Spiral transfiguration

Make a statement of quiet elegance with cylinder beads, pearls, and fire-polished beads in a monochromatic palette

designed by Gwen Simmons

Fire-polished beads inserted between rows of spiraling cylinder beads take you beyond standard Ndebele herringbone stitch. A blend of playfulness and precision, this subtly asymmetrical necklace is as beautiful as it is intriguing.

step by step

Necklace
Side one, spiral tube
[1] On 2 yd. (1.8m) of conditioned Nymo (Basics), leave a 6-in. (15cm) tail, and pick up two color A and two color B cylinder beads. Sew through all four beads again in the same direction. Alternating pairs of As and Bs, work in ladder stitch (Basics) until you have a two-bead ladder that is eight beads long (figure 1). Join the ladder into a ring by sewing through the first two As, the last two Bs, and the first two As again.

[2] Work the next rounds as follows:
Round 3: Work one round of tubular Ndebele herringbone stitch (Basics), using an A and a B in each stitch.

Rounds 4–65: Working in spiral herringbone, pick up an A and a B, sew down through the next B, and continue up through two As in the next stack (figure 2, a–b). Repeat around for four stitches (b–c).

At the end of 65 rounds, the tube is approximately half the length it will be when finished. If you wish to adjust the length of the necklace, make this section longer or shorter as desired.

Fire-polished embellishment
Continue working in spiral herringbone as follows:
Round 66: Work the first stitch, but sew through two Bs and come up through three As (figure 3, a–b). This creates an opening where you’ll insert a 4mm fire-polished bead on the next round. Complete the round (b–c).

Round 67: Work the first half of the first stitch (c–d). Pick up a 4mm, and sew up through two As in the next stack (d–e). Complete the round (e–f).

Round 68: Work the first stitch, but sew through two Bs and the 4mm, and continue up through three As on the next stack (figure 4, a–b). Work the second stitch, and, following the method used in round 66, create an opening for a
Branch fringe combined with stick pearls gives this necklace an opulent look. You can achieve other effects by varying your bead choice and fringe technique.
Round 69: Work the first stitch, retracing the thread path through the 4mm as in the previous round (figure 5, a–b). Work the second stitch, adding a 4mm (b–c). Complete the round (c–d).

Round 70: Work the first stitch, sewing down through one B and up through two As on the next stack (figure 6, a–b). Sew back down through the second B from the top on the previous stack, continue through the two As of the next stack (b–c), and tighten to close up the gap above the 4mm. Work the second stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm (c–d). Work the third stitch, leaving an opening for the next 4mm (d–e). Work the fourth stitch (e–f).

Round 71: Work the first stitch. Work the second stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm. Work the third stitch, adding a 4mm. Work the fourth stitch.

Round 72: Work the first stitch. Work the second stitch, closing the gap above the third 4mm. Work the third stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm.

Round 73: Work two stitches. Work the third stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm. Work the fourth stitch, adding a 4mm.

Round 74: Work two stitches. Work the third stitch, closing the gap above the third 4mm. Work the fourth stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm.

Round 75: Work the first stitch, creating an opening for a 4mm. Work two stitches. Work the fourth stitch, retracing the path through the 4mm.

Rounds 77–83: Repeat rounds 68–74.

Round 84: Add a 4mm after the first stitch. Work three stitches.

Round 85: Retrace the thread path through the 4mm. Work three stitches.

Round 86: Retrace the thread path through the 4mm, and create an opening for a 4mm after the second stitch. Work two stitches.

Round 87: Work the first two stitches, adding a 4mm after each. Work two stitches.

Round 88: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work two stitches.

Round 89: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms, and create an opening for a 4mm after the third stitch. Work one stitch.

Round 90: Work the first three stitches, adding a 4mm after each. Work one stitch.

Round 91: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work one stitch.

Round 92: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms, and create an opening for a 4mm after the fourth stitch.

Round 93: Work four stitches, adding a 4mm after each.

Rounds 105–106: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work one stitch.

Four-sided bead cage
Continue working in spiral herringbone as follows:
Round 94: Create an opening after the first stitch. Work three stitches.

Round 95: Add a 4mm after the first stitch. Work three stitches.

Round 96: Retrace the thread path through the 4mm. Work three stitches.

Round 97: Retrace the thread path through the 4mm, and create an opening for a 4mm after the second stitch. Work two stitches.

Round 98: Work the first two stitches, adding a 4mm after each. Work two stitches.

Round 99: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work two stitches.

Round 100: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms, and create an opening for a 4mm after the third stitch. Work one stitch.

Round 101: Work the first three stitches, adding a 4mm after each. Work one stitch.

Round 102: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work one stitch.

Round 103: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms, and create an opening for a 4mm after the fourth stitch.

Round 104: Work four stitches, adding a 4mm after each.

Rounds 105–106: Retrace the thread path through the 4mms. Work one stitch.
path through the 4mms.

**Rounds 107–130:** Repeat rounds 104–106 until you have 12 4mms in the first stack.

**Rounds 131–142:** Continue stitching as in rounds 104–106, closing the gap after the 12th 4mm of each stack.

Work in regular spiral herringbone after each stack is closed.

**Fringe**

1. After all four stacks are closed, resume spiral herringbone for approximately ten more rounds.
2. Work three more rounds of spiral herringbone, retracing the thread paths between the stacks to separate them.
3. Choose a stack, and extend it by several rows: Pick up an A and a B, and sew through the previous B and A. Continue through the last A added (figure 7, a–b). Repeat until the stack is about ½ in. (1.3cm) long (b–c).
4. Pick up a 4mm and two As or Bs, and sew back through the 4mm and the other cylinder previous to the 4mm (c–d).
5. Sew back through the adjacent cylinder, the 4mm, and the first cylinder picked up in the previous step (d–e).
6. Pick up a 4mm, a stick pearl, a 4mm, a stick pearl, a 4mm, and two cylinders (e–f). Sew back through the 4mms, stick pearls, and one cylinder of the pair added in step 4 (f–g). Sew through the adjacent cylinder, sew back through the same five beads, and continue through the first cylinder picked up in the previous step (g–h).
7. Pick up approximately 1 in. (2.5cm) of cylinders, skip the last one, and sew through the next two or three cylinders (figure 8, a–b).
8. Pick up three to six cylinders, skip the last one, and sew back through the others and the next two or three stem cylinders (b–c).
9. Repeat step 8 until you’ve made several branches on the stem (c–d). Sew into one of the cylinders below the last 4mm, and sew through the adjacent cylinder (d–e).
10. Repeat steps 7–9 twice to make a total of three fringes. Sew back through the fringe beads and the separated stack, and exit the end cylinder of the adjacent separated stack.
11. Repeat steps 3–10 on each separated stack, varying the length of each fringe. Secure the tails with a few half-hitch knots (Basics) between beads, and trim.

**Side two, spiral tube**

1. Repeat the instructions for side one up through step 2 of the fringe.
2. Choose a separated stack, and add 14 pairs of cylinders as in step 3 of the fringe.
3. Pick up a 4mm, and wrap the stack around side one, between the fire-polished cage and the fringes (photo a). Sew into an end cylinder of the opposite separated stack of side two, and sew through the adjacent cylinder, the 4mm, and the adjacent cylinder of the extended stack (photo b). Retrace the thread path a few times to reinforce the connection.
4. Sew back through the beadwork, and exit an end cylinder of one of the remaining stacks.
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to join the two remaining stacks. Secure the tails, and trim.

**Bead caps and clasp**

1. Secure 2 ft. (61cm) of condi-

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:** If you want the spiral on the second side to go in the opposite direction of the first side, work your spiral herringbone by going down two and up one bead on each stitch. You’ll need to work the embellishment and cage beads in the opposite order also, adding a 4mm bead after the fourth stitch and working backward.
tioned thread at the ladder end of one side, and exit any cylinder. Pick up a cylinder, sew through the next cylinder, and exit the following cylinder (figure 9, a–b). Repeat around to add four cylinders (b–c).


[3] Work two or three rounds of tubular, even-count peyote stitch (Basics). Sew through the final round of peyote to taper the end.

[4] Pick up a cylinder, a 4mm, a cylinder, a 4mm, a stick pearl, a 4mm, and three cylinders. Skip the last three cylinders, and sew back through the last six beads. Sew into the cylinder opposite the one your thread is exiting.

[5] Retrace the thread path several times, and then sew through the beadwork to exit a cylinder in the first row of peyote where the herringbone tube and the peyote cap join. To camouflage the join with three-bead picots, pick up three cylinders, and sew through the next cylinder in the first peyote round. Repeat around, adding picots to the first two peyote rounds. Secure the tails, and trim.

[6] Repeat steps 1–3 on the other end. Pick up a cylinder, a 4mm, and enough cylinders to form a loop around the stick-pearl toggle. Sew back through the 4mm and into the bead cap. Repeat step 5.

**Earrings**

[1] Thread a needle on 2 ft. (61 cm) of conditioned Nymo, and, leaving a 6-in. (15 cm) tail, pick up four cylinder beads. Sew back through the first two cylinders (figure 11, a–b).

[2] Stitch two more pairs of cylinders, as shown (b–c).

[3] Pick up a stick pearl, a 4mm fire-polished bead, a stick pearl, and two cylinders. Sew back through the pearls, the 4mm, and a cylinder above the top pearl (c–d). Sew through the adjacent cylinder, the next three beads, and an end cylinder (d–e).


[5] Sew back up through the pearls, the 4mm, and one stack of cylinders. Pick up five or six cylinders, and sew back through the adjacent cylinder. Retrace the thread path a few times. Secure the tails, and trim.

[6] Open the loop of an earring finding (Basics), attach the earring, and close the loop. Make a second earring.

**MATERIALS**

both projects

- Nymo B, conditioned with beeswax or Thread Heaven
- beading needles, #12

necklace 20 in. (51 cm)

- 5–7 stick pearls
- 130–140 4mm Czech fire-polished beads
- 10g Japanese cylinder beads, in each of 2 colors: A, B

earrings

- 4 stick pearls
- 2 4mm Czech fire-polished beads
- 1g Japanese cylinder beads, in each of 2 colors: A, B
- pair of earring findings
- chainnose pliers