



Ribbon Amulet Bag

Level: Beginner

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Thank you for purchasing this tutorial! Before you get to work, **please take the time to read the tutorial thoroughly.**

It's a bit like a complicated recipe; you want to have all of your ingredients ready before you start! This tutorial is intended for beginning level beadweavers; all you really need to know is how to thread a needle!

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The design for this piece is based off of ancient techniques. I started making amulet bag kits to sell on Ebay in 1996. In 1997, another seller on Ebay started making and selling the kits, using lower quality supplies. She used patterned/printed ribbons that sell at about 1/5 the price of the brocade ribbons. Her kits, as a result, were significantly less expensive than mine. I decided not to fight it and sort of lost interest for a while in these little bags, and so had shelved this project until just now.

Please have fun while making your little bag! Feel free to contact me with any and all questions regarding the information below, and for sources for any of the materials mentioned. I'll do my best to help you track down whatever you'll need!

You might notice that my photos are not so awesome for the finished bags. That's actually because I haven't made them in a very long time. My photos have improved since then!

Materials Needed:

- *Brocade Ribbon.
- *Optional – little piece of Velcro for bag closure or a pretty button.
- *Beading Wire. Yours should already be attached to the ribbon bag with crimp beads
- *Crimp Beads & Clasp (I recommend a toggle)
- *Optional – crimp covers
- *Size 11 seed beads or delicas
- *Selection of beads for fringe
- *Size 10 sharp needles
- *Beading thread (I like Fireline)
- *Sharp scissors
- *Needle nosed pliers
- *Optional – vellux beading surface or beading tray



From Wikipedia: An **amulet** ([Pliny], meaning "an object that protects a person from trouble"), a close cousin of the **talisman** (from Arabic *تلاسم* *tilasm*, ultimately from Greek *telesma* or from the Greek word "talein" which means "to initiate into the mysteries") consists of any object intended to bring good luck and/or protection to its owner. This bag is intended to hold your special items; in my case I use it for my computer memory stick, which I otherwise lose.

SETTING UP YOUR BAG

You can get some really high end Brocade ribbons from Fishman's Fabrics in Chicago. Expect to pay \$10/yard for them, though. They are totally worth it.

Vogue Fabrics has some lower end brocade ribbons. They are fun as well, but just aren't the quality of the Fischman's fabrics when you hold them up against one another.

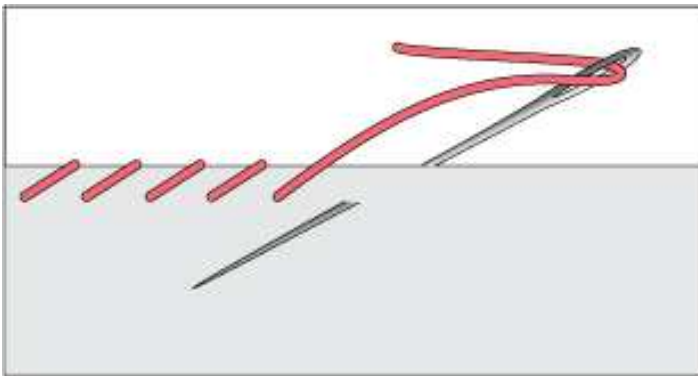
I get my brocade ribbon from a seller on Etsy. She's just great, and her prices are really reasonable. They still aren't the quality of the Fischman's ribbon, but she has a great selection.

<http://www.etsy.com/shop/trimgoddess>

First, decide how big you want your bag to be. Its like a little envelope, so you'll be folding the ribbon into thirds. Cut the ribbon, and add a little bit of glue to the cut edges.

Tip: Fray check or Aileen's craft glue work great. Don't use Elmers, because it will get sticky again if it happens to get wet!

Fold the cut edges under and stitch them into place. You can either make the front like a little triangle or flat across the front. Look through the photos in this tutorial of the finished bag to see what I mean.



Whip stitch along the edge of your bag to hold it in place. Later on you might decide to cover this edge with beadwork, so keep those stitches small. You can use regular thread for this step, if you'd like. The ship stitch is super easy, just come from the front of the bag over the edge and into the back. Repeat.

Tip: If you are feeling really fancy, you could use a sewing machine for this step. That's what I used to do, because I'd make the bag blanks about 2 dozen at a time and I really wanted them to be strong.

You will learn THREE techniques for this project.

- Basic Stringing
- Picot Stitch
- Beaded Fringe

TECHNIQUE #1 – BASIC STRINGING

You'll probably be stringing the necklace strap for your bag. I actually suggest doing this step last, so that you can use all the extra beads you haven't used in the fringe. However, we're going to start by discussing this technique since it's the most basic beading technique.



Tip: As you read through this tutorial, you'll also see a few bags finished with ribbons and braids. Those are an option as well, but I'm not really going to discuss them here.

Lay your design out on a non-slippery surface. A vellux beading surface is good, or you can get a flocked design board that shows you how long your necklace will be and has a channel to hold the beads in place. I generally design my pieces by doing a series of larger beads separated by seed beads. You'll want to keep the largest beads toward the bag, otherwise they'll be hidden behind your neck.

For a little bit more on how to design your necklace, you can visit about.com and type in "stringing," but to be quite honest, I like to keep my necklace strap pretty simple for this project otherwise it will overwhelm the center bag.

Make a tiny hole in the side of the bag where you want the strap to attach. You want to try and move the fibers aside, not break them, when you do this. Otherwise your brocade can start to fray. String a crimp bead onto your flexwire, go through the bag and string the tail of the flexwire back through the crimp bead to make a tiny loop that holds the bag in place. Smash your crimp bead with pliers.

Doesn't make sense?



Read on, and perhaps the following explanation with help!

String your beads onto the beading wire strap. This beading wire is made out of a steel cable covered with a nylon coating. It is extremely strong, but you still need to work with it properly. It cannot be knotted. Instead, we are going to use a crimp bead to hold it in place. Also, it is not stainless steel, so I wouldn't recommend letting it get soaking wet.

Thread your beads onto the wire

Now you need to finish up and crimp your clasp into place. Open your toggle clasp so that it is two pieces. Now take one end of your wire and add a crimp bead (2mm X 2mm

crimp beads are ideal with medium diameter wire), a bead, and another crimp.

Optional: Thread on some 11/0 seed beads, so the loop of wire is covered with beads and doesn't show. Place one of the clasp pieces on the wire. Thread on more 11/0 seed beads. Loop the wire back through the same crimp, seed bead and crimp section. Now tighten the loop so the clasp end is secure, but has a little room to play, if it is too taut, there will be extra wear on the wire. Make sure the wires inside the crimps are parallel. If the wire is criss-crossed, this will weaken the security of the crimps and they may slide. Smash the heck out of each crimp bead .

Make sure your crimped necklace has some breathing room. You don't want to crimp too close to the beads. Leave a little room so the beads can move freely



Repeat the crimping process for the other end of the necklace. You'll have a total of 4 crimp beads. Once your crimps are finished, tuck the excess wire into a few beads (if it fits) and cut off.

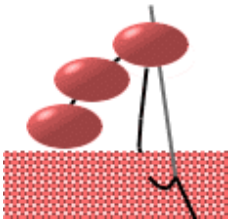
Cover the crimp bead with the crimp cover. Using as light a touch as possible with your pliers, close the crimp cover around the crimp. The finished cover should look like a little round bead, so don't smash it too hard!

TECHNIQUE #2 – PICOT

Picot stitch is a great way to finish off the edge of your amulet bag so it looks more finished.

This is actually the FIRST step I do on my amulet bag, then the fringe, then the stringing (above).

Set Up for the 3-Bead Picot Stitch – thread on 3 beads (see diagram). You will use three beads to set up the pattern just this time. The middle bead will sit up above the 2 side beads on either side. Let the beads fall to the bottom of thread and rest on the Stiff Stuff edge. Move needle over one bead width and pass needle from the back, a whisper in from the edge and through to the front edge. Now, pass the needle up through the last bead from its bottom hole through bead to top.



From now on you will only thread on 2 beads each time you create a bead picot. You will simply thread on 2 beads and make another small stitch that is one bead width away, bringing needle through from back to front edge. Now bring needle up through the last bead as it shows in the first diagram, and tug thread to set beads into position. The finished picot should look like the diagram on the previous page.



TECHNIQUE #3 - FINISHING YOUR PIECE WITH FRINGE

Tell you what – all your bag really needs is some fringe. On the next page are a few photos of my very simplest ones, which I sold on Ebay a million years ago for \$10 each.



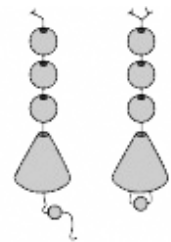
FRINGE

There are all kinds of different fringe. I use basic fringe for this project usually, but have added in a bunch of other fringe techniques here, just for fun.



Basic Fringe

See right for a basic fringe diagram. Your fringe can be all the same, or you can make it longer in the middle; lay out a few possibilities on your work surface and see what you like!



Tip: I usually use the bigger beads at the bottom to help weight the fringe.

Looped Fringe

Fringe, by the way, uses a LOT of beads.

1. Pass the needle out of the fabric bag, where ever you want the fringe to begin.
2. Add all the beads for one side of the fringe.
3. Add your "bottom beads". It helps if there is at least one larger bead (4 - 5 mm) at the bottom of the fringe,

- especially when you are just starting out.
4. Add the beads for the other side of the fringe.
 5. I generally go through the top bead in the fringe before I go back into the fabric. You want to make a tiny little stitch into the fabric right next to each fringe. This helps to secure the fringe since this is the weakest part of your design.

Twisted Fringe



Tip: Use Nymo, Silamide or C-Ion for twisted fringe. Fireline doesn't have the twist inherent in the thread to work well for this type of fringe.

- 1) Pass the needle out of the fabric, where ever you want the fringe to begin.
- 2) Add all the beads for one side of the fringe. This works best if they are all seed beads.
- 3) Add your "bottom beads". It helps if there is at least one larger bead (4 - 5 mm) at the bottom of the fringe, especially when you are just starting out.
- 4) Pass back through the "bottom beads" and add the seed beads for the other side of the fringe.
- 5) Setting the piece near the edge of a table, let your needle dangle over the edge of the table. Wax the free side of the thread to keep the needle in place.
- 6) Holding the thread close to the end of the seed beads you just added, begin twisting. Using a fingertip moistener from the office supply store will help tremendously.
- 7) Start the twist at the first joint of your index finger, and roll the thread towards the tip of the finger. Do this 4 or 5 times.
- 8) Holding the thread near the beads, let the dangling needle untwist itself, to keep it from tangling. Make remaining twists.
- 9) Pass back through the top bead or the next open place on your base row. The fringe will twist on to itself, and should hold.
- 10) Pull the thread taunt, but not too hard. Pass out of the next bead in the base row and start from Step One again.

Wear and Enjoy!

Biography – Hannah Rosner

I've been doing seed bead work since 1986. Much of what I've learned has been through trial and error, out of books or through the wonderful resources available online. I have been able to take classes from many of our leading beadweavers.

I was a semifinalist in the lampwork category for Bead Dreams 2009 and won second place for my bead embroidered collar piece in the Treasures of Toho 2009 Contest. You can see the Beaded Collar in the February 2010 edition of Bead & Button. I was a third place winner in the jewelry category at the Vegas Glass Craft Expo in 2011.

To see more of my tutorials, kits, beads and finished work, check out my website – <http://www.GoodRiverGallery.com> and also my Etsy sales site – <http://hannahrachel.etsy.com>

