

The Making of a Mala

Sometimes known as a Buddhist rosary, this Tibetan necklace has been used for centuries by Buddhist monks to count their sutras.

Materials

3 - 4 yards of Tuff Cord – strung double
108 beads of your choice (6mm is the most common size)
3 marker beads
1 focal bead
Big Eye needle
Glue – we like Hypo Cement
Knotting tweezers

Optional

Size 11^o seed beads
Bead caps for marker/focal beads

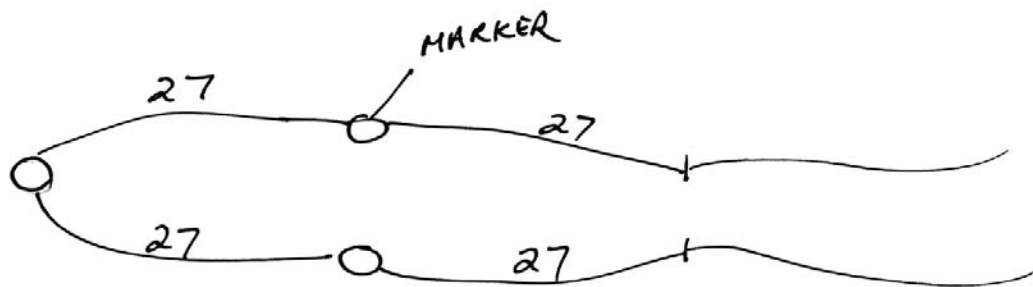
Tassel:

30 yards of thin fiber such as cotton, linen, silk or bamboo - we don't use the synthetic threads

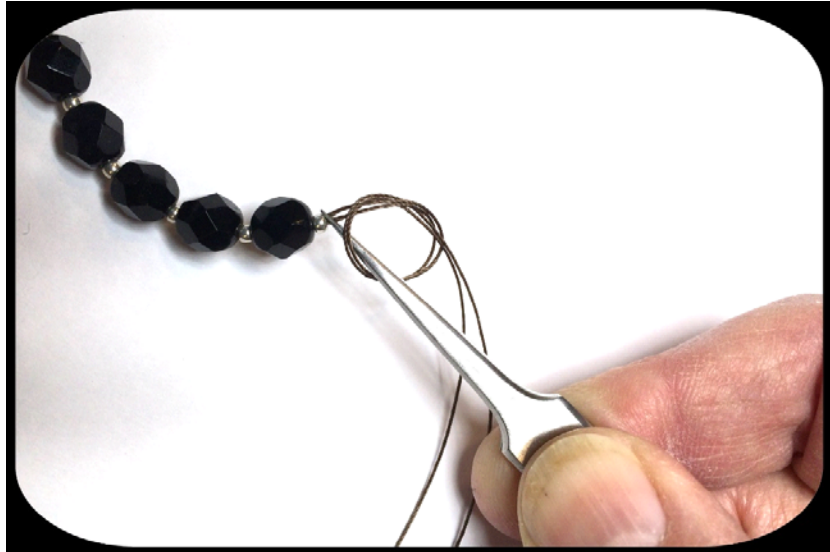
because they tend to splay out and hang stiffly.

3 inch jewelry box

You may have noticed malas have no clasp so start stringing from the bottom, just before the focal bead. The stringing process is straightforward, simply add your beads one at a time until you have 27 plus optional caps if used. Add one marker bead, another 27 beads, and then another marker bead. Follow this pattern until you have 4 sets of 27 beads separated by 3 marker beads. Leave a good 6" of thread at each end.



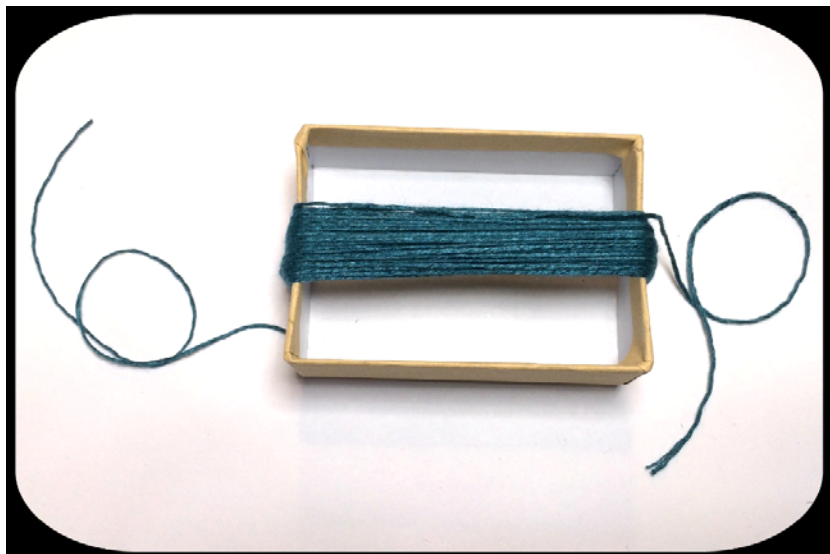
Lock down your beads at each end with an **overhand knot** – these knots also help the focal bead sit well as you bring the two ends down through one focal bead.



Take both tails through your focal bead.

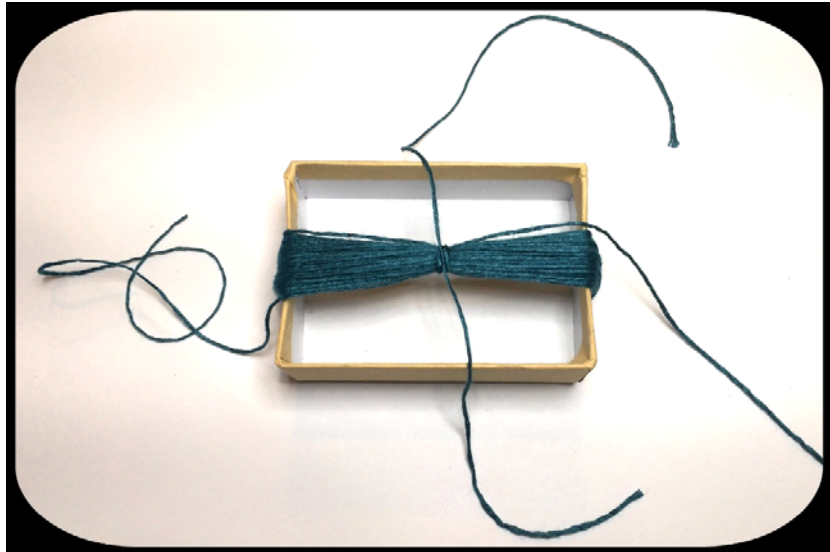
The Tassel:

Begin by wrapping your fiber thread lengthwise around the box. The size of the tassel depends on how much thread you use: more yards = fluffier tassel. If you have a thicker fiber, you will need fewer yards. For the samples, we used 30 yards of 10/2 cotton.



When the circle of thread is as full as you want – remember; the tassel will be twice as thick as

what you see - cut the yarn. With an 18 inch piece wrap around the tassel bundle several times and tie securely. Glue the knot and trim the tails. Slide your thread circle off the box.



Return to your string of beads. From opposing sides, take each six inch tail under the cinched part of the fiber circle. Snug up the stringing thread so the tassel head is as close as possible to the focal bead and tie a knot. If you can bring the tails back up through the focal bead, great! If not, no worries.

Glue the knot. When the glue is dry, trim the tails.





To finish making the tassel:

Cut another piece of thread, a yard is plenty. Pinch the tassel $\frac{1}{2}$ inch below the head and hold it tight. Begin wrapping the loose yard around the place you've pinched, keeping the tension tight as you wrap. It is easier if someone else holds the tassel for you while you wrap around. Secure with a knot, glue the knot and trim the tails or let them hang loose – your choice.



To complete the tassel, cut your looped yarn at the bottom. Trim off any uneven bits and you're done!



Congratulations, you have made your very own mala!