

Wubbers Teardrop Hearts

The Bracelet Tutorial



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Skill Level : Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

What a creative delight to turn a wire teardrop shape into an irresistible heart with no measuring, no sweat, and no tears! In this tutorial, you will learn to make the most out of your Wubbers Teardrop Mandrel Pliers with just a few turns of the wrist. Your Teardrop Hearts Bracelet is fun and easy to make. When you are finished, simply wear your new jewelry and watch the hearts stop!

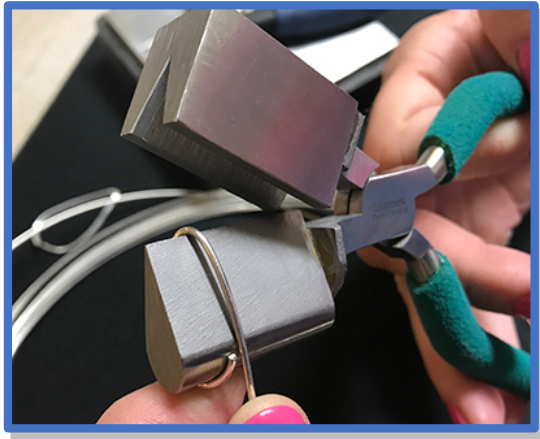
Tools

- Wubbers Medium Teardrop Pliers
- Wubbers Flat Nose Pliers (Medium Classic or ProLine Flat Nose)
- Wubbers Chain Nose or Bent Chain Nose Pliers (Classic or ProLine)
- Wubbers Large Round Mandrel Pliers
- Wubbers Artisan's Mark Planishing Hammer
- Polished Steel Block
- Heavy Duty Flush Cutters
- Lindstrom or Xuron Metal Cutting Shears
- Soldering Tools—Torch, Solderite board, Soldering Pick, (Pickle Pot, Pickle, and copper tongs optional)
- Easy Silver Paste Solder (optional)

Materials for Bracelet

- 16-gauge Argentium Silver wire—round, dead soft (approx. 2.5 for a 7-8" bracelet)
- 18-gauge Argentium Silver wire—round, dead soft (approx. 1 foot for the silver balls)
- Argentium Silver jump rings
 - 6.0mm i.d. (1 for clasp, close it before starting project)
 - 3.5mm i.d. (12-16 to join links, or 2 per heart link)
 - 4.0mm i.d. (8-10 for loop on the heart link, or 1 per link—close them before starting project)

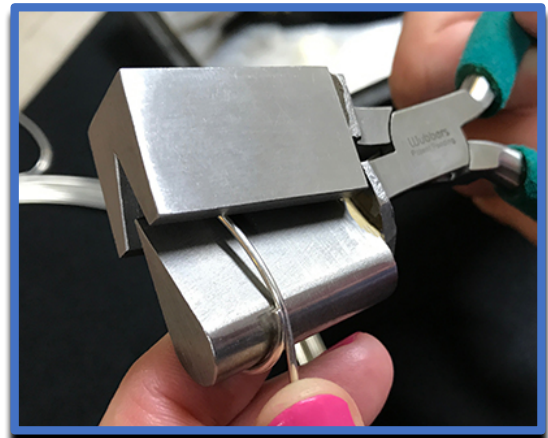
Note: Each heart link is approx. 7/8" long and the clasp hook is approx. 3/4" long. Total measurement a bracelet with 7 links is approximately 7 1/4" long. The length can be adjusted by the number of links and the length of the hook for the clasp.



Step 1—Making the Teardrop Coil

Make a coil around the teardrop-shaped jaw of the Wubbers Mandrel Pliers. Coil away from the tip of the jaw so that it will be easier to remove the coil from the jaw of the pliers. Close the pliers and press the wire each time you cross over the tip of the teardrop.

Close the pliers and press each time you cross over the tip of the teardrop. For this pattern, there is no need to wrap the wire very tightly around the jaw. It is fine to have a slightly rounded side on the teardrop as shown in the photos.



Helpful Tip:

It saves wire if you can work off the coil. As you make wraps around the jaw of the pliers to form a teardrop coil, roll the pliers rather than wrap the wire around the jaw. Holding the wire stationary while rolling the pliers is easier and will avoid the need to fight with tangled wire as it comes off the coil.

As you form the work, wiggle the wire so that it moves toward the end of the jaw. This will help keep the wire loose enough for easy removal.





Grasp the sides of the teardrop coil and wriggle it off the jaw. If the wire seems stuck and hard to remove, then use a rawhide hammer to tap the sides of the teardrop to flatten them slightly. This will make it easier to get the coil off. The photo shows a coil with 9 wraps. It is easiest to work with a coil with a maximum number of 6-9 wraps.

Step 2—Cutting the Coil

As you remove the teardrop coil from the pliers, the coil will twist or torque. Gather the coil in between your thumb and index finger, holding it back into shape. Using a pair of shears, cut directly in the middle through the wide, rounded end of the teardrop.

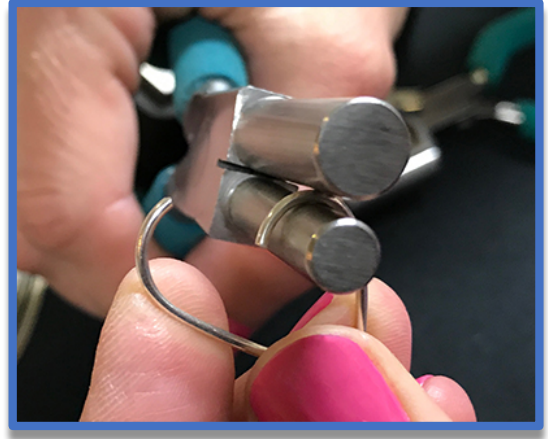


Step 3—Shaping the Heart

Open the teardrop as shown.

Using the smaller jaw of the Wubbers Large Bail Making Pliers, begin to roll the end of the wire toward the center of the teardrop.





As shown in the two photos above, continue rolling the first end of the wire into a curve. Adjust the jaws of the Wubbers Bail Making Pliers as needed as you roll. Turn the teardrop over, and roll the second side toward the center so that the wire now forms a heart shape as shown in the photo to the right.



Step 4—Close the Heart

Using the same technique as used to close jump rings, move the two sides of the heart back and forth in a twisting motion to close the heart. It helps to push the ends of the wire such that the heart is past the point of being closed.

Then, pop the ends into place as shown. The ends of the wire should have enough pressure holding them together such that there is no space between them.



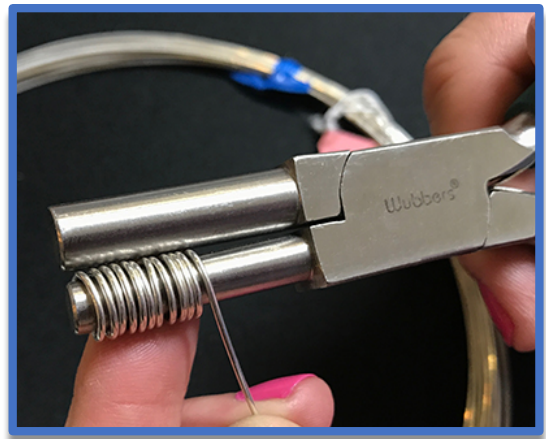


Step 5—Make the Round Balls from Jump Rings

Using the 18-gauge wire, form a coil around the smaller jaw of the Wubbers Large Round Bail Making Pliers. You will need about 7-10 round balls to make the bracelet, so you will need to coil around the jaw a minimum of 8-10 times.

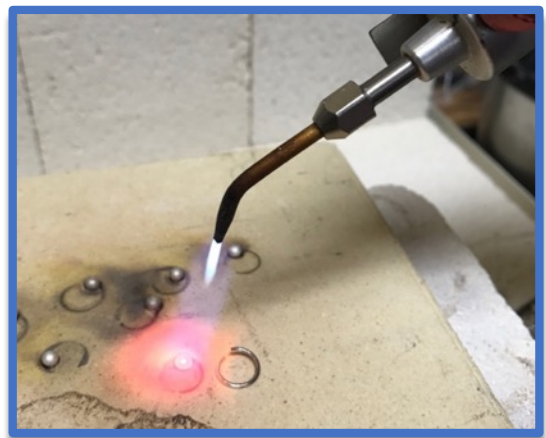
Helpful Tip:

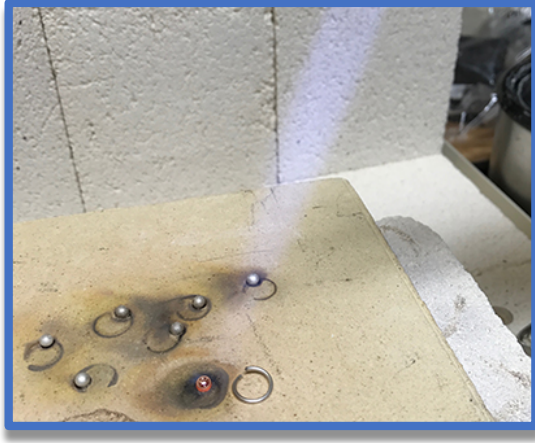
It is a good practice to work away from the tip of the jaws, moving the coil off the end of the jaw as needed. The photo to the right shows the cut end of the wire is on the tip of the jaw, and the length of wire being fed into the coil is closer to the box joint of the pliers.



Using shears, cut the coil into jump rings. The cut on these jump rings does not have to be perfect, because we will be melting each of these jump rings into a small silver ball to use on each heart link.

Lay the jump rings on the soldering surface and apply heat with a torch to them, melting them one at a time. Each jump ring will melt into the perfect size ball that will be used to add the finishing touch to each heart link.





Helpful Tip for Argentium Silver:

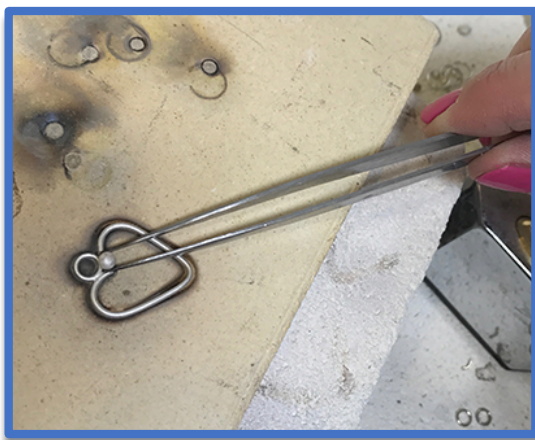
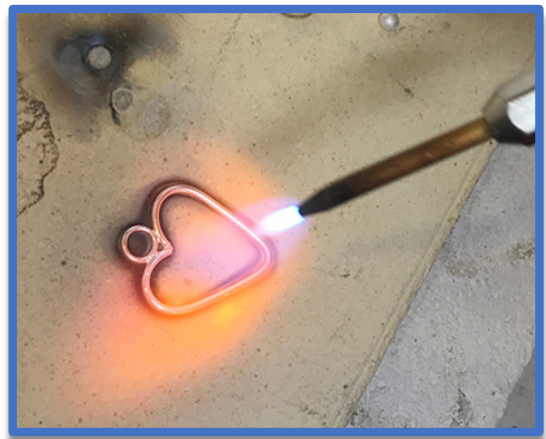
Argentium silver is very brittle when it is glowing hot. Always allow the metal to cool for 20-30 seconds (or longer for larger pieces) before attempting to move or manipulate it. If you move or quench Argentium while it is still very hot, there is a danger of fracturing your piece.

Helpful Tip if Using Sterling Silver:

It can be a challenge to get a smooth (rather than dimpled) finish on sterling silver balls without a couple of simple tricks. First, flux each jump ring before applying heat. Second, once the ball is completely melted, remove the heat slowly. The dimple occurs when oxides develop or when the metal is cooled too quickly.

Step 6—Fusing the Link Together

Place the closed heart shape on the soldering surface with a closed jump ring snug against the top of the heart as shown. The opening of the jump ring should touch the heart so that it will be hidden under the silver ball that will be added. Heat the heart evenly, then move the focus of the flame onto the area to be fused. The jump ring will heat more quickly than the heart. When you see a “mercury” look, watch for the Argentium to flow together as shown, then quickly remove the heat. If you do not see the Argentium flow, stop, cool, and reposition the pieces so they make better contact. Sometimes adding a touch of flux will improve the flow.



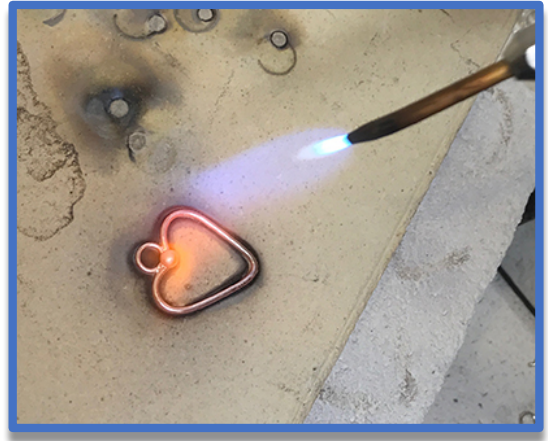
Step 7—Adding the Silver Ball

Without moving the heart and while it is still warm, place a silver ball on the cleft of the heart with a pair of tweezers.

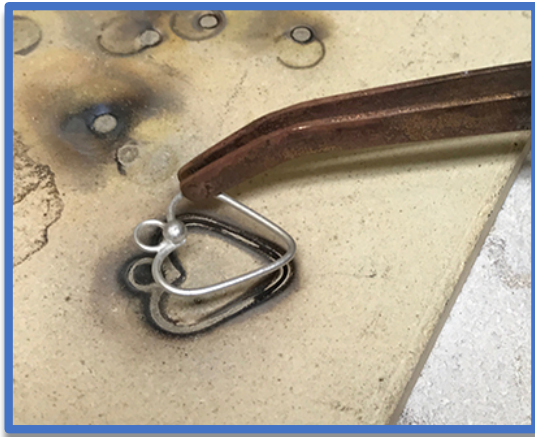
Helpful Tip:

If you prefer, add a tiny dot of easy paste solder using a soldering pick. While this method is optional, it is quite easy to see when the solder flows and there is less risk of melting the link. While Argentium solder may be preferable, regular paste solder can also be used.

Apply heat to the link, monitoring closely (especially the jump ring). When you see the metal glow, watch closely for it to appear shiny and fluid. Remove the heat, allow the heart to cool for at least 20-30 seconds.



Once cool, quench the link in water. If your torch tends to burn hot and envelop the link as show in the photo above, then you will get little to no discoloration.



If you are using a cooler torch such as a refillable butane torch, then you might get some discoloration on your metal which can be removed by using warm pickle.



Step 8—Add a Little Finesse

While this step is optional, I often choose to add just a little extra flair to my jewelry design. I used the Wubbers Artisan's Mark Planishing Hammer to flatten the area around the tip of the heart. I didn't want much texture, just a slight widening and flattening of this part of the heart.



Step 9—Join the Links

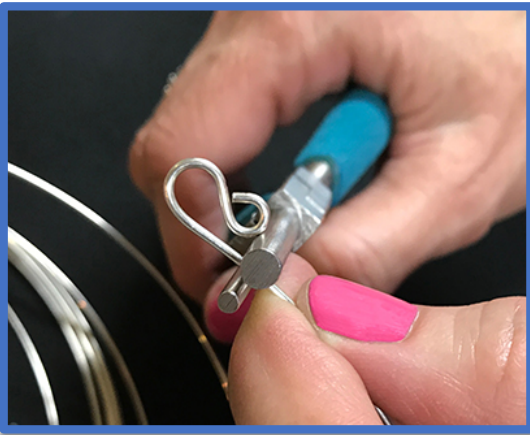
Now, the exciting part! It's time to start joining the teardrop heart links together. Join the soldered jump ring on the cleft of each heart to the tip of the adjacent heart. The link with the larger jump ring should be the last link on one end.



Step 10—Make the Clasp

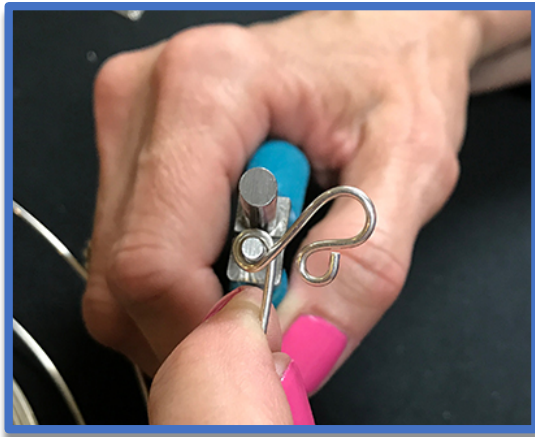
Working off the coil of 16-gauge Argentium wire with a flush cut end, use the small jaw of the Wubbers Medium Bail Making Pliers to make a small loop on the end of the wire.

Place the small loop in the jaws of the pliers as shown with the small loop facing away from the larger jaw. Roll a curl into the wire to make a hook as shown in the photo below.



Place the pliers so that it is gripping the wire with the larger jaw snug against the small loop.

Roll a loop around the smaller jaw of the pliers.



Cross the wire over as shown. When working off the coil of wire, I often rotate the pliers rather than “wrap” the wire around the jaw. This keeps the wire from tangling.

Flush cut the wire just before it crosses over the long side of the hook.



Open the last loop just made with a twisting motion as shown. Connect the open loop to the bottom of the heart link that is on the opposite end of the chain from the heart link that the larger jump ring was soldered to. Using a pair of Wubbers Flat Nose Pliers, work the wire back and forth until the loop is closed. This motion is like the back and forth motion used to close a jump ring.



Teardrop Hearts are Joined!

To add the finishing touch to your bracelet, you may wish to tumble polish your creation for 2-4 hours, and even overnight if desired.

It's been a lot of fun making the bracelet, but now...

A Little Bonus

Here are the details for the Teardrop Hearts Necklace:

- To make the large heart pendant, start with a 14-gauge teardrop shape made with the *Large Wubbers Teardrop Mandrel Pliers*. To make the correct size ball for the decoration, melt two of the 18-gauge jump rings together (same size as used in the bracelet).
- To make a necklace that measures approx. 20 inches in length, 20 heart links are needed, 10 for each side of the necklace. A total of 42 jump rings that are 18-gauge, 4.0mm i.d. are needed to connect the heart links to the pendant as well as to each other. Another 20 of the 18-gauge, 4.0mm i.d. jump rings are needed for the loops that will be fused or soldered onto each heart link.
- Cut two 4.0 mm i.d. jump rings in half. Fuse them (or solder using easy paste solder if using sterling) to each side of the large heart.

