



This list contains some of the wire terms used in jewellery making along with some of the alternative names they are also known as (AKA).

Wire is usually copper or steel wire with a colour coating. Ensure you don't overwork wire as it can become brittle.

You will see the diameter or thickness of wire measured in two ways, either gauge or in millimetres (mm). The lower the gauge number, the thicker the wire. Therefore, 12 gauge wire is much thicker than 28 gauge wire.

Gauge	Diameter in mm	Diameter in inches
12	2.00mm	
14	1.50mm	.064
16	1.25mm	.051
18	1.00mm	.040
20	0.75mm	.032
21	0.724mm	.029
22	0.64mm	.025
24	0.50mm	.020
26	0.40mm	.016
28	0.30mm	.013
30	0.25mm	.010
32	0.2mm	.008

Between 20g and 22g wire is excellent for making your own headpins, eyepins, jump rings or earring findings. Use sizes between 24g and 28g for threading beads, crocheting or bead weaving.

You will also find the terms dead soft and half-hard. These terms are used with precious metal wire to describe their hardness and how easy they are to bend the wire to the desired shape. Precious metal wires also come in different shapes, round, half round, square, twisted.

Dead soft wire is easy to bend with your fingers. Half-hard wire is slightly stiffer and will hold its shape better.