

Braided Rainbow

by Alexis
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All you need:

Clasp
Bead Tips
Flat Spacers
Needle
Thread

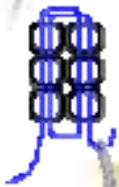
Beadsoup (Beadmixes) in Black, Purple/Pink, Orange/Red, Yellow, Green, Blue. There should be different sizes (mine were from about size 12 to size 6) and different bead finishes (opaque, rainbow, matte, silverlined, colourlined)

How to get the soup:

1. Buy a beadmix and sort it for the above mentioned colour families (that is what I did, but if you don't like sorting, try idea number 2 or 3 ☺)
2. Buy pre-sorted beadmixes.
3. Take your beads and mix them up yourself.

Let's make two 3-bead-brick stitch triangles:

1. Take up 6 beads, go through them all again:



2. Take three more beads, go through the last three and through the three just added:

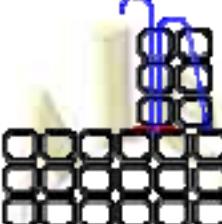


3. Add three more beads in the same fashion:

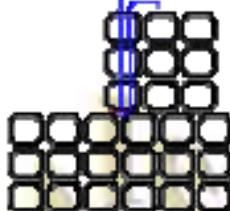


- 4 ... and so on, till you have nine columns

5. Now for the next row: take up six beads, go under the thread between column 5 and 6 and up through the last three added beads:



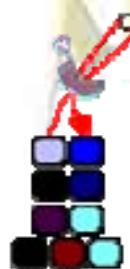
6. Take three beads, go under the next bow and up through these three:



7. Add eight columns in this fashion and make the next row with seven, then six, ... then two columns. Here is the colour distribution I used and a blank pattern for making your own pattern:



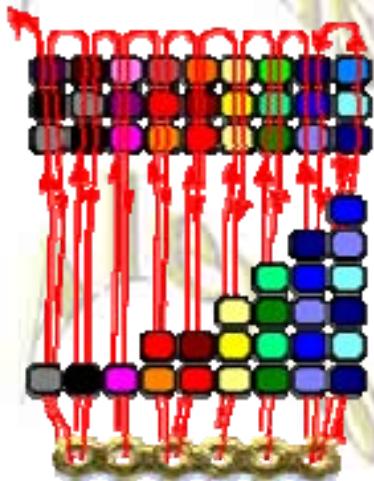
Attach the bead tips to the points of the triangles and attach your clasp to them.



Attaching the triangles to the spacers:

The beads between triangle and spacer are leading to a curve.

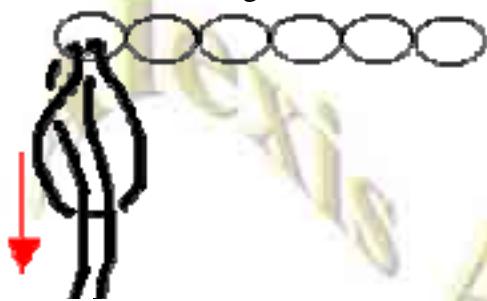
(Of course, we don't let so much space between spacer and triangle like in the picture ☺)



At the other side of the spacer we are knotting threads, like this:
(the red X marks the middle of the thread)



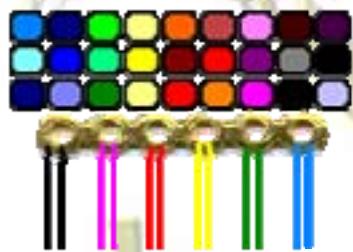
Pull the ends through the bow, like this:



and pull at both ends, this is one pair of threads.

Repeat this action until you have two pairs of threads in each hole of the spacer.

Add your needle to one pair of threads (we are using doubled thread – the strung beads can get quite heavy!) and string the colours in the following order:



I didn't draw in the beads – the colour of the thread is indicating the colour of the strung beads.

How long is one strand? Here are my (approximate):

- the collar is 16,5 inch (without closure)
- the closure is 1,2 inch (clasp and bead tip)
- the brick triangles are 1,5 inch
- the strands were 20 inch (before braiding)

It is time for some helpful hints from Sylvia (THANK YOU SYLVIA!)

One or two tools and tricks I found useful for keeping the beads tightly together on the rope while braiding them are the following:

1. If you can find them at Radio Shack, or other electronics stores, get small alligator clips. Wind the extra thread at the end on these and clip them tightly and against the long strand of beads.
2. The little girls' hair barrettes, the kind that snaps open without a hinge. Smaller the better. These are in supermarkets under the names Goody and Scrunchie etc. They press open by bending and snap shut when you unbend them. Wrap the long thread in the back portion and snap it shut with the beads on the thread tightly together.
3. So you cannot find any of these common items nearby. Use a single stop bead at the end of the rope of strung beads. Push this stop bead up against the strand so no gaps occur. Make sure it stays snugly against the beads by checking often.

Wrap the extra thread around a paper bobbin you cut from some cardboard box or something stiff, like a bleach or water bottle plastic. Make it like floss winders so you can clip the thread into a slot. Make the bobbin bases small so they do not get in the way while you are working.

I hope some of these are useful to you in braiding strands of seed beads.

Fasten your seatbelts, Ladies and Gentlemen – or better fasten your piece to a Macramé board or tape it to the table. If you don't do that, the piece will have a wee look-see all over your table or jump from it during braiding. (That was my experience ... ☺)

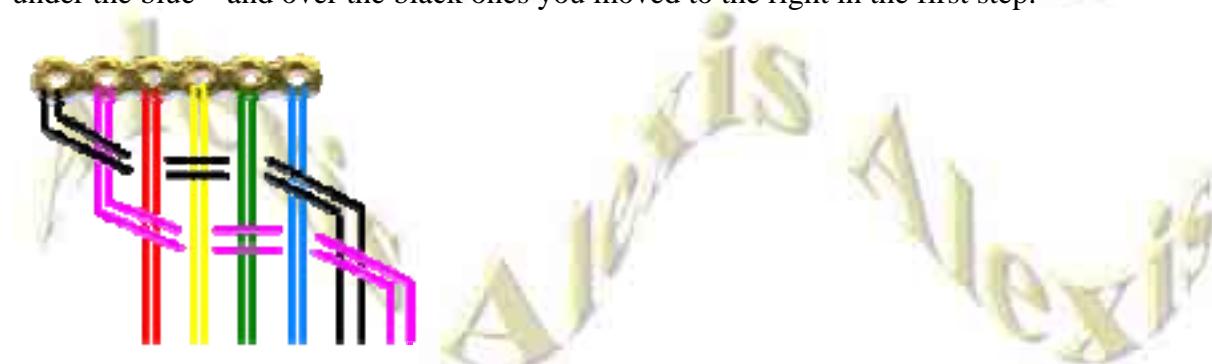
Braiding

1. Take your black strands and put them over the pink, under the red, over the yellow, under the green and over the blue ones.

Take the pair you want to move flat between thumb and forefinger – this helps to have them lying evenly side by side afterwards.



2. Take your purple/pink strands and put them over the red, under the yellow, over the green, under the blue – and over the black ones you moved to the right in the first step.



3. Take your red strands and put them over the yellow, under the green, over the blue, under the black and over the pink strands.



We want the necklace to curve – so make a bigger bow with the strands when you take them from the left over the next pair of strands, and put them down in a short distance after the last pair of strands.

The turquoise arrow is pointing at the outside with the big bows, the orange one at the inside with small bows.



Braid till your necklace is long enough and knot the threads to the spacer of the second brick triangle.



This is the sequence of colours I used:



Go back through some beads and make a half-hitch knot, go back through some beads and make a half-hitch knot, go back ... for as long as you care or get bored or until you reach the beginning. ☺



Done!

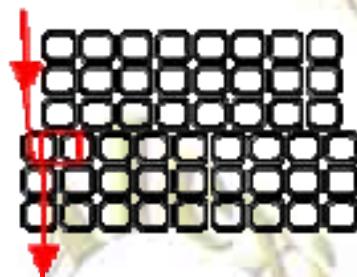
Variations:

You don't like the triangles and don't want to use premade spacers?

Make a ladder from size 8 beads and use that as a spacer. (Steps 1 to 4 of the brick stitch triangles, just using one bead instead of three.)

You can't get / don't like spacers, but like the triangles?

Anchor your threads for the braid in the triangle:



You can't get exactly those spacers or you don't like brick stitch triangles?

Forget about them, take usual spacers, go with your thread through them string more beads and assemble the threads in a bead cap:

