practice to project

On a Roll

By Rebecca Kemp Brent

Use sample stitchouts to make jewelry that's fun, funky and absolutely unique.

Supplies

- Foam hair rollers
- Sturdy thread (quilting, carpet, or buttonhole thread)
- Ribbon, cord or rattail for stringing beads
- Purchased beads or spacers with large central holes
- Rotary cutter, mat and ruler
- Hand sewing needle
- Tweezers or a tube turner
- Paper scissors
- Large-eye yarn needle or a crochet hook
- Optional: Jewelry findings

Choosing stitch-outs

Each puff bead is made from a strip of fabric, so border designs are ideal. Look for borders that resemble purchased beads and trims, with well-defined side boundaries. Other borders can be adapted by adding rows of decorative machine stitches to the sides, creating the same kind of defined edge.

Embroidery motifs not intended as borders can also be adapted for puff beads. Stitch them in groups, one after another, to create a border effect, or feature a single small motif at the center of a bead. Adding decorative stitches along the edges increases the designs' suitability, and introduces color and texture to the beads.

Small, sample stitch-outs can be used for jewelry or other accessories. Follow our simple steps to discover
conceal raw edges and loose threads created by cutting through the embroidery. Some border designs are long enough to make two or three beads (A).

The foam rollers can be cut to any size, so the bead width is flexible. Generally, beads from ⅜" to 1¼" wide are the most attractive.

A portion of the fabric will wrap around the foam at each bead end, so take that into account when trimming the sample stitch-outs (B).

The allowance for the side wrap can be solid fabric, open embroidery fill or decorative stitches. Dense fill will not wrap and gather well, so keep filled areas within the main bead width.

For small diameter beads, add 1⁄8" to each long side for wrap and seam allowance. Add ⅛" for medium beads and ¼" for large.

Use a ruler and rotary cutter to trim each fabric piece to the correct size.

For best results, samples should be stitched on medium-weight woven fabrics that do not ravel easily. Broadcloth, weavers' cloth and muslin work well. Because the foam rollers are colored, it may be necessary to back thin or light-color fabrics with fusible interfacing to prevent show through.

As a rule, choose designs that were embroidered with tear-away stabilizer, because it doesn't add too much bulk to the beads. If a cut-away stabilizer was used for the embroidery, be sure to remove as much as possible especially from the bead edges and seam allowances.

**Preparation**

Foam rollers are available in several sizes, from ⅛" to almost 2" in diameter.

For this project, choose small (about ⅛" diameter), medium (⅛") or large (1") rollers.

For small rollers, select designs 2" long. Medium rollers use designs 2 ½" long, and large rollers accommodate designs 3" long. Add 1⁄8" to the length for ⅛" seam allowance on each end.

Longer designs can also be used for beads, because the seam allowances will

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Use finished puff beads for decorative pull chains, drawer handles and other dress-up items. The foam rollers can be cut to any size, so the bead width is flexible. Generally, beads from ⅜" to 1¼" wide are the most attractive. A portion of the fabric will wrap around the foam at each bead end, so take that into account when trimming the sample stitch-outs. The allowance for the side wrap can be solid fabric, open embroidery fill or decorative stitches. Dense fill will not wrap and gather well, so keep filled areas within the main bead width. For small diameter beads, add 1⁄8" to each long side for wrap and seam allowance. Add ⅛" for medium beads and ¼" for large. Use a ruler and rotary cutter to trim each fabric piece to the correct size.

**Make the beads**

Press ⅛" to the wrong side along each long edge. Fold each fabric strip in half, right sides together, and stitch the short ends by hand or machine. Use a ⅛" seam allowance (C).

Turn the fabric tube right side out. Tweezers or a notion designed for turning tubes may be helpful (D).

Remove the plastic frame from each roller. Use scissors to cut the foam to the desired bead width.

Stuff each fabric tube with a foam piece. (It’s easier to pull the foam into the tube than to push it into place.) Insert a long pair of tweezers into the empty tube and use the tips to grasp and compress the foam roller (E).

While keeping the foam compressed, pull it into the tube (F). Release the roller and use the

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As a rule, choose designs that were embroidered with tear-away stabilizer, because it doesn't add too much bulk to the beads. If a cut-away stabilizer was used for the embroidery, be sure to remove as much as possible especially from the bead edges and seam allowances.

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Easy Adjustable Necklace

With just four beads, you can make an adjustable slide closure for your necklace.

♦ Be sure to choose beads with holes that will snugly accommodate two pieces of cord.

♦ Arrange the necklace beads and string them on a long cord.

♦ Thread the right-hand cord through two closure beads, going from right to left.

♦ Thread a third closure bead on the right-hand cord and tie a knot in the cord end (G).

♦ Thread the left-hand cord through the first two closure beads only, going from left to right (H).

♦ Thread the fourth closure bead on the left-hand cord and tie a knot in the cord end (I).

♦ To adjust the necklace length, slide the first two closure beads along the cords. When the closure beads are together, the necklace is at its full length. When the beads are slid apart, the necklace becomes shorter.

♦ You can also eliminate the third and fourth beads by simply tying large knots at each end of the necklace cord.

G Thread a third closure bead (shown in white) on right-hand cord

H Thread left-hand cord through first two closure beads (red) only

I Thread fourth closure bead (white) on

tweezers to smooth it back into shape.

♦ Thread a hand-sewing needle with doubled sturdy thread and run a gathering stitch along one pressed edge. Pull up the gathers and secure the thread. The opening at the gathers’ center should be about the same size and location as the hole through the roller’s core.

♦ Repeat to gather the other bead edge.

Make the necklace

♦ Cut a length of cord, rattail or ribbon as long as desired for your necklace, plus 2” to 4” for finishing.

♦ Use a large-eye yarn needle or a crochet hook to thread the cord through the holes in the embroidered beads.

♦ If desired, add purchased beads or spacers to the necklace between the embroidered beads. These beads are decorative, but they also add weight to the necklace for a more attractive drape when worn.

♦ Knot the cord ends together or secure them with a few stitches. Arrange the necklace so the joined ends are hidden inside one of the beads.

♦ Alternatively, purchase a two-part jewelry clasp and attach one part to each cord end.

More ideas

♦ Make three to seven beads in graduated widths and diameters for a necklace. String the largest at the center, adding gradually smaller beads to each side.

♦ Create a necklace from several identical beads.

♦ For a dramatic, long necklace, string just one bead vertically on a length of rattail, with the ends left dangling below the bead to form a tassel.

♦ Match thread colors to a favorite outfit to create coordinating jewelry.

♦ Use a single bead as a scissor fob or rotary cutter dangle for easy identification in class.

♦ Single beads can also become key chains or cell phone dangles.

♦ Attach a single puff bead to a tassel to make seasonal decorations for drawer pulls or holiday trees.

Rebecca Kemp Brent is a freelance writer, designer, and author. She writes for Creative Machine Embroidery and other Primedia publications and teaches at consumer and trade shows across the country.

Blue and white beads: Singer XL6000 built-in border

Folk art beads: Brother Card #45, designs 18, 22, 25, 26, 28

Bargello beads: Sudberry House, M’Lady’s Jewels, #D4300

Sewing motif beads: Sudberry House, Sew Magic, #D4500

All other cross stitch beads: Sudberry House, Floral Gems, #D4500

Winter Beads: Sudberry House, Christmas Puff Bead

Folk art beads: Brother Card #5006 and Singer XL6000 built-in border

Blue and white beads: Singer Card #5006 and Singer XL6000 built-in border

All other cross stitch beads: Sudberry House, Floral Gems, #D4500

Winter Beads: Sudberry House, Christmas Puff Bead