

Starflower Earrings Tutorial

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Stretch your herringbone stitch skills with my delicate flower-like earring pattern.

Step 1. Assemble your materials: you will need Delica size 11/0 beads in two colors or finishes and 7 small fringe beads (per earring) plus two earwires, 1/4" of bullion wire, Nymo thread, thread conditioner and beading needle. First step-create bead ladder: Using a yard of waxed Nymo, string on two Delicas in color 1. Go back through first bead.

Step 2. Pull thread so beads sit next to each other.

Step 3: Insert needle back through second bead.

Step 4: String on one color 2 bead and go through last bead in same direction.

Step 4a. Pull thread tight so bead sits next to second color 1 bead.

Step 5: Insert needle through just added bead in opposite direction (on same side as exiting thread).

Step 6: Continue in same manner with another color 2 bead, then two more color 1s and two color 2s as shown. You will be creating a bead ladder. Threads will be pointing in same direction when you have completed last step.

Step 7: Insert needle through first bead of ladder in opposite thread direction to form a ring.

Step 8: Go back through last bead of ladder in same thread direction. Pull tight to make the ring.

Step 9: Going through the first ladder bead once again will result in thread tail and working thread pointing in opposite directions as shown.

Step 10: Add three color 1 beads and insert needle in second ladder bead going in opposite thread direction.

Step 11: Bring needle up through third ladder bead (first color 2 bead of ladder) in opposite thread direction.

Step 12: Repeat process by adding three color 2 beads and going down through same color bead in ladder and up through next bead.

Step 13: After completing three bead row all around the circle, start next row by stepping up. String on four same color beads and insert needle through third bead in first group of three beads in opposite thread direction. Do not go through ladder row.

Step 14: Come up through first bead of next three bead group. This step can be combined with previous step in one pass if desired. Continue on around matching bead colors to complete the row.

Step 15: Step up to next row.

Step 16: String on two same color beads and insert needle through next bead in four bead group.

Step 17: Going through the next bead also (can be done in one step-not shown) and exiting, add two more same color beads and insert needle through next bead (4th bead in 4 bead group). Come back up through next color 2 bead as in herringbone stitch in previous row. Continue all around and step up to next row. When finished you will not see a new row, you will see row two with what looks like "ears" on each four bead loop.

Step 18: Insert needle so it emerges from the first of the bead "ears" (two bead groups on each side of row two).

Step 19: String on three same color beads and insert needle through second of bead "ear" exiting to the left. Pull tight.

Step 20: Insert needle through next two beads of row two (middle two of 4 bead group) plus first of second bead "ear" of same group. Usually it takes a couple passes. It's not easy to go through all three beads at once if your work is as tight as it should be.

Step 21: It's easy to see here how the herringbone stitch works in one pass. After adding three color 1 beads, take needle through second bead of second bead "ear" of first group and insert through first bead of first bead "ear" of color 2 group. Repeat all around and step up to next row.

Step 22: When stepping up, come out through first bead of three beads added on previous row. You still will not see a separate row from the previous round, just bigger "ears."

Step 23: Come through the remaining three beads of the enlarged "ear."

Step 24: Add fringe bead and skipping two beads (still the middle two of second row), come out through third bead of "ear" if possible or second, picking up third on a subsequent pass (shown in next photo).

Step 24a: another view of second pass through third bead.

Step 25: Add fringe bead and pass through middle bead of three bead "ear." Pull tight and repeat steps 24 and 25 all around except for last section-leave unfinished for earwire placement.

Step 26: Take needle down through the stack of beads (doesn't matter how many).

Step 27: ...and back up through the next stack to exit from bead at top of stack.

Step 28: Add 1/8" piece of bullion wire and earwire. Be sure to orient earwire so that it faces forward. The beaded portion now looks like a little basket. This is the front. The bottom of the "basket" should be facing towards the back.

Step 29: Create a bullion loop by inserting needle through same beads as in step 26 and 27.

Step 30: To strengthen the loop, carefully insert needle halfway through bullion...

Step 30a..., then re-insert through remaining wire to negotiate the curve.

Step 31: Again go through the bead stack and exit through the bottom edge.

Step 32: Insert needle in neighboring bead in bead ladder and exit into the center of the "basket."

Step 33: Add a fringe bead and insert needle into a ladder bead to exit from the bottom of the "basket." Repeat steps 32 and 33 with two more fringe beads to create a total of three "eggs" in the "basket." Stitch through several beads and knot in several different locations. Trim thread and repeat all steps for second earring.