

Braided Gemstone Ring

This braided gemstone ring allows you to enjoy the flexibility and beauty of metal clay.



MATERIALS

10 gm 650 Low Fire Slow Dry metal clay

Empty Syringe

4 mm Round Stone

4 mm Stone Setting

Non-stick Teflon Surface Ring Strip

ADDITIONAL TOOLS & SUPPLIES REQUIRED

- Ring mandrel with stand, non-stick work surface and strip of same, work surface, tissue blade or clay cutter, tape, paint brush, tweezers, jewelry pliers, stainless steel brush, agate burnisher rubber block.

Drying Methods - may include hairdryer, oven, or toaster oven set below 250°F, food dehydrator or warming tray. Piece also may be left to dry naturally.

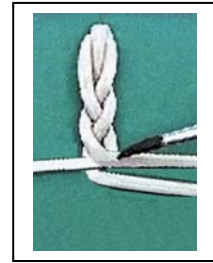
Firing Methods - include either by electric kiln, hand-held butane torch, or gas stovetop burner.

PROCESS

- ✚ Set ring mandrel on stand.
- ✚ Take plastic ring sizer - measure your finger so that the ring sizer fits comfortably. Remove the sizer and add one and one half sizes to account for the 8-10% shrinkage during firing.
- ✚ Slide ring sizer gently onto ring mandrel so as not to disturb size. Make a mark on either side with pencil so that it can be seen through the non-stick surface.
- ✚ Take a strip of the non-stick surface and wrap around the mandrel, centered over the markings. Secure with a small piece of tape. Do not tape non-stick surface to the mandrel as you will need be able to remove the strip.
- ✚ Take the empty syringe and draw up some clear water. Expel the water. This will lubricate the inside of the syringe. Remove the plunger and set it aside.
- ✚ Rub a small bit of olive oil onto your hands to prevent the clay from sticking to your hands, and to prevent your hands from removing the moisture from the clay.
- ✚ Open the clay and roll it into a log shape.
- ✚ Insert clay into the syringe and replace the plunger. Slowly depress the syringe. If you see air trapped, use a paper clip inserted into the end to allow the air to escape and the plunger to compress the clay.
- ✚ Extrude 3 ropes of equal length - by either extruding the clay all at once and cutting in thirds, or by extruding 3 equal pieces.
- ✚ Once you have the 3 pieces, pinch them together at the top and press down onto a clean, flat surface so the clay will not move.

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- ✚ Keep the clay moist with water while braiding. Braid in the shape of an upside down "T" with 2 arms out at all times, and gently lifting up each sides and braiding one arm over the other. Periodically moisten the clay. If you continue to keep the arms out, you will have an even braid. Keep even pressure while braiding.
- ✚ Braid to the very bottom and pinch the ends together.
- ✚ Trim off a small bit of the clay ends and place into a small container, such as a lid. Add water to form a paste.
- ✚ With brush, mandrel, craft knife and paste on hand, pick up the braided segment and moisten again. Wrap the braid around the mandrel, overlapping. Cut on an angle below one of the ropes with your cutter. Remove the excess clay.
- ✚ While holding the braid to the mandrel, secure ends with some paste type on a fine brush. You may need to press ends together slightly to secure.
- ✚ Take the back edge of your cutter or a ruler and, while rotating the ring mandrel, guide the ring to make sure that it is straight. This must be done during the wet clay stage.
- ✚ Find your seam area. Place the 4 mm setting in the seam area, taking care to center. Press gently into the clay so the bottom band of the setting is buried in the clay.
- ✚ Use paste to fill in around the setting and smooth.
- ✚ Slide Teflex 1 inch toward tapered end to allow clay to shrink minimally while drying. Dry with a food dehydrator (recommended).
- ✚ When the ring is dry enough to move, remove from the non-stick surface.
- ✚ Use small files to refine the ring, checking for excess clay in the seam area (inside, too!) and within the setting. If there are any areas that need filing in, do so now. Re-dry piece if any moisture has been added. Do not file too much inside the ring, or your size will change.
- ✚ Using 600 grit sandpaper, to gently sand away any imperfections - including the inside of the ring.
- ✚ Fire by either a programmable electric kiln, hand-held butane torch, or gas stovetop.
- ✚ Brush with stainless steel brush to remove white coating and reveal the brilliant silver.
- ✚ Use 600 then 1200 grit wet sandpaper to refine the shine. Change water when changing grits to avoid scratching with larger particles as you go to finer grits.
- ✚ To set your stone, first check your mount with jewelers' pliers to make sure the prongs are open.
- ✚ Pick up the stone with the tweezers (start with the stone upside down and then turn it over while in the mouth of the tweezers).
- ✚ Place it in the setting and close prongs with jewelers' pliers. Start this process from opposite corners for best fit.
- ✚ Tap stone with tweezers to make sure it is in the setting tightly. If there is any movement, use pliers again to secure.