

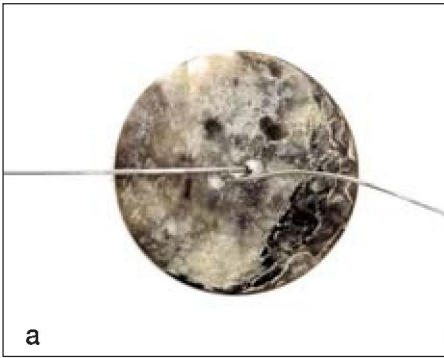
WIREWORLD / STRINGING

Bunches of buttons

Bundle a collection
of blooming buttons
with behind-the-
scenes wirework

by **Stacy Hillmer**

Brass chain, crystal
pearls, and a leaf
component lend
a vintage look to
this necklace.



materials

necklace 19 in. (48 cm)

- 4 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. (2.7 cm) cupped mother-of-pearl sew-through buttons
- 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ -in. (2.2 cm) cupped mother-of-pearl sew-through buttons
- 38 x 23 mm leaf component (Vintaj, vintaj.com)
- 16-in. (41 cm) strand 8 mm crystal pearls
- 14–20 5 mm crystal pearls
- 8 18 x 12 mm oval links (Knot Just Beads, 414-771-8360, knotjustbeads.com)
- hook clasp
- 32 in. (81 cm) 24-gauge wire, half-hard
- 9 in. (23 cm) chain, 10–11 mm links
- 8 mm jump ring
- 3 7–8 mm jump rings (optional)
- 7 5 mm jump rings
- 8 micro crimp beads
- flexible beading wire, .010
- 2 pairs of chainnose pliers
- wire cutters

As soon as I saw the floral motif on these mother-of-pearl sew-throughs, I imagined them clustered together in little button bouquets. To do this, I wired each button to an oval link, then attached the links with jump rings. This technique secures the buttons from the back, and layering the buttons so that their cupped shapes lock together is the key to making a sturdy cluster.

step by step

Button clusters

[1] Cut a 4-in. (10 cm) piece of 24-gauge wire. With the tip of your chainnose pliers, grasp the center of the wire, and bend both ends downward. Feed each end of the wire through a hole of a sew-through button, front to

back. Cross the wires close to the back of the button. With one end, go through the opposite hole, back to front, then go through the first hole again (**photo a**).

[2] Over both ends, string an oval link. Using chainnose pliers to guide the wire, wrap each end around a side of the link three or four times. Trim the wire, and press the ends close to the link (**photo b**).

[3] Repeat steps 1 and 2 with the remaining buttons.

[4] To make a two-button cluster, layer two buttons as desired so that the ends of the oval links are touching. Open a 5 mm jump ring (Online Basics), attach the oval links, and close the jump ring (**photo c**). To make a three-button cluster, use jump rings to attach the oval link of a third button to each of the previous two links (**photo d**). Adjust the buttons until they lock into a solid cluster (see Designer's Note). Make one two-button cluster and two three-button clusters.

Necklace

[1] Cut an 8-in. (20 cm) piece of beading wire. String a crimp bead and a link of a three-button cluster.



Go back through the crimp bead, tighten the wire, and flatten the crimp bead with chainnose pliers (Online Basics). String a pattern of 8 mm and 5 mm pearls for 4¼ in. (10.8 cm). String a crimp bead and a link of the two-button cluster. Go back through the crimp bead, tighten the wire, flatten the crimp bead, and trim the excess wire.

[2] Repeat step 1 with a 9-in. (23 cm) piece of beading wire and stringing 5½ in. (14 cm) of pearls. Repeat again using an 11-in. (28 cm) piece of beading wire and stringing 7¼ in. (18.4 cm) of pearls. Attach both strands to the same links as the first strand.

[3] Cut a 3½-in. (8.9 cm) piece of beading wire. String a crimp bead and the remaining link of the two-button cluster. Go back through the crimp bead, tighten the wire, and flatten the crimp bead. String three 8 mm pearls, a crimp bead, and a link of the remaining three-button cluster. Go back through the crimp bead, tighten the wire, flatten the crimp bead, and trim the excess wire.

[4] Open a link of chain to remove a 4½-in. (11.4 cm) piece of chain. Repeat to remove a 3¾-in. (9.5 cm) piece. Open an end link of the 4½-in. (11.4 cm) chain, and attach an oval link of the three-button cluster connected to the

three strands of pearls. Close the link. Open an end link of the 3¾-in. (9.5 cm) chain, attach an oval link of the other three-button cluster, and close the link. Open the remaining end link of the 3¾-in. (9.5 cm) chain, attach a hook clasp, and close the link.

Alternatively, if your chain links are soldered, use 7–8 mm jump rings to attach the chains to the clasp and button clusters.

[5] Open an 8 mm jump ring, and attach the leaf component and a link of the two-button cluster. Close the jump ring. ●

DESIGNER'S NOTE:

Your buttons may form a solid cluster on the first try, or they may need some encouragement. Try any of the following to make your cluster more stable:

- Combine buttons with different degrees of the cupped shape.
- Mix up the sizes of buttons in the cluster.
- Layer the buttons in different arrangements.
- Open the 5 mm jump rings attaching a link, turn the link, and attach the jump rings to the other end of the link.
- Add more jump rings, between 5 and 8 mm in diameter. Oval jump rings may also prove useful.
- If you still find that a button is prone to popping out of the cluster, avoid attaching the chain or pearl strands to that button.

Stacy Hillmer

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