

Frequently Asked Questions about Riveting:

1: What types of metal work well for riveting?

A: Most metals work well for riveting. Copper is an affordable metal to practice with. It is also a little softer than sterling silver and brass and is therefore easier to punch or drill holes in.

2: What type of wire works well for riveting?

A: Most all wire types can be used for riveting. Fine silver and copper are easier to work with than sterling silver or gold-filled wire because they are much softer.

3: What type of hammer should I use?

A: A riveting hammer is best, although a chasing hammer will also work.

4: How do I make a hole in the metal?

A: Either drill a hole in the metal using a flex shaft or punch a hole using a hole punch.

5: How do I drill a hole for riveting?

A: Make sure the drill is straight and not at an angle. This is especially important when drilling through multiple layers.

6: Can I drill more than one sheet of metal at a time?

A: Yes, multiple layers being riveted together should be drilled together to ensure that the holes are aligned. Drill and set only one rivet initially because hammering will cause the metal to shift slightly, moving the holes out of alignment. After the first rivet is set, set a second rivet on the opposite side (called counter setting). This secures the metal so that it doesn't continue shifting. All other holes can then be drilled and set.

7: What can be used as rivets?

A: You can buy rivets especially made for jewelry, or you can use wire.

8: How do I select wire of the correct size for the hole I have made?

A: Measure both the wire and the hole size to ensure you have the correct fit. The wire should fit snugly inside the hole. If the fit is loose, the wire will not work as a rivet. The tighter the fit, the easier the riveting.

9: How do I measure the wire and hole?

A: A wire gauge or drawplate and calipers are useful when measuring wire gauge and hole size.

10: How long should the wire be?

A: Measure wire precisely and cut it flush. If it is too long, the rivet will bend over. If it is too short, the rivet head will not form. The wire should be a few millimeters higher than the level of the metal you are riveting.

11: What is the difference between tube and wire rivets?

A: Tubing will give you an open rivet, while wire will result in a closed, solid rivet.

12: The wire keeps bending when I try to hit it with a hammer. What am I doing wrong?

A: The wire should not be longer than a few millimeters above the level of the metal you are riveting. Use a gauge of wire that fits snugly inside the hole. If the wire is loose inside the hole, it will not be supported and will bend when you hit it with the hammer. Bent wire can be straightened with chain nose pliers.