

# Butterfly Pendant

by Carolyn Baum

Jig-formed wire wings highlight a glass focal bead.

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.



When designing this pendant I did not have a particular bead in mind to use, so I ended up designing the bead to match the pendant. I chose to make a bead with a conical shape. I used silver foil in the bead to give it some sparkle and black markings to mimic a butterfly body. The conical shape helped to give the pendant a long slender look even though the bead was going to have a large hole, to accommodate the two wires that had to come through the bead hole.

However, I am sure that lots of other shapes of beads will work, as long as the hole is large enough. It will require some minor adjustments in the design of the wire pattern to accommodate a different size and shape bead.

## MATERIALS:

- Bead with 4mm hole
- 14-gauge dead soft wire, 34" long (copper, sterling, brass, or gold-filled)
- 20-gauge dead soft wire, 3" long
- Wooden board at least 5" x 5" x 1/4"
- Finishing nails
- Paper
- Marker
- Cord or chain with clasp
- Tape

## TOOLS:

- Planishing or ball peen hammer
- Steel block
- Wire cutters
- Round nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Hammer
- File

## TECHNIQUES:

- Wirework, hammering, making a jig, beads and wire.

**Step 1:** Lay the bead in the center of a sheet of paper, and trace around the bead. Remove the bead. Draw a simple line design for the top of the butterfly wing. Start drawing at the top of the bead, and end near the center. Keep in mind that you need a loop in the wire above the bead to pull a chain or cord through. Try to make it mimic the eyes of the butterfly. Start at the bottom of the bead, and draw a simple curved line down and then up, to end near the center of the bead. The two halves should touch each other at some point. Fill in with a widened line where you want the wire to be hammered flat.

Trace this design, and flip over to repeat on the opposite side. Make any adjustments necessary. Beware that too much free floating wire could affect the wearability of the pendant.

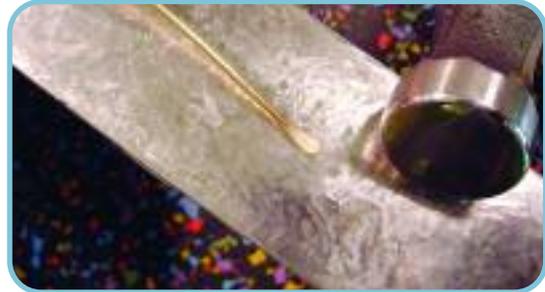
*To make the jig, place the finished drawing on a wooden board, and tape or glue down. Hammer the finishing nails into the board at all major turning points of the design. It is only necessary to do this for one side of the butterfly. Clip the heads of the nails off with a heavy-duty wire cutter.*



Step 1

**Step 2:** Cut two 17" pieces of 14g wire. The length may vary depending on the final design. Check to make sure they both fit in the bead together. If

not, file the bead hole opening larger until both wires fit through the bead.



Step 2: Hammering the wire into a teardrop.

Begin forging the wire by hammering a teardrop shape on the end of the wire. File the end smooth.

**Step 3:** Hold the teardrop in place with round nose pliers, and bend the wire into a C shape with the teardrop sitting flat in the C.



Step 3: Bending the wire.

**Step 4:** Place the C shape over the pattern, and bend the wire around the nails for several turns.



Step 4: Shaping the wire on the jig pattern

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Lift the wire off the board, and hammer portions of the wire if necessary to follow the design.



Step 4: Hammering the wire to shape

**Step 5:** Place the wire back on the jig, and bend the wire around the nails until you reach the loops above the bead. Make a loop around the nail.



Step 5: Looping around the nail

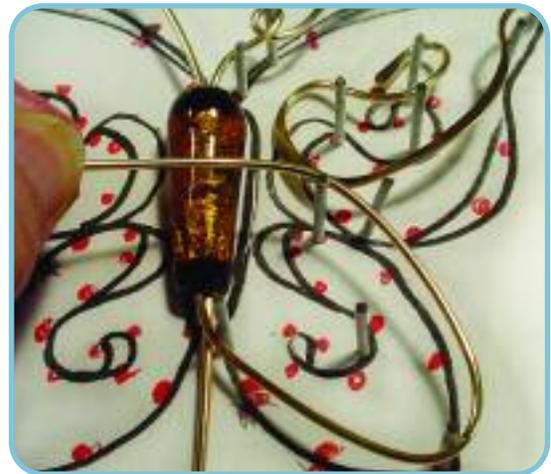
**Step 6:** Hammer the remaining curves of the top of the wing.



Step 6: Hammering the wings

**Step 7:** Repeat Steps 3-6 for the second piece of 14g wire. When forming loops for the butterfly eyes, make sure you loop them in opposite directions

to keep the design symmetrical. Straighten out the remaining wire on each piece. Use flat nose pliers if necessary to straighten out the wire. Line up the two pieces next to each other, with the wings flared out, and pull both wires through top of the bead.



Step 7

Place the bead and wire on the board, and start bending the wire around the nails from the bottom up. Remove the wire from the nails.

**Step 8:** Hammer the first curve of the lower portion of the wing.



Step 8

**Step 9:** Place the pendant back on the jig, and finish following the pattern with the wire. Cut off any unnecessary wire.



Step 9

**Step 10:** Hammer the final curves on the wire flat. In order to do this, it may be necessary to bend the pattern out of shape slightly to protect the bead and finish the pattern. Bend the wire back to your desired shape after hammering.



Step 10

Repeat Steps 7-10 for the bottom wing of the other side. Flipping the bead over and using the same nails works well, so it is not necessary to have nails on both sides of the board.

**Step 11:** Make final adjustments to the wire, and using the 20g wire, wrap the upper and lower wings of each side together. Hammer if desired. Pull your cord or chain through the loops. Adjust the length if necessary.



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has a Master's degree in Art Education and has been making glass beads since 1996. She studied lampworking at the Corning Studio of Glass. To see more of her work, visit her Web site at [Cbeadsandbuttons.com](http://Cbeadsandbuttons.com).



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