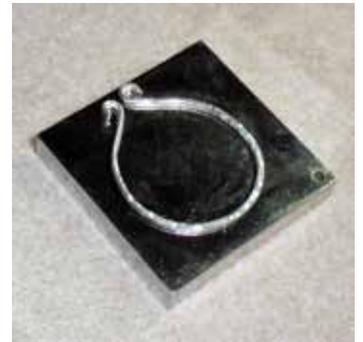
Wires - especially thinner wires, will need to be work hardened once shaped, to strengthen them - if left as they are, the frames will distort easily. The more you work the wire - the tougher and more springy, rather than bendy, it gets.

You can work harden wire by repeatedly gripping and releasing it in the jaws of flat pliers - either metal or nylon jaw pliers; or by using a soft hammer, against a solid surface - a wooden, nylon or steel block. Hammer carefully so you don't distort the shape and hold the frame to keep its shape.

You can use nylon, rubber or wooden or hide mallets, or you can buy pairs of solid nylon blocks to tap flat shapes between. Effectively - the more you do to the wire, the stronger it will become.

If you use a metal hammer, you have the opportunity to also add texture and surface marks to the wire, or to hammer it flat - which can create great effects, especially when used on thicker wires.

Make sure when doing any hammering that you hold the wires carefully to watch your fingers, and ensure the wire keeps its shape - especially when using metal hammers, the shape can start to distort quite dramatically the more you hammer it.



Putting It Together

Use a jump ring to link through the loops you created at the top of each frame, to attach the frame/s to an earring fitting or a chain and it is ready to wear!

You can make more than one frame in different shapes or sizes and hang them together for added interest.

You can also add beads to hang inside the hoop on a headpin, attaching the loop on the top of your headpin to the loop where you are also attaching the earring (or chain) with another jump ring.

You can use a finer wire to wrap beads onto the frame itself to decorate it, or leave it plain.

There are many other options you can use wire frames or shapes for - these are just some ideas to get started with!

