



## Beyond the Basics of Polygon Stitch with Carol Cypher

# CAROL'S TOP 5 TIPS

## 1 Finishing threads

I read or heard it said to "Take the time to finish off the threads, etc., in the best possible way, because, if you do not allow sufficient time to finish it off properly, *where* will we find time to *redo* or *repair* the piece later?" Boy, did that get my attention! Pearls of wisdom to pass along to you. Now, I approach the finishing and weaving in of threads as though I have nothing more fun or important to do.



## 2 Choosing closures

Pay close attention to your choice of closures or findings for your work. It can make the difference between a piece winning first prize over honorable mention, make the beadwork more wearable or convey a particular worth. There are many styles of closures available that will enhance or detract from your work. Or, consider beading your closures and having them be an integral part of your design. During the 16 years I wore my long hair in locks, this influenced my designs. No fringe to get stuck in my hair and no fussy closures for the same reason. I grew to love the ease and simplicity of magnetic closures, often opting to conceal them within the beads.

## 3 Needle disposal

Before discarding a broken or hopelessly bent beading needle, I lay it on a piece of paper, cardboard or cardstock and tape it down. This way the needle is not free to insinuate itself through the trash and into a person or pet. In Japan, there is a 400 year old annual event that puts to rest and honors spent needles for their service. It is called Hari-Kuyo. Both Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines celebrate this festival that acknowledges the work done by even the smallest tools, by accepting the retired needles, placed in a soft loaf of tofu. In some areas of the country, February 8th is the day of observance, while elsewhere it is December 8th.



## 4 Organization après beading

After you've completed a session of beading, take a moment to organize the work and the beads. Wind the thread and tail around paper or plastic bobbins before storing in a ziplock bag. If the beads are still in separate little piles, return them to their container. If your beads do mingle, as they do, scoop them all into a little ziplock bag of bead-soup. When you resume, just start with that bag. If the beadwork is finished, that little bag of bead soup may inform another project in a similar palette of beads. Bead mats are convenient to roll the beadwork up in. Consider stacking them carefully so that you have several projects ready to resume.

## 5 Ergonomics and comfort

It is important to have a comfortable chair at the appropriate height for your beading table. I find a cushion behind my lumbar section is a delight. Bead store owner Leanne Netzwow designed an inflatable one that I love. I have one in my bead chair in the studio and one that I travel with for the window seat on the plane, between my knees for sleeping, to sit on while driving, strengthening my core while being comfortable on long drives. Elevate your beadwork rather than crunching or curling up to be nearer to it. And set your timer to remind you to move every hour or so. I set my iPhone alarm to twinkle 2 minutes of each hour. I use it as a cue to have a drink of water, get up and swing my arms or walk around. But it is also easy to ignore, if necessary.