

Melted Cut Disk Beads

Here are instructions on two somewhat different beads at the same time: randomly melted cut disks and folded melted cut disks. The instructions are the same throughout most of the bead, except near the end. These instructions assume a basic understanding of making glass beads.

Disks can shock and break easily, so keep that in mind. Flash them in the flame often!!!!

Here are examples of the finished beads:

Randomly melted cut disk:



Finished bead this tutorial-

Folded cut disk:



This tutorial-

Colors used in this tutorial (in the order applied) for the folded cut disk were: Moretti Base- aqua 232, Disk-clear aquamarine 034, Kugler neon green 021, transparent emerald green 030, violet 273, ink blue 058.

If you want to use silver, cut a piece of silver foil that is long enough to cover your bead from end to end, and wide enough to go around the bead. Lay it on your marver so you can pick it up later.

- 1) Wrap glass onto your prepared mandrel to about the length you'd like the finished bead to be. Shape into an even cylinder.



- 2) Optional: Roll your hot bead across the silver foil you placed on your marver, and rub it with a tool to burnish it onto your core bead. It is not necessary to add silver to either type of bead, but it is a nice effect, especially if you are going to fold the disks.



- 3) Begin wrapping glass in a disk around the center of the cylinder. If you are putting silver into the bead, start with a wide wrap of transparent glass to trap the silver beneath. Look down the mandrel at the bead, and even out the disk as needed (see tips). Don't worry if the silver on each side of the wrap burns off.

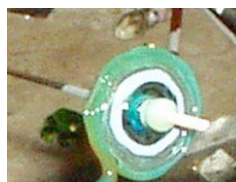


No silver



Silver

- 4) Ok, now you're ready to start adding some other colors to your disk. Alternating transparent and solid colors gives the bead more depth. Not sure how to make a disk? See the tips at the end! And remember, when you're adding glass to your disk, keep flashing your bead in the flame to keep it warm.



- 5) If you'd like to you can, at some point, roll the bead in a bit of raku frit, white or other color enamel, or both. This adds a lot to the random nature of the bead, while adding some new colors.



No silver



Silver

Caution: When using enamels or any powdered glass, be sure your studio is properly ventilated and wear a respirator with a P100 HEPA filter.

- 6) Ok, when you have a nice large disk with a lot of different color layers on your cylinder, you are ready to start cutting. Because this bead is rather random, it's not necessary to completely even out the disk.



No silver



Silver

- 7) Spot heat the portion of the disk you want to cut. This takes some control. Don't let it get droopy and crazy- heat it just until it's red. Take your glass scissors, and cut the disk right down to the cylinder, without cutting into the cylinder. Do this spot heating and cutting about 6 times. This is kind of a random bead, so don't worry too much about cutting it in even sections. Again, be sure to keep the disk and core cylinder fairly warm so it doesn't break apart. If you are making the folded cut disks, you can push them a bit towards alternating ends as you cut them (see below).



No silver

- 8) So here is where the two beads become different:

For random cut disks: Simply begin melting the glass and let the glass fall onto the cylinder where it may. If you want to control it a bit, you can push it around with your favorite tool as it melts. Try not to trap any air bubbles as you do this. Just keep melting until it's pretty well melted in.



Random cut disks

For folded disks: Push the cut sections to alternate ends of the cylinder- one to one end, the next to the other. When you are cutting the disks, you can actually push them a bit towards the ends as you cut.



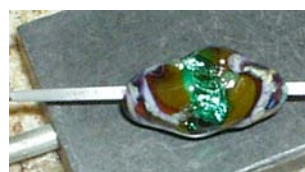
Folded cut disks

9) When your disk is melted, or at least mostly melted, into the cylinder, it's time to do some shaping. I prefer a nice flattened bead, but it usually starts out as a bit of a barrel. And I can't resist using my graphite paddle to help it along.

Without silver, random melted disks:



Folded melted disks with silver:



And, when you've got a nicely formed bead, you can leave it alone or, if you're like me, flatten it!



Disk tips:

Be sure each layer of glass you add adheres well to the layer below it. The glass must be wrapped firmly on the previous layer as you spin the bead. When wrapping the glass, your bead should be slightly behind the flame, while the glass rod is in the flame. Make sure the glass rod is heated all the way through, not just on the bottom, so that you don't pull the base bead around misshaping it or breaking the bead release. You may be able to wrap and spin as you go, or you may want to pull a bit of glass off the melting rod and attach it to your disk at regular very small intervals. Push the hot glass onto the disk as you add it to make the layers adhere to each other nicely. Make sure the layers of glass are adhering all the way around, and there are no gaps between the layers.

Making a basic disk:

Start by making a pea-sized bead. Shape this into a small cylinder. (In the case of the cut disk bead, you will be starting with a larger cylinder.) This will be the core of the disk, and should stay pretty much as is during the whole process, though it still must be kept warm. Start winding the glass onto the cylinder (see above for tips). You can add colors as you go if you want, or leave it all one color. If necessary, the disk can be straightened using the flat part of your tweezers, or a masher. Don't pull up on the disk; just flatten all the way around. Remember to look down your mandrel to see how even and round your disk is and add glass or use gravity to correct. Flash the disk often to keep it warm; otherwise pieces may break off. When your basic disk is finished, cool it in the flame for a minute or two before putting it away in your kiln. Keeping the disk warm without melting it down and cooling the disk without breaking it are the two hardest parts of this process.

Disks are the basis for a number of different bead styles, including hollow beads, folded beads, 3-dimensional flowers, and fluted disks.