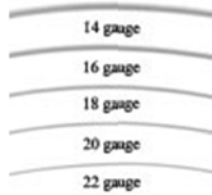


Wire Glossary

Gauge

Gauge is the most common measurement of wire thickness used in the U.S. The smaller the gauge, the thicker the wire. For example, 16 gauge wire is thicker than 22 gauge.

Approximate gauge to metric conversion:



12ga =	14ga =	16ga =	18ga = 1mm	20ga = 0.8mm
2.0mm	1.6mm	1.3mm		
22ga =	24ga =	26ga =	28ga =	30ga =
0.6mm	0.5mm	0.4mm	0.3mm	0.25mm

Sterling Silver



Silver is a natural precious metal. When silver is combined with copper in a 92.5% / 7.5% ratio, it is considered sterling. Adding copper to silver makes the silver harder and easier to work with. Sterling silver wire will tarnish over time but can be polished easily.

Fine Silver



Fine silver wire is 99.9% silver. Because it has a higher silver content than sterling, it is much softer. Jewelry designers find fine silver wire ideal for making ball headpins and fusing projects. Fine Silver does not contain the copper that sterling silver does, so it will not oxidize and turn black when heated.

Gold Filled

Gold-filled wire is made by fusing a layer of 14kt gold to a base metal—usually brass – that results in a permanent bond. The gold layer on gold-filled products is thicker and will wear far better than gold-plated products. Note: Gold-filled wire is considered hypoallergenic but some



people who are especially sensitive to metals may still have allergic reactions to it.

Base Metal



The term base metal refers to any metals other than precious metals. They are usually alloys of non-precious metals. Base metal wire is usually made of tin, copper, bronze or nickel. It can be coated or plated with precious metals such as silver or gold. It can also be coated with a permanent color coating.

Dead Soft



Dead soft, which refers to the hardness of wire, is usually used to describe sterling silver or gold filled wire. Dead-soft wire has not been hardened, so it is the most flexible. It is most often used in designs that call for wire-wrapping making several bends and loops. Wire becomes harder as it is manipulated, so using dead-soft wire will enable you to manipulate it longer before it becomes too brittle to work with.

Half Hard



Half-hard wire has been hardened but is still very flexible. Again, this term is usually used with sterling silver and gold filled wire. Because it has already been hardened, the half-hard wire will maintain a loop, bend or shape under some stress. Half-hard wire is also commonly used when making wire-wrapped jewelry or simple loops such as earrings or bails.

Beading Wire



Soft Flex and Beadalon and Tiger Tail are flexible beading wires made of multiple strands of stainless steel covered with clear or colored nylon, which makes them extremely strong and durable. An excellent choice for most bead-stringing needs, beading wire lends an attractive drape to your design. Beading wire is firm enough that it can be used without a needle, and does not kink. Note: You must use crimp beads to securely fasten these wires to a clasp.