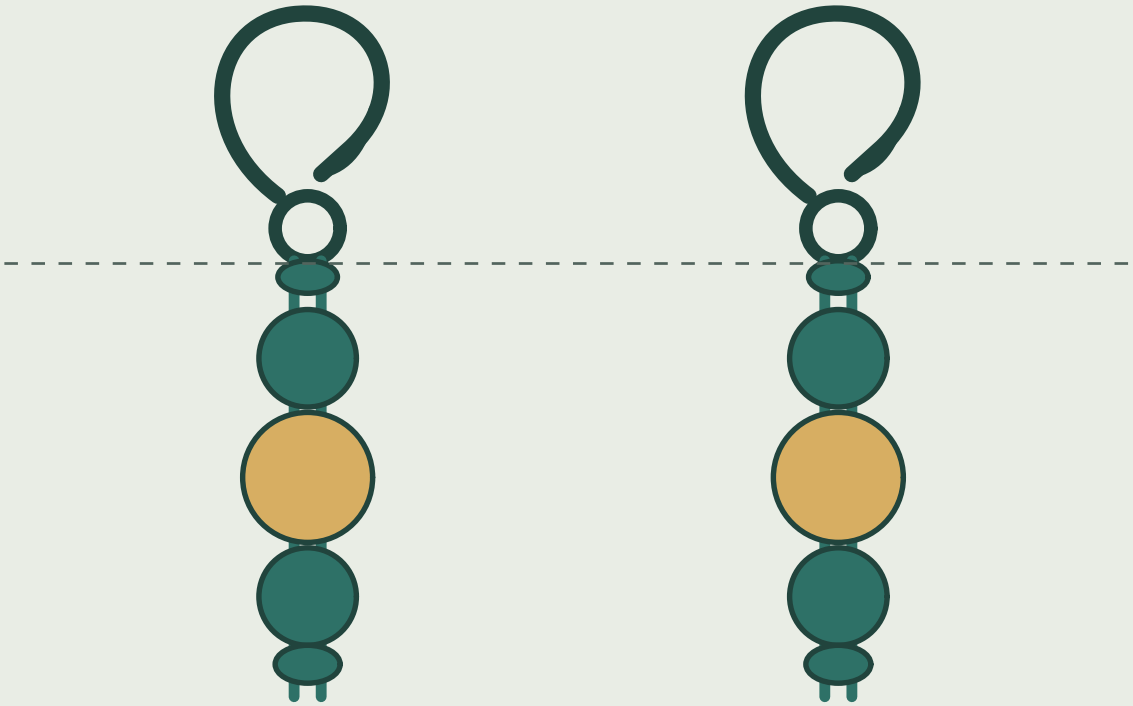
STEADLEAF PRESS

MAKE / BEADS & WEARABLE KEEPSAKES

Make Matching Thread-and-Bead Earrings



L · A-B-A **R · A-B-A**

Original schematic · not a physical sample

14 practical steps · Match, attach and finish

Paired layout, cord route and two printable maker records

Before you start

A pair of earrings can be assembled from the same materials and still look uneven if the beads sit at different heights, the knots differ, or one finding turns away from its intended orientation. This project makes two short, lightweight drops with the same three-bead sequence. Each drop uses a single folded length of nonelastic jewellery cord and a purpose-made earring finding with a smooth, permanently closed attachment eye below its fastening mechanism. A folded hitch attaches the cord to that eye; both ends pass through each bead and finish in a compatible bundled stopper. The fastening itself is manufactured, not made from thread or improvised wire. Work on a lined tray and make the pair in parallel rather than finishing one earring before considering the other.

Materials: two identical, labelled earring findings intended for adult decorative wear, with their specified closures or backs; a suitable smooth, closed attachment eye on each; six lightweight smooth beads in three matched pairs; labelled nonelastic jewellery or craft cord whose intended use and finish suit this construction; extra matching cord for practice; adult scissors, ruler, pencil, paper, small containers and a padded tray. Choose known, suitable skin-contact materials, and follow the actual hardware and cord instructions. Keep small parts and tools away from children and pets. Do not pierce ears, bend ear posts, solder, melt thread or use adhesives to rescue a poor fit. This is an accessory-making guide for adults with established, healed piercings if pierced findings are chosen, not piercing or medical advice.

Plan the two matching drops

Define the same reference point on both findings: the lower bearing surface of the closed accessory eye where the cord will sit. Measure from that point to the longest finished cord tail while the piece lies relaxed on a tray. Keep the overall finding length separate from the drop length. For an illustrative pair, choose the motif A-B-A, with nominal axial bead widths of 6, 8 and 6 mm (20 mm in total) per drop. Allow 5 mm for the visible hitch and clearance section, 5 mm for the lower stopper region, and 8 mm for retained visible tails only if the specific cord's directions permit that length. The example drop is about 38 mm below the eye. These are planning dimensions, not fixed lengths, minimum tail lengths or safe weight limits. Two drops require four A beads and two B beads, plus spares if available. A 200 mm working cord for each earring is a starting allowance; folded in half, it provides two 100 mm ends before the hitch, stopper and tails consume material.

The drop uses two relaxed strands in each bead. A nominal 1.5 mm round bore and two equal nominal 0.6 mm round strands leave a difference of 0.3 mm under ideal geometry, not a guarantee of fit. The closed eye must also admit the folded bight and permit the two free ends to pass through the bight during attachment. Compare the actual bore, cord end, bends and any approved threading aid. Use a last bead whose actual exit is compatible with the approved stopper; a small nominal hole does not by itself establish retention. Equal bead counts do not prove equal length, weight, drape or comfort. Compare the two completed pieces before considering wear, and do not rely on a visual inspection as a strength or allergy test.

Steps 01–02

1. Choose a matched pair of appropriate findings

Select two identical purpose-made earring findings from the same known product, such as a leverback style with a separate permanently closed eye designed to accept decoration. Do not confuse the movable lever or closure with the attachment eye. Choose the actual type suitable for the wearer's established piercing and the supplier's intended use; a clip-on design would require its own appropriate manufactured fitting. Inspect the attachment eye, post or hook and closure for a gap, burr, distortion or rough edge. If the only available connection is an open seam, choose a different compatible product rather than trying to bend it shut in this project. Put the pair on the tray in the same orientation.

2. Record the materials that could contact skin

Read the supplier's material descriptions and intended use for the findings, beads, cord and any coatings. Nickel-containing jewellery can cause contact allergy in susceptible people; the appearance of a shiny finish, a generic metal label or a claim of comfort cannot establish suitability. Do not use a material that has previously caused a reaction or whose suitability for the wearer is uncertain. Seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional about known metal sensitivity; do not deliberately expose skin to a suspect finding as a test. Keep all pieces clean and work with clean hands and tools. No homemade cleaning treatment or coating in this project converts an unsuitable finding into a suitable one.

Steps 03–04

3. Select three pairs of beads rather than six random beads

Choose four A beads and two B beads for the A-B-A pattern. Match the upper A in one drop to the upper A in the other, the centre B to its partner, and the lower A to its partner. Use similar lightweight, smooth beads, preferably from the same product and batch. Inspect both entrances and surfaces in good light; reject cracked, rough or damaged beads. Compare each pair's actual width along the threading axis, not its advertised outside size alone. If a pair differs noticeably in shape or visible finish, replace it or deliberately redesign both earrings together. Record the paired positions on Pattern 1.

4. Plan the drop length and the reference line

Lay both findings across the same reference line on the printed comparison sheet, with the bottom bearing surface of each attachment eye at the line. Arrange each bead row below its finding on a separate lined tray; the paper diagram itself is not a jig. Record the actual three axial widths, the planned hitch clearance, lower stopper region and permitted visible tail length. Compare totals. In the illustrative design, 5 + 6 + 8 + 6 + 5 + 8 = 38 mm. The closure height is not included. Change the bead selection or design if a drop is too long; never shorten a required finishing tail just to match the other earring.

Steps 05–06

5. Verify the full two-strand route

Use a spare length of the actual cord. Fold it and check that two relaxed strands and their real ends can pass gently through each selected bead. Include the widest part of any maker-approved threading aid. Look for fraying, scraping or permanent deformation and stop at resistance. A nominal calculation is useful only as a preliminary screen; it cannot reveal every internal restriction. Check the actual folded bight at both attachment eyes as well, including space to bring both free ends through the bight. Mark FREE, SNAG, NO FIT or UNKNOWN for each paired position. Change a limiting component rather than forcing a passage or drilling a bead.

6. Practise the attachment and stopper with spare cord

Use the actual maker-supported finish. In this design a folded hitch starts with the midpoint of one cord: pass the bight through the closed eye, pass both free ends through the bight, then seat gently so the two strands rest together on the smooth eye. For the lower finish, if the cord maker permits a bundled overhand stopper, treat both free ends as one bundle, form a loop in the bundle and pass both ends together through it. Seat as directed. Compare the stopper with the actual lower bead exit; it must be compatible and visibly larger, without being pulled into the hole. A pliable knot can deform and a visual check does not establish its retention. If the finish is not suitable or its requirements are unknown, stop and use a verified alternative kit or consult the supplier.

Steps 07–08

7. Cut two equal working lengths and label the stations

Use the measured layout and sufficient working allowances for both knots. Cut two equal lengths of fresh cord with adult scissors on a stable table, using the 200 mm example only as a starting point. Keep spares available; thick cord or a different finish may require more. Label two tray areas L and R for your pair; the labels identify the maker's working stations, not necessarily a left-specific or right-specific hardware design. Keep two beads for each A position and one pair for B separated by position. Match the cord ends to find the midpoint, and keep the two lengths separate so they cannot tangle.

8. Attach the two folded lengths in parallel

Keep each manufactured finding supported by the tray. Pass its folded bight through the separate closed accessory eye only, bring the two ends together through the bight, and seat the hitch according to the actual component directions. Repeat the same orientation on the second finding. The two working ends must emerge below each eye without twisting around a hinge, post or latch. Use the same face orientation on both pieces. If the cord blocks the clasp movement or crosses a sharp edge, remove it and choose another suitable fitting; never secure an uncertain attachment with glue or change the shape of a post.

Steps 09–10

9. Thread the matching bead columns

At station L, place the first A bead on both free ends from the finding-facing side. At station R, add its paired A bead in the same way. Continue with the B pair and then the lower A pair. Both strands must enter and leave every bead together. Check the bead sequence from eye to tip; A-B-A on both pieces is the worked motif, not a universal requirement. Keep the columns compact but uncompressed, with a small clearance between each hitch and upper bead. Move the beads only gently along the supported strands. If one column differs in visible width or orientation, compare the actual pieces and revise before closing the knots.

10. Align the two unfinished drops before tying

Place the two closed eyes at the same reference line and rest the bead columns straight below without stretching the thread. Compare the top and bottom of each matched bead, and mark the planned position of each stopper below its final bead. Inspect the free movement of the hardware and ensure the beads do not touch the moving closure. Differences in actual bead width or hitch consumption may change the length. Adjust the layout or choose a better matching bead pair; do not compensate by tightening one drop harder. Leave enough room to tie each stopper and retain the actual required tail lengths.

Steps 11–12

11. Make the compatible bundled stopper on each drop

Work with one supported column at a time. If permitted for the selected cord, make the same two-strand overhand stopper practised in Step 6. Form one loop in the paired ends, pass both tails through together and ease the knot to its planned place below the last bead. Seat as directed by the manufacturer. Repeat at the other station. Inspect both knots for unintended crossing, loose strands and damage; check the actual exit of each bottom bead. If a stopper is too small, changes position, fails to seat or is otherwise uncertain, remove or remake that drop with compatible materials. Do not tug it into the hole, add a loose spacer as a repair, or rely on adhesive to conceal a failing knot.

12. Finish the tails and compare the actual dimensions

Trim only when the selected finishing process permits it and leave at least the actual required tail allowance. Measure from the seated stopper to each tip; do not cut into the knot or shorten a tail flush. The illustrative 8 mm tails apply only if the chosen maker permits that length. Follow the exact product's approved non-heat finishing method for this exercise. If no appropriate method is known, hold the piece. Re-align the two eyes and measure each relaxed drop, including tails, separately. Record both lengths and the difference. If matching requires changing one knot, bead or cord, remake as needed rather than trimming below the permitted tail length. Assess visual symmetry under the same light.

Steps 13–14

13. Inspect the closures and the completed pair

Look at both findings, closed eyes, hitches, bead surfaces, cords and lower stoppers while supported in the tray. Open and close each manufactured fastening according to its instructions, confirming the decoration remains clear. Complete any required maker acceptance checks without inventing a load or force. If the closure fails, a knot shifts, the cord frays or a hard edge is exposed, do not wear either questionable piece. Visual comparison is not a retention test. Only consider ordinary adult wear once material suitability, completion and required checks have been established. Do not insert anything into an unhealed piercing, force a finding through skin, wear heavy or uncomfortable drops, or test strength against the body. Remove the earrings if discomfort or irritation occurs; seek medical advice for persistent symptoms.

14. Record the pair and care for it

Complete Record 2 with the actual paired bead widths, drop lengths, closure condition, tail lengths, material information and any required checks. Mark HOLD for unresolved material or acceptance requirements, CHANGE/REMAKE for a defect, or DECORATIVE ONLY if the chosen process is complete and ordinary adult decorative use is suitable. Keep the pair together in a clean, dry compartment so the thread does not snag against other jewellery. Follow the actual maker's cleaning instructions; remove earrings before sleep, bathing, strenuous activity or any work where they may catch. Retire a damaged drop rather than trusting a matching appearance. Preserve the paper layout so a replacement can be made with corresponding compatible components.

Fix, care and preserve

The attachment eye is too small or has an open seam. Choose a suitable manufactured closed-eye finding with space for the folded hitch. Do not pry a tiny eye open or bind over the gap with glue.

The bead order matches but the drops differ in length. Compare actual axial widths and both hitch and stopper regions from the same lower-eye reference point. Match components or remake the longer or shorter drop; do not reduce required tails.

One bead catches the paired thread. Recheck the entire usable bore and end profile. Replace the bead or choose a compatible thread with an appropriate finish. Never scrape, force or stretch the thread to pass.

The stopper moves or appears smaller than the final exit. Hold the pair. Choose a verified compatible finish or change the final bead and remake. Never assume a visually tidy knot guarantees retention.

The finding irritates skin or the fastening catches. Remove the earring gently and stop use. Verify material suitability and replace the unsuitable finding or consult a professional. Do not add a homemade coating or bend the post as a remedy.

Source & evidence boundary

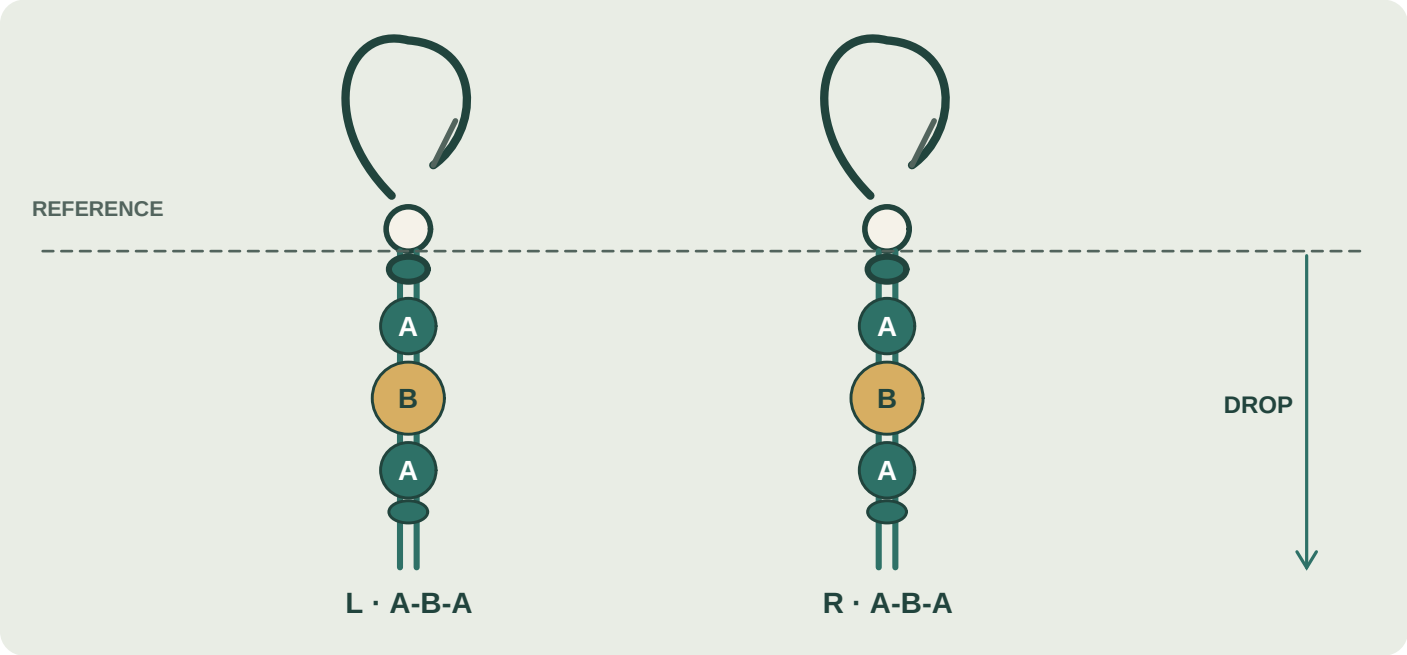
Original Steadleaf English prose, calculations, paired layouts, knot-route diagrams and records. Factual context: Fire Mountain Gems and Beads lists leverback earring findings with closed and open attachment loops; Michaels describes the folded lark's-head attachment in a different cord-earring project; Health Canada discusses nickel contact allergy. These are contextual sources, not approval of the present design, and no proprietary project pattern, image or wording is copied. Actual component instructions and individual material suitability govern.

- Fire Mountain Gems and Beads, Leverbacks: https://www.firemountaingems.com/jewelry-supplies/findings/earring-findings/leverbacks/ - Michaels Canada, Neutral Boho Macramé Earrings: https://canada.michaels.com/project/boucles-doreilles-en-macrame-de-couleur-neutre-a-style-boheme-B_91045 - Health Canada, Second Report on Human Biomonitoring of Environmental Chemicals in Canada (nickel): https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/environmental-contaminants/second-report-human-biomonitoring-environmental-chemicals-canada-health-canada-2013.html

The publisher has not physically made, weighed, measured, fitted, worn, printed, retention-tested or allergy-tested these earrings. The dimensions are planning examples. No strength, retention, wear life, hypoallergenic status or safety certification is implied. Adult decorative use only; not a children's item or piercing procedure.

Matched pair and drop-length plan

Illustrative positions, not an actual-size hardware template. Align the two lower-eye bearing surfaces before comparing length.



ILLUSTRATIVE LENGTH PER DROP

Hitch and clearance	**5 mm**
A-B-A: 6 + 8 + 6 mm	**20 mm**
Lower stopper region	**5 mm**
Retained tails (only if permitted)	**8 mm**
Total below the eye	**38 mm**

Two drops require four A beads and two B beads. Check the actual axial widths of all six beads; the example does not establish a suitable weight, tail allowance or fit.

YOUR PAIRED WIDTHS (mm)

Upper A	Centre B	Lower A
L: _____ R: _____	L: _____ R: _____	L: _____ R: _____

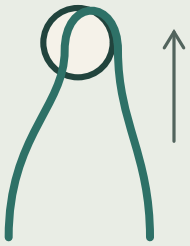
50 mm calibration — print Actual Size

Hitch, bead route and stopper

Enlarged route cues, not to scale. Keep the decorative cord clear of the fastening mechanism. Follow the exact component instructions.

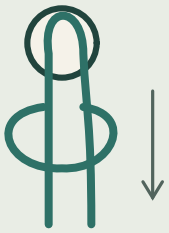
1 Folded bight through eye

Closed eye



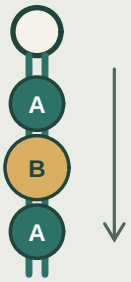
One midpoint, two free tails.

2 Both tails through bight



Seat the hitch on the separate closed eye.

3 Both strands through beads



A-B-A on both drops; do not force the bore.

4 Bundled stopper



Pass both ends together through one loop, if permitted.

CLOSURE CLEARANCE

Compare both findings in normal open and closed positions, supported on the tray. The hitch belongs on the closed accessory eye only, not on the hinge, post or latch. Stop for loose knots, sharp edges, fraying, or uncertain skin-contact materials. No strength or allergy result is represented.



CLEAR: closed eye only



STOP: cord across moving lever

Materials and paired layout

Record actual observations only. Write UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED when appropriate. No retention, strength or skin-compatibility certificate is implied.

Finding L/R product / closure and separate closed eyes

Documented skin-contact materials / wearer suitability or unresolved issue

Cord product, material and nominal diameter

Maker-supported folded hitch, stopper and retained tail allowance

Upper A / centre B / lower A widths, L and R (mm)

Actual two-strand passages and eye fit: FREE / SNAG / NO FIT / UNKNOWN

Planned drop lengths L / R and working cut lengths

Bead sequence, comparison notes and decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Final pair and condition

Record actual observations only. Write UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED when appropriate. No retention, strength or skin-compatibility certificate is implied.

Actual relaxed drop length L / R (mm) and difference

Actual paired bead widths, colours and sequence

Hitch and closed eye condition, L / R

Stopper condition and actual retained tails, L / R

Closure operation, L / R: NORMAL / CHANGE / NOT CHECKED

Maker-required checks and actual observations

Material suitability / discomfort or snag concerns

Disposition: HOLD / CHANGE-REMAKE / DECORATIVE ONLY; date and reason