

## Frequently Asked Questions about Looms:

### **1. How can I create a design for loomwork?**

A. You can create a design before you begin weaving by using Beader's Canvas, a software program, or make it up as you go. You can also use graph paper to draw your own design chart. (Be aware that not all seed beads are perfectly square so your design may appear stretched out on the loom compared to how it looks on the graph paper.)

### **2. How do I select a loom?**

A. To weave a 7-inch-long rectangular piece, you'll need a simple loom that holds a warp at least 12 inches long (from screw to screw), which would include 7 inches for the bracelet and 5 inches (2.5 inches on each side) for finishing.

FusionBeads.com offers the following looms:

Ojibwa Wooden Bead Loom, which accommodates projects up to 5 inches wide and 17 inches long. This loom holds warp threads approximately 22 inches long.

American Indian Metal Bead Loom, which accommodates projects up to 2 inches wide and 9 inches long. This loom holds warp threads approximately 11 inches long.

Beazu Small Bead Loom, which accommodates projects up to 5.75 inches wide and 6 inches long. This loom holds warp thread approximately 12 inches long.

Beazu Large Bead Loom, which accommodates projects up to 9.5 inches wide and 9.5 inches long. This loom holds warp thread approximately 18 inches long.

### **3. What are warp threads?**

A. These threads run the length of the loom and the base threads onto which you will weave your beads.

### **4. What are weft threads?**

A. These threads run the width of the loom. The weft thread is threaded onto a needle, and beads are then strung onto the thread and woven between the warp threads.

### **5. How does the loom operate?**

A. The loom holds the warp threads under tension while you weave across them with the weft threads and beads.

### **6. How are the threads set up on the loom?**

A. On a basic loom, a sturdy spring across each end spaces the warp threads and holds them firmly in place. Stringing the warp threads onto the loom before you begin weaving is called warping the loom. To begin warping the loom, tie a slip knot at the end of the thread over one of the screws. Pull the thread across the top of the loom, and lay it into corresponding slots in the left and right springs. Keep the thread parallel to the loom edges. Pull the thread taut, and wrap the thread around the screw. For more detailed information on warping the loom, please see the instructions that came with your loom and our Beading Technique, Assembling a Beazu Bead Loom.

### **7. What size beads should I use when weaving on a loom?**

A. You can use nearly any size seed bead. The beads most often used for loom beadweaving are 11° and 10° Delica seed beads, although round seed beads are often used in Native American beadwork. You can also use other size seed beads such as 15°, 8° or 6° as well as different shapes for different effects. Delica beads, cubes and hexes are ideal because they have straight sides that line up beautifully.

## **8. How many beads will it take to make a loom piece?**

A. The number of beads you use will depend on the size of your piece. You can calculate the number needed by multiplying the number of beads across by the number of bead rows in your pattern.

## **9. Which threads and needles are best for weaving on a loom?**

A. Here are tips for selecting threads:

- Use a smooth thread such as Nymo or FireLine. We recommend Nymo size D or FireLine Braided Bead Thread .006 diameter, 4 lb/Size B.
- When using thread from a bobbin, such as Nymo, unwind and pull the length of the thread firmly between two hands to stretch it and remove some of the curl. This procedure will also reduce tangling, which is especially helpful for the weft thread.
- Select a thin thread that fits easily through the beads at least twice for the weft.
- Most beadweavers use the same type of thread for both warp and weft.

Here are suggestions for choosing needles:

- Use regular beading needles or extra long needles. We recommend Size 12 English Beading Needles or for larger pieces the ultra long Pony beading needle.
- If your piece is wide, you may find that a longer needle saves time because it enables you to pass across the width using fewer stitches.
- When using 11° Delica beads, use a size 11 or 12 beading needle. As you become more experienced, you may want to use a thinner needle because it will reduce thread fraying and splitting and enable you to pass through each bead more times.

## **10. How do I set up my loom for beadweaving?**

A. Please see the FusionBeads.com Technique called Assembling a Beazu Wooden Bead Loom.

## **11. How many warp threads do I need to set up on the loom?**

A. You will need one more warp thread than the number of beads in one row. For example, if you have 32 beads in one row in your pattern, you will need 33 warp threads.

## **12. How do I string the beads onto the loom?**

A. Please see the FusionBeads.com Beading Technique called Basic Beading on a Loom.

## **13. Do all loomwork pieces have straight sides?**

A. Straight sides are not necessary. To weave a shaped piece, work increases and decreases to make the rows of beads longer or shorter. You can increase the number of beads only to the number of warp threads already on the loom, so you'll need to plan the shape before warping the loom. An excellent resource is *Beading on a Loom* by Don Pierce, which includes thorough instructions on increasing and decreasing.

## **14. How do I add more weft thread while weaving?**

A. To add additional weft thread, work to the end of a row and tie several knots around the warp thread at the far left. Trim the thread, leaving at least 6 inches. Cut a new weft thread, and tie it to the outer warp thread as before, leaving a tail. Continue weaving. You can weave all of the weft tails into the work later when the weaving is completed, or bury the tail thread as you go by passing it through the beads with the new thread.

## 15. How can I make the edges on my loomwork even?

A. There are several things you can do to make loomwork edges neater:

- One factor to consider is thread tension. When tightening the weft threads in a row, the thread should be smooth and snug but not tight enough to distort the warp threads at the edge.
- Another factor is bead type. Some seed beads, like Delica beads and Japanese round seed beads are relatively uniform, while Czech seed beads can be inconsistent in size or shape.
- You can also make simple edge adjustments while weaving. If a row seems to be getting a little short, try placing a wider bead at the outer edge. With practice, your eye will start to notice edge variations, and you'll be able to correct them as you weave.

## 16. How do I finish the warp threads?

A. There are many ways to finish off a beaded loom piece, depending on the effect you want, how much time you choose to spend, and how the piece will be used. In any case, you'll need to secure the warp threads, so that the piece will be strong and stable. Options include:

- Backing the beaded piece with leather or fabric.
- Making the warp threads into a beaded fringe at the top or the bottom edge.
- Beading a decorative border at the edges.
- The warp threads can be woven back into place and you can leave the piece unlined and with plain edges. Refer to the Fusionbeads.com Basic Beading on a Loom technique.

## 17. Can I use glue to adhere the warp threads on the wrong side of the piece?

A. If you are weaving a small piece, and the ends are completely enclosed, it may be fine to use some glues. In general, glue can add stiffness to the piece, and if you are not careful, the glue can ooze out between the beads, which may show on the right side.

## 18. How do I tie off the threads still hanging from the sides of the piece (weft threads)?

A. If you didn't weave in the tail ends of the weft threads as you went along, you will need to do so as part of the finishing process. Some weavers prefer to weave in all the weft threads before the piece is cut off the loom, while others choose to leave them hanging until after all the warp threads have been woven in. One reason to do this is that you may need to stitch through the same spot again and may accidentally pull the thread tail out of the bead. Please refer to the FusionBeads.com Basic Beading on a Loom Technique to see how weft threads can be finished.

## 19. How can I use the warp threads to make fringe at the end of the piece?

A. Beading a fringe can be a great way to embellish the edges of a woven piece while finishing off the warp threads at the same time. An excellent resource is *Beading on a Loom* by Don Pierce, which includes thorough instructions on various fringe techniques.

## 20. How do I attach a clasp?

A. There are many ways to attach a clasp.

- Toggle attachment, see the Fusionbeads.com loom technique.
- Bar/Sliding Clasp
- Button Clasp

An excellent resource is *Contemporary Loom Beading-A New Look at a Traditional Stitch* by Sharon Bateman, which includes thorough instructions on various clasps finishing techniques.

## **Troubleshooting:**

### **21. I am having difficulty getting the tension right on the warp threads. How tight should it be?**

A. All warp threads should be under consistent tension and wrapped smoothly and evenly – not too loose and not too tight. Pulling the warp threads too tight can distort the loom and cause some of the threads to be loose and others to be tight, especially if you are working on a wire loom like the American Indian Metal Bead Loom. When you remove the piece from the loom, it may have distorted and won't lie flat. We have found it easier to control the tension by warping the loom from the center outward. To refer to this method please see the FusionBeads.com Basic Beading on a Loom technique.

### **22. My woven piece looked straight on the loom, but now that I have removed it from the loom, it is distorted. What did I do wrong, and how can I fix it?**

A. If a woven piece looks distorted, for example it buckles or puckers when you remove it from the loom, it may mean tension on the warp threads was too tight or uneven. You may be able to eliminate or relax the puckers by laying the piece flat on a table and gently roll the beads around to release some tension. If the piece won't relax, you may have pierced some threads while weaving, so the threads are unable to move. Also, the weft threads may have been worked with uneven tension. If the piece refuses to lie flat, you might consider framing it or mounting it to a firm backing.

### **23. How can I fix my piece if I drop or miss a bead?**

A. Dropped or missed beads can be fixed by re-weaving through the piece and catching the warp thread that was missed with a new weft. Or if caught early enough you can undo the weft back to the error and redo the stitch.