

*Combine easy techniques from metal clay, wireworking, and chain making to build a bracelet one step at a time.*

# LINKS & LADDERS

by Carol A. Babineau

**M**any complex-looking jewelry pieces are actually assembled from several simple parts. The design of the featured bracelet follows the same principle. You'll combine an easy 2+3 chain, textured metal clay panels, and gemstone beads to create a unified whole.



**Faceted 3 x 5mm garnet beads add color and sparkle to this 6½ x 1-in. (165 x 25.5mm) bracelet. You'll learn metal clay, wireworking, and chain making techniques while making it.**

## materials

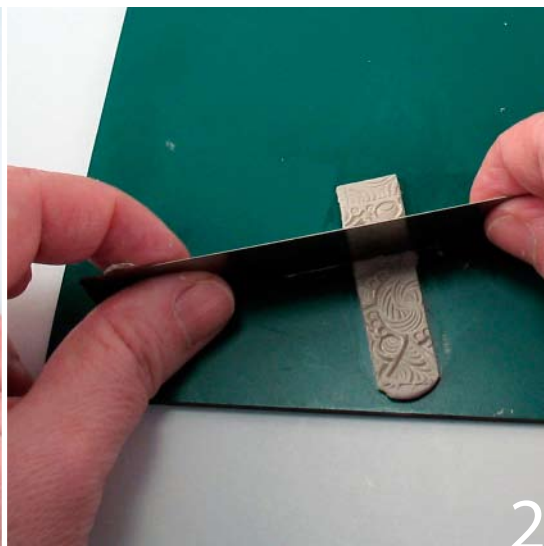
- Metal clay: 20g
- Sterling silver jump rings:
  - 300 20-gauge (0.8mm), 3.5mm inside diameter (ID)
  - 2 16-gauge (1.3mm), 5mm ID
- Sterling silver wire: 22-gauge (0.6mm), round, half-hard, 14 in. (35.6cm)
- Sterling silver lobster claw clasp
- 21 gemstone beads: 3 x 5mm, faceted, garnet

## tools & supplies

- Acrylic roller
- Olive oil
- Texture plate
- Flexible Teflon sheet
- Tissue blade
- Sandpaper or emery board
- Drill bit: 1.0mm
- Kiln, kiln shelf
- Tumbler, steel shot, burnishing compound
- Pliers: bentnose, chainnose, roundnose
- Wire cutters

## resources

- Jump rings, wire, and gemstone beads: Rio Grande, [riogrande.com](http://riogrande.com)
- Jump rings: Urban Maille Chainworks, [urbanmaille.com](http://urbanmaille.com)
- Gemstone beads: Cherry Tree Beads, [cherrytreebeads.com](http://cherrytreebeads.com)



▼ To vary the look of the bracelet, try stringing beads in a different color or pattern. This 7 x 1-in. (178 x 25.5mm) bracelet has faceted round and smooth oval chrysoprase beads.

**[1–2] Texture and cut out the metal clay.** Roll out 20g of metal clay on a lightly oiled texture plate [1]. Transfer the clay to a flexible Teflon sheet. Use a tissue blade to cut seven ½ x ¾-in. (13 x 19mm) rectangular panels from the clay [2]. Set the panels aside until they are completely dry.

**[3–4] Refine and drill the metal clay panels.** Use sandpaper or an emery board to refine the edges of the panels [3]. Using a 1.0mm drill bit, drill a hole 1.5mm (⅙ in.) in from each corner of each panel [4].

**Fire and tumble-polish the panels.** Fire the panels according to the manufacturer's instructions, and allow them to cool. Place the sintered panels in a tumbler with steel shot, burnishing compound, and water. Run the tumbler for about 2 hours.







▲ The panels and gemstone units are connected only to the double links of the 2+3 chain, allowing the bracelet to lie flat.

## States of dryness for metal clay

<b>Wet</b>	Clay contains a lot of moisture and is very pliable
<b>Semi-dry</b>	Clay contains some moisture, but is firm and holds its shape
<b>Mostly dry</b>	Clay is nearly devoid of all moisture and is rigid
<b>Completely dry</b>	Clay contains absolutely no moisture and can be fired



Process photos by Carol A. Bahneau.

Attach the remaining panels and four gemstone units in an alternating pattern; do not attach the panels or the gemstone units to the triple links.

Attach a gemstone unit to the double links at each end of the bracelet.

**Make the chain.** Use 3.5mm jump rings to make a 2+3 chain. (For tips on how to open and close jump rings, see Basics.) Begin the chain pattern by closing two jump rings and then attaching three jump rings to the first two. Continue the chain by alternating two jump rings and three jump rings until you reach a length of 6 in. (15.2cm). Repeat to make a second chain.

**Make the gemstone units.** Cut 2 in. (51mm) of 22-gauge (0.6mm) wire. Make a wrapped loop (Basics) at one end. String

three gemstones. Make a wrapped loop above the top gemstone. Repeat to make a total of seven gemstone units.

**[5] Assemble the bracelet.** Open four 3.5mm jump rings and thread one through each hole in a panel. Skipping the first double links of both chains, attach the panel to the double links as shown. Close the jump rings.

On the next double links of both chains, open the links and attach a gemstone unit.

**[6] Install the clasp.** Using 3.5mm jump rings, make four 2+2 chains, adjusting the length of each chain to fit your wrist. Attach a 2+2 chain to each end of each 2+3 chain.

On one end, use a 5mm jump ring to attach both 2+2 chains and a lobster claw clasp. Repeat on the other end, omitting the clasp.

On each end, connect the 2+2 chains by sliding a 3.5mm jump ring through the pairs of double links adjacent to the end links.

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