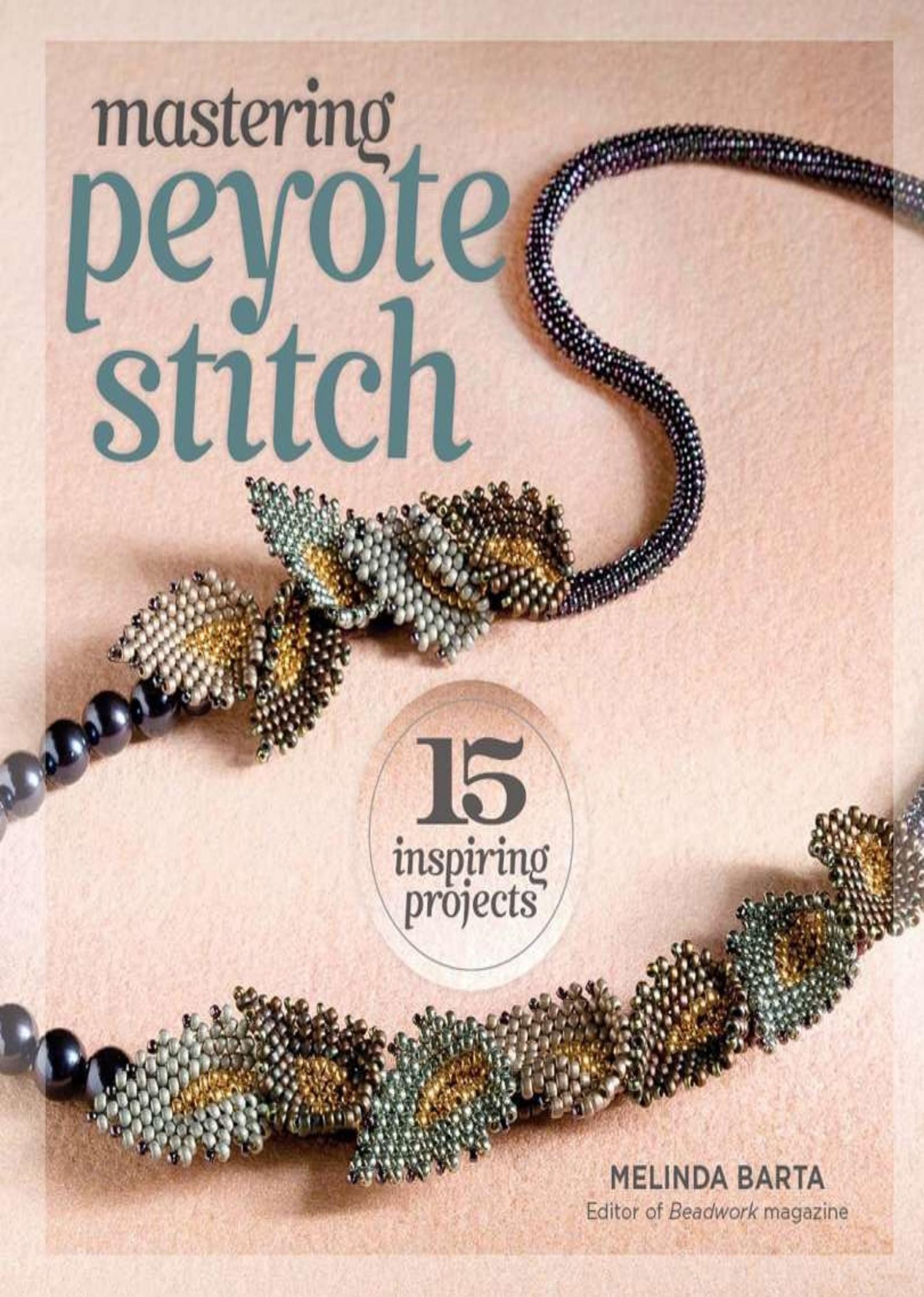


# mastering peyote stitch



15  
inspiring  
projects

MELINDA BARTA

Editor of *Beadwork* magazine

mastering  
peyote  
stitch





DEDICATION  
for Wally and Molly

# acknowledgments

## THANKS

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## introduction

**The next time** you're at a bead show or class, ask the beaders around you about their favorite technique and they'll probably tell you peyote stitch is their hands-down favorite. They might also tell you it's the first off-loom beadweaving stitch they learned. I actually came to beadweaving by way of daisy stitch: After studying the thread path of a tourist-shop bracelet, I spent a summer during my early teen years making daisy-chain bracelets. But it didn't take long for me to try my hand at peyote stitch, and I've never looked back. It's definitely my go-to stitch, meaning any time I sketch a new design or component, I almost always try the first sample with a peyote-stitch thread path. Plus, I love the meditative, repetitive, and soothing nature of peyote stitch.

Surprisingly, little is known about the exact origin of this popular stitch. You may already be familiar with the prevalence of peyote stitch (aka gourd stitch) in both past and present Native American beadwork. But did you know some of the earliest peyote-stitched artifacts date back to Ancient Egypt? And yet, centuries later, beaders still manage to come up with never-before-seen uses for this stitch.

One could never tire of this stitch because of its umpteen variations. With simple decreases and increases, a change in the number of beads strung, or a mix-up in bead size, you can turn a tube of loose beads into a fabric of beads that's anywhere from flat to three-dimensional. The projects in this book cover every peyote variation you can dream up.

In addition to my beaded creations, you'll find seven projects that showcase these limitless variations of peyote stitch. All-star contributors Jean Campbell, Lisa Kan, Carole Ohl, Melanie Potter, Jean Power, Cynthia Rutledge, and Sherry Serafini are known for their unique styles, mastery of beading, and time spent as *Beadwork Magazine* Designers of the Year.

Start with Carole Ohl's Buckle-Up Cuff. It's a great warm up if you're new to beading or if you've been beading for years and are seeking an easy-to-stitch contemporary design. Or, perhaps you're ready to explore the dimensional possibilities of peyote stitch, such as the beaded beads in Jean Power's Urban Skyline necklace or the gently curving leaves in my Walkin' After Midnight necklace. Looking for a statement piece that sparkles? Try Cynthia Rutledge's crystal-rich lariat or my Zigzag Zing crystal-rivoli bracelet. And if you love to create versatile seed bead components, make peyote-and-herringbone bead caps and mix them with brass chain and pearls in my Beaujolais necklace.

Turn to the Basics section for an overview of this beloved stitch, a guide to the terms and general techniques used throughout the book, and a refresher on the

materials you need to get started. As the book progresses from flat to circular to tubular peyote stitches, check out each section opener for more detailed how-tos on each of these stitch variations. In the chapters that follow, combine peyote with other favorite stitches—including netting, herringbone, right-angle weave, and square stitch—and then learn a few must-know embellishments for adding a finished look to your designs.

I invite you to draw inspiration from each of the jewelry styles presented here, using them as a springboard for your own creations. Of course, I hope you fall in love with each and every project in this book. But, if your bead tray is full and you only manage to make your absolute favorites, I encourage you learn the techniques presented in each project—even if this means you only stitch a component or two.

Just when I think I know a stitch through and through, I'm amazed by what can be learned from new projects and innovative designers. The time you spend with your beads is special to you, so fall in love with peyote stitch all over again and start beading!

**have fun,  
Melinda**

## basics

Dive right into the wonderful world of peyote stitch with this handy guide to beadweaving and jewelry making. Start off with an overview of bead types and the most common findings and tools. Do you sometimes feel as if we beadners speak our own language? Then don't miss the listing of must-know terms on [page 18](#). Beading + Peyote 101 ([page 19](#)) covers everything from threading your needle to correcting errors and adding new thread. And last but not least, is a lesson on crimping, wireworking, and knotting ([page 24](#)) because, even if you bead strictly with seed beads, many of these techniques are necessary for designing and finishing your work.

**Let's get started!**

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## BEADS

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### seed beads

Seed beads are made of glass and come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and finishes. They are sized on an inverse scale: the larger the number, the smaller the bead. Seed beads range from size 2° (largest) to 24° (smallest).

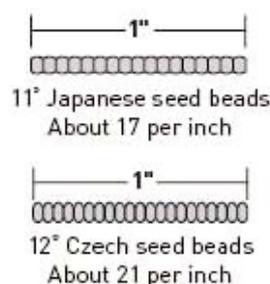
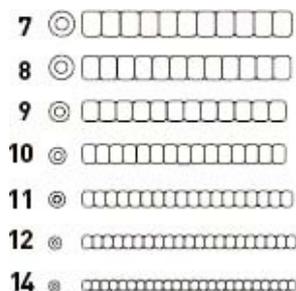
**Aught** describes a seed bead's size and is usually represented by a small degree symbol. The exact origin of this symbol is unknown, but it is thought to have once referred to how many strands of beads occupy an inch when lined up side by side. For example, eleven parallel strands of size 11°s (or eleven size 11°s laid side by side, not hole to hole) would equal an inch.

Most **Czech seed** beads are sold prestrung in 12-strand bundles called hanks. A typical hank of size 11° seed beads measures about 10" (25.4 cm) long (20" or 50.8 cm of beads per looped strand); hanks of size 13° charlottes, a faceted bead, are about 6" (15.2 cm) long (12" or 30.5 cm per looped strand). One hank of size 11°s weighs about 35 to 45 grams. Manufactured in the Czech Republic, the beads on these hanks are temporarily strung on thin thread and must be restrung or transferred onto a stronger thread or wire. Czech seed beads are very round and donutlike and, when compared to cylinder beads and Japanese seed beads, are quite inconsistent in size. This isn't a bad thing—sometimes a bead that's a little too wide or a little too skinny will be just what you need.

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## SIZE CHART

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**Cylinder** beads are perfectly cylindrical Japanese beads. Brands include Delica (made by Miyuki), Aiko and Treasure (made by Toho), and Magnifica (from Mill Hill). They are consistent in size and shape with thin walls and large holes. You'll find them in an impressively wide range of colors and in sizes 15°, 11°, 10°, and 8°. Aiko size 11°s run slightly larger than Delica size 11°s and are not easily interchangeable. Choose cylinder beads when your design requires precisely and consistently sized beads.

**Japanese** seed beads share characteristics of both Czech seed beads (because they are donutlike and round) and cylinder beads (because they are more consistently sized than Czech seed beads). Thanks to more consistent sizing, you'll spend less time culling these beads.

**Charlottes, true cuts, and one cuts** are seed beads with a single facet. This cut edge catches light, creating a sparkly look. Charlottes and true cuts are made in the Czech Republic. Although you'll hear these three terms frequently interchanged, technically, a charlotte is a size 13° single-faceted bead and true cut describes all other sizes of single-faceted Czech seed beads. Japanese beads shaped like this are commonly called one cuts (and thus beads with three facets are called three cuts).

**Hex cuts** have six evenly spaced, equal-sized surfaces that reflect light, resulting in a shiny bead. Hex cuts (and other shapes such as bugles, triangles, and cubes) are extruded as shaped beads, whereas faceted beads (such as charlottes) are cut by running strands of seed beads against a grinding tool.

**Bugle** beads are long tubes of glass. Bugles that range from 2mm to 11mm long are referred to by size, but be careful when you shop because Czech bugles and Japanese bugles are labeled differently (for example, a Czech size 1 is 2mm; a Japanese size 1 is

3mm); longer beads are sold by length, up to 35mm. To prevent thread breakage sometimes caused by the sharp ends of these beads, string one seed bead before and after each bugle, treating the three beads as one. Look for twisted and spiral bugle beads for added sparkle.

**Triangles** have three distinct sides. In general, Miyuki triangles tend to have rounded corners with round holes (though Miyuki “sharps” just hit the market at the time of printing); Toho triangles have sharper, more defined corners with triangular holes.

**Cubes** have four distinct sides and usually relatively large holes.

**Drops** (also called teardrops, magatamas, and fringe beads) are 2.8mm to 6mm teardrop-shaped beads with one hole and a bulbous end. Though you’ll find these terms used interchangeably, Miyuki’s magatamas are a little different than other drops: They have a less pronounced teardrop shape, a nearly round front profile and oval side profile, and are currently available in 2.8mm and 3.4mm. Miyuki’s long magatamas are 4×7mm and come to a gentle point at the end.

**2-hole** beads are flat square beads with two holes that run parallel to each other. The thinnest types are made by Miyuki and called Tila. The thicker variety, called CzechMate, is made in the Czech Republic.

**Peanut-shaped** beads, as their name suggests, are shaped like peanuts and have one hole in the center. They are distributed by Matsuno as “peanut beads,” those imported directly from the Czech Republic are called *farfalle* (Italian for butterflies), and Miyuki’s version is called “berry beads.”



↑ Czech seed beads ↓



cylinders ↓



hex cuts ↓



↓ bugles



↓ triangles



drops ↓



cubes →



charlottes →



2-hole ↓



## seed bead finishes

The finishes added to beads drastically affect their color, often making the process of choosing colors complex. For example, a shiny red bead is no longer just red when treated with an AB (aurora borealis) coating. Thus, it's important to stitch a small sample to see how your beads will complement each other before diving into a large project. Plus, the way a bead looks inside its tube (or strung on a hank thread) can be drastically different from the way it will look when standing on its own. And it's not just about color—the balance of shiny and matte should also be a large consideration when selecting beads for a project.

**AB (aurora borealis)** and **iris** finishes give the bead surface a rainbow, somewhat oily-looking effect. This coating is quite stable compared to dyed and galvanized coatings.

**Matte** seed beads have a frosted appearance.

Hold a **color-lined/silver-lined** bead up to the light and you may find the bead to be a different color than you expected. A bead that looks solid green on your bead mat may actually be amber with a green lining. Beads with silver or gold linings have extra sparkle.

**Luster** is a general term for a shiny, glassy seed bead without special AB coating, matte finishing, or lining.

**Opaque** beads are solid colored and do not allow light to pass through them.

**Transparent** beads are primarily clear with a touch of color.

Beware of **dyed** and **galvanized** beads as their finishes may wear off. Look for permanent galvanized and Duracoat beads, and ask your bead vendor about the coating's durability. Otherwise, after wearing your jewelry a few times, you may end up with a design made of only white or silver beads. Some beaders finish their work with clear acrylic spray (such as Pledge Floor Finish with Future Shine) to protect the coatings, but, if you choose this route, go lightly so you don't end up with a sticky piece of jewelry.

peanut-shaped ↓



↓ aurora borealis  
or iris finish



↓ matte  
finish



↑ color-lined and  
silver-lined



luster  
finish ↓



↓ transparent



↑ opaque

dyed →



← permanent  
galvanized

## **rivolis, fancy stones, and chatons**

A **rivoli** is a holeless, round crystal faceted to a point on both the front and back. **Chatons** are flat on the front, faceted to a point on the back, and typically smaller (1.3mm to 12mm) than rivolis. Holeless, faceted crystals found in shapes other than round are referred to as **fancy stones**. All are commonly available with a foil backing added to enhance the color and sparkle of the crystal. To incorporate these holeless elements in jewelry designs, beadweavers use seed beads to create bezels that surround the outside edges and sometimes the backs.