



# Jewelry Making Tools

by Judy Markwell

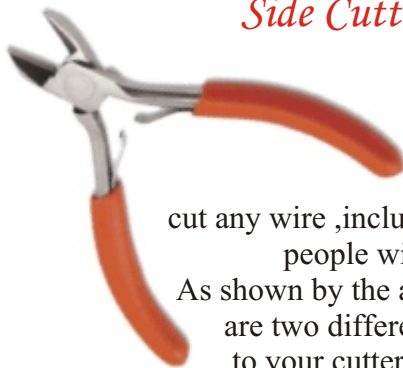
*What you really need      What they do*

If you're new to jewelry making, you may have seen all the tools that are out there and wondered just how many of them you need, and just exactly what they're all used for. Here's a quick guide to the most used tools and what they are used for. When I started, I bought all the tools I thought I wanted as cheaply as I could. Over the years I've replaced them with higher quality ones. I rather like this approach - I had everything I needed in the beginning for around \$30, then I only invested in high quality tools for the ones I use the most. I still use some of those first ones, also, because for the amount of time I use them, they work just fine..

*Must Haves*

**side cutters**  
**round nosed pliers**  
**chain nosed pliers**

## *Side Cutters*



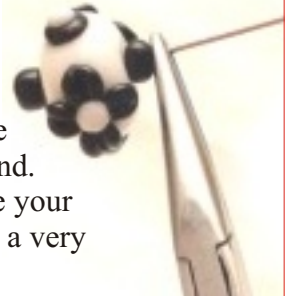
These are used to make a flush cut on your wire. You'll need these if you ever cut any wire, including head pins, so most people will need a pair of these.

As shown by the arrow, there are two different sides to your cutter. One side will make a flat or flush cut on your wire, the other side will make a really pointed and sharp cut. Make sure you always use the side that makes the flat cut.



## *Chain Nosed Pliers*

These are used to for holding things in tight spaces. These are very narrow at the ends, but still have a flat area where you hold onto the wire. These are not as indispensable as the cutters or round nosed pliers, but you should try a pair of cheap ones to see if you like them - I think they are very useful when making a head pin. I use the width of them as my guide for where I make my first bend, as shown here, and I also like them for tucking the tails of my wire under at the end. You can also use them to close your crimp beads, although they do a very inferior job to crimping pliers.



## *Round Nosed Pliers*

Also called needle nosed pliers, these are another must-have. You use them to shape anything round. If you only work with memory wire, you'll need a pair for the loop at the ends. If you only make head pins, you'll need them to form the round part. You can use them to make jump rings, also. When I'm making them, I like to make a little mark on my pliers with a permanent marker so that I make them all at the same place on the pliers to ensure that the jump rings are all the same size. This tool can also be used for holding wires and tucking ends, but it doesn't do quite as good a job as chain nosed pliers for these jobs..



## *Flat Nosed Pliers*

These pliers are the ones you'll use for holding your work steady while you bend or cut with your other hand. They can also be used to correct a bend that was made by mistake. You will want a pair of these fairly soon, but you can get by without them for a while if you have chain nosed pliers.



*Jewelry Making Tools Information*

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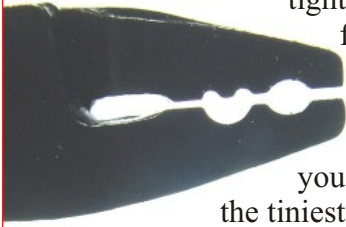
### *Crimping Pliers*

These are used to make a very nice closing of a crimp bead. Nothing else really takes their place. You can close a crimp bead with some kind of flat pliers, but you will have sharp edges.



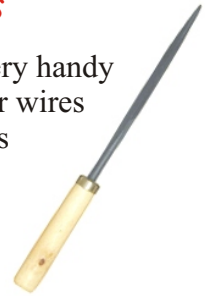
The picture below shows the two areas of the crimper.

You use first one area then the other to make a very tightly closed crimp that will hold fast the cord that you're using the crimp bead on. We have a complete tutorial on crimp beads and crimping pliers if you need one. For everything but the tiniest and largest crimp tubes, you use a standard size crimping plier.



### *Needle Files*

A set of needle files is very handy for filing the ends of your wires when they've been cut, as well as filing down any places that you have a burr on. At first, the main use you'll have for one is filing the tails off your cut wire, and you can substitute an emery board for this. This is definitely a tool that can wait.



### *Memory Wire Shears*

If you do much work with memory wire, you'll want some of these cutters. We have a two page tutorial that covers lots of Memory Wire tips and techniques.



*There are lots of fun tools,  
but don't buy so many tools you  
don't have any money for  
BEADS !*

Now, there are all kinds of tools and accessories that you can buy to help you make your jewelry. If you string beads, you'll need some scissors and the appropriate needles. Also, a beading mat is very handy and you could use some bead trays like the one below left. It's really nice to lots of these for putting the different components of your project into while you work, and then



returning the pieces to their proper containers when you're finished. If nothing else, they work well with the bead mat to scoop all of your beads up and pour them into their bag. On the right is a tray for laying out your projects to get a feel for how your arrangements will look.

Then there are more specialized tools such as jigs - they're great for making your own wire components and pay for themselves in savings. There are little rings you wear that make it easy to open jump rings, and pliers that help you make different sizes of jump rings instead of using marker on your round nose pliers. Just don't get so caught up in buying tools that you spend all your bead money.



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