



CAROL'S TOP 5 TIPS

1 Weaving in thread

When I say in class or in recipes, 'weave in the thread,' I very specifically mean to secure the remaining few inches of thread *and* the new thread that will continue the work, *and* the final thread, as though life depended on it. When your working thread is only six to eight inches long, a new thread must be introduced. I could suggest you secure the finished thread and start a new one but, sometimes this leaves room for mishaps. Instead I suggest: Make a half-hitch knot with the retiring thread. Thread a new wingspan of thread onto a beading needle. Fold an inch of masking tape over it, 8 inches from the end, sticky sides together, to mark the tail. Pass through the bead that the retiring thread is exiting. You may decide to tie these two in a knot. Now resume beading with the new thread. In a couple rows, weave the abandoned thread into the new beadwork and the new tail into the previous beadwork.

2 Beader's block

Shop for palettes of colored beads you find appealing. Often looking at beads and how they work together – play off each other – can inspire new design! I walk around the studio with a plastic shoebox, choosing hanks or tubes of beads and building a palette of beads that look fantastic together. Perhaps one bead project will emerge; perhaps an entire body of work will be done in this colorway. Only when the beads are in community together do we see how they will appear.

3 Flattening thread

Thread is the key that binds our beads together! Unless you are using a flat thread such as Nymo, go ahead and flatten your thread to make it easier to thread through your needle. To flatten thread: 1. Squeeze terminal inch of thread in a flat-nose pliers. 2. Press an awl or sorting tool on it and pull the thread. 3. Pull the thread between thumbnail and finger. Unless otherwise specified, use your wingspan of thread nearly centered on the needle. Now, simply extending your arm pulls all the thread through. Longer thread gets caught on the table, the cat's tail, the coffee cup, and you have to reel it in. I always (well, almost always) use the thread singly. Doubled thread makes unbeading way more complicated than you want.

4 Beading on the go

On my bead table I have a beautiful box that contains a purse organizer. The organizer holds all my beading tools: scissors, thread burner, caliper, ruler, tube of French wire, glues, pliers, crimp tools, needles, measuring tape, fine beading awls, bead reamers, cellulose headpins, zip lock bags, bobbins, bees wax, crystalline wax... It is easy to wrap this and take it along when traveling (unless flying!). Many of these items would be confiscated during screening, so be careful about bringing it in carry-on luggage.

5 Spread out beads

Most of us use a Bead on it Board, a beading mat, a Bead Buddy or other vellux or flocked beading surface. Place small piles of the seed beads you will use and then smear them along the surface. This causes their holes to point upward, making them more likely to jump onto the needle. Some bead-ers use rings of rubber or PVC pipe to corral their little piles of beads. I have tried these items and am content to let the beads mingle instead.

