

kindling necklaces

a tutorial by
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These beads are simply whittled with hand-tools and then thoroughly sanded. A light coat of oil and polishing them finishes them. If you'd like to make a chain too, I'll show you how I make a simple seed bead chain and a delicately crocheted chain from perle cotton.

materials

For beads:

Bits and scraps of firewood kindling- apple, cherry and maple all work well
Olive or flaxseed oil

For chains:

Perle cotton thread or embroidery floss
Nylon beading thread
1.75 mm seed beads
4 mm glass beads

supplies

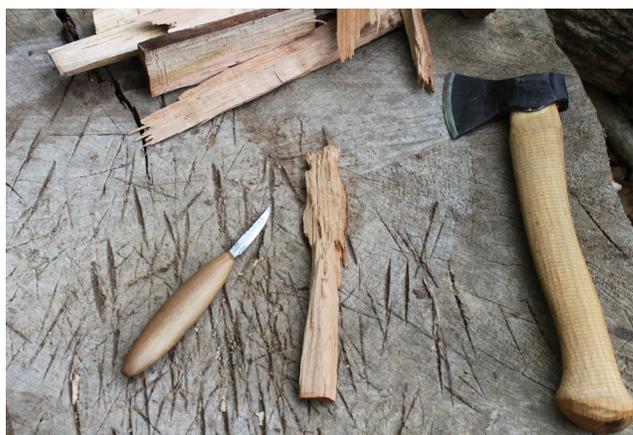
For beads:

Sharp knife
Hand saw
Hatchet (optional)
1/16, 3/32" drill bits and drill
Sandpaper: 150, 220 grit

For chains:

5mm crochet hook
Beading needle
Sewing needle with large eye

the beads



Find a sizeable piece of kindling. The paper-thin "flakes" of wood are harder to work with. Look out for cracks and checks on the end grain, and either toss aside cracked pieces for the kindling box or clean up enough wood so you can get a bead or two out of the middle of the piece.

Working in smooth, even strokes, remove the rough wood.



Keep the angles of the wood if you like, or round the edges to make a smoother piece.

Observe the grain and decide how your cuts can make a bead that best shows off the special qualities of the piece of wood you are working with.



For some beads, after I had made a smooth tablet of wood, I used my hatchet to split the piece into tiny "billets" of wood. This made long, slightly irregular rectangular beads.

I am trying to learn more about working with a knife, so I challenged myself to make the bead faces smooth with my knife alone. It's actually faster than sanding. But if you have a tricky spot, or are happy to sand, sand the faces smooth with 150 then 220 grit sandpaper, following the grain.



Cut the beads to length. (And please don't leave your saw out in the rain as I have mine...)

Sand the end grains well.

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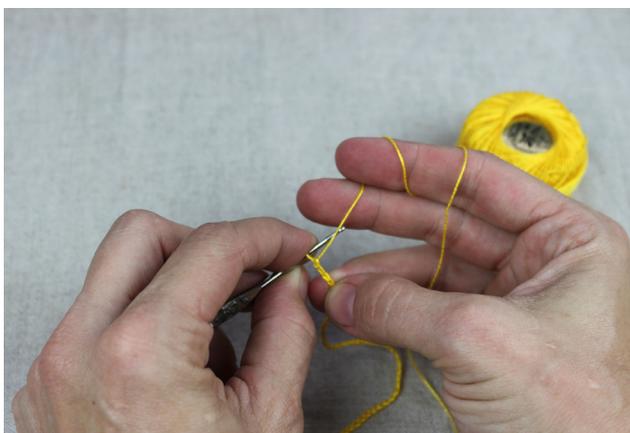
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Carefully drill a hole through the bead. If you are working with a tiny piece of wood, it might be easier to use your fingers to manually turn the drill bit. If you want to thread a string of seed beads through your wooden bead, drill with a 3/32" bit after making a pilot hole with the smaller bit.

Use your knife or sandpaper to clean up the edges of the drilled hole. Apply oil liberally to the bead and allow it to soak in for a while. Rub with a soft cloth to polish and remove extra oil. Thread onto a chain of your choice.

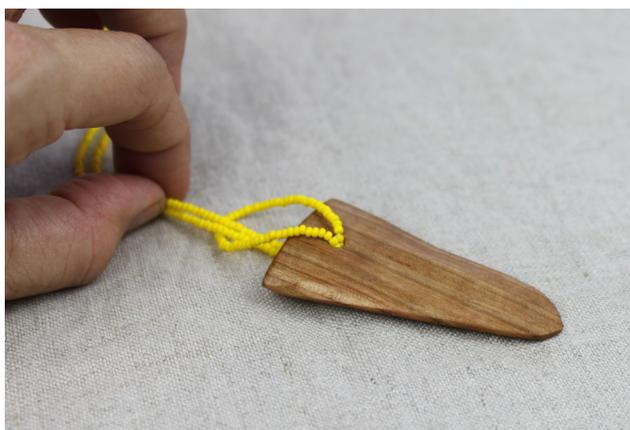
the chain



Using perle cotton thread, crochet a chain that is at least 24" long. Thread chain through beads and knot ends.

-or-

Using nylon beading thread, make a string of seed beads that is at least 24" long. You can add accent color sections if you like. Thread bead chain through wooden beads and knot ends.



Thread the string of beads through your wooden beads and knot. You can add larger glass beads between the wooden beads if you like.