

Week 2

- Rethink Your Alphas
- Repurpose Your Games, Puzzles and Toys
- **Research Jewelry Making Tools**
- Reinvent Yourself: Making Your Own Charm Bracelet

Researching Jewelry-Making Tools and Their Applications in Scrapbooking

Right about now you might be asking yourself...wait isn't this a paper crafting class?

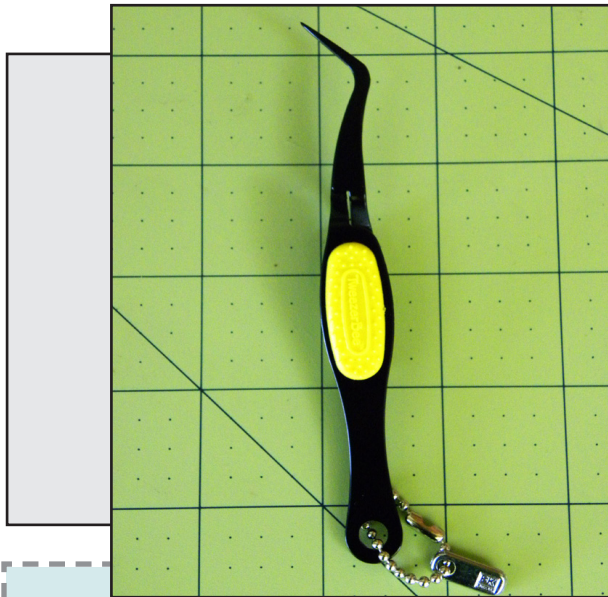
I am here to tell you that there are tons of crafty tools and techniques out there meant for something other than paper that can serve practical (and FUN) uses in your scrapbooking! And jewelry-making tools happen to be amongst them!

Some of you may have used these types of tools before and many of you may not have. However, the idea here is to inform you of what's out there and how these tools may aid you in your paper-crafting--so keep an open mind and I think you'll be surprised.

Please be advised that these reviews contain my personal recommendations and opinions based on my experience and research of the items. Any and all information provided should be verified by the manufacturer.

So let's have a look at what's out there!

Three Jewelry-Making Tools I Can't Live Without!



#1-Tweezers

You'd think after crafting for 12 years these hands of mine would be used to picking up tiny eyelets, pebbles and beads—but you'd be wrong. When it comes to handling anything smaller than my own fingertips I'm all thumbs! That is why I love my trusty pair of tweezers!

Popular Options:

Popular Options: We R Memory Keeper's Precision Tweezers, Making Memories Tweezers, Fiskars Tool Taxi and EK Success' Tweezer Bee.

Price Range: 2.99-12.99

Applications in Scrapbooking:

- To pick up and sort small elements such as beads, brads, eyelets, pebbles, rhinestones, etc.
- To position and adhere tiny stickers, pebbles, sequins, beads and rhinestones on your page.
- Removing negative pieces from small stickers, alphas, die cuts, etc.

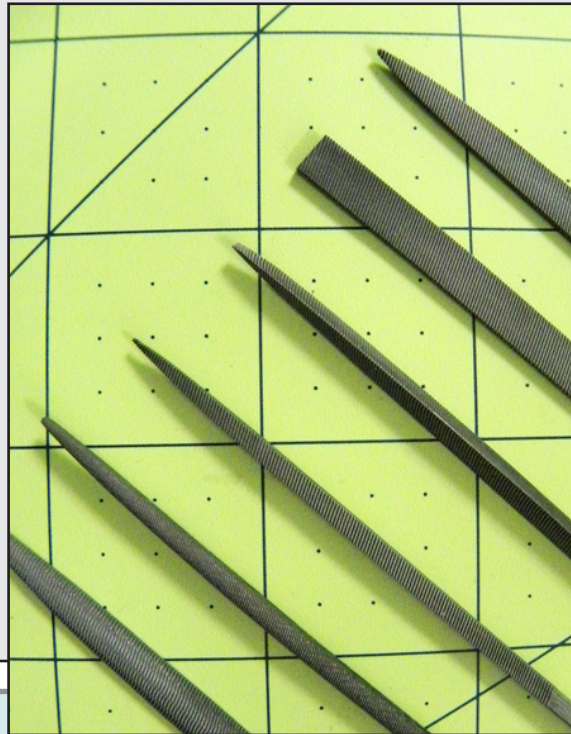
What to Look For in a Pair of Tweezers:

- Extended handle
- Curved, precision tips
- Comfortable grip

My Pick: I swear by the Tweezer Bee! First of all, the easy grip handle is not only extended but makes this tool comfortable and simple to hold. Second, these tips can hold the tiniest of elements with ease. And, finally, its tips have a non-stick coating that makes it easier to position stickers, pebbles and other adhesive-backed elements.

Precision Files

If you work with punched chipboard, die cuts and alphas, or you do a lot of altering, I think you'll find that these tiny tools will come in handy. These small files are perfect for giving every project, every alpha and every cut a clean and precise edge. Most of these files are sold in 6 piece sets and the variety makes it easy to find a file perfect for every occasion.



Popular Options:

Popular Options: Basic Grey's 6 pc. Precision File Set, General Tools 6 Piece Steel Precision File Set, and Commando Precision File Handle and 6 pc. Needle Set.

Price Range: 6.99-13.99

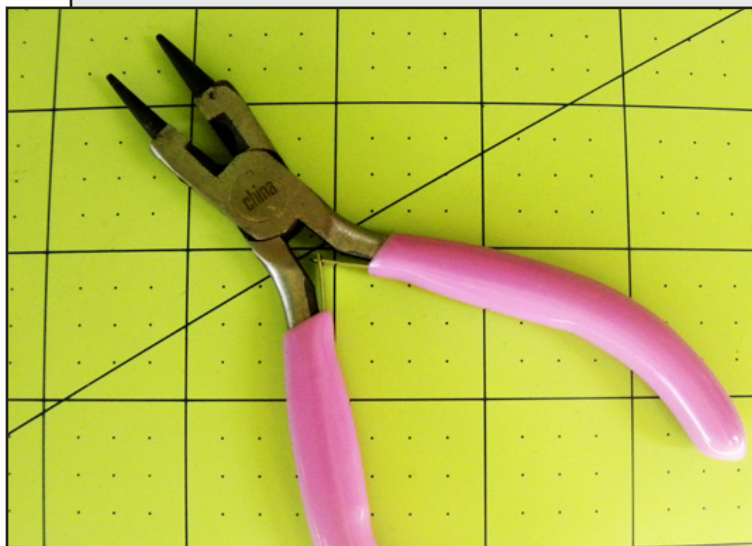
Applications in Scrapbooking:

- Getting into grooves and removing negative pieces that won't seem to budge.
- Removing the excess paper from the edges of your altered projects.
- Cleaning up the edges of pre-punched chipboard die cuts and alphas.
- Putting a polished edge on your fussy-cut paper elements.

What to Look For in Precision Files:

- Try to find files with handles on them, this makes them much easier to use.
- Having a carrying case is nice since they can be easy to lose.
- Look for a set with at least 3 or more files—a round, flat and half-round.

My Pick: The General Tools 6 pc. Steel Precision File Set is a great price for a high-quality file set and they even come in an easy-to-store case. You can get them at your local Lowes or Home Depot. It is an extra step to screw each of the files into the universal handle but I like having a nice sturdy handle to work with.



Jewelry Pliers

These multi-purpose tools make it simple to cut and shape metals and to secure small things to your pages. Sometimes these are sold as a single tool with all three capabilities and other times in a set of three. You may wonder why these would be so useful—but they can really come in handy when working with any kind of metal charms, wire and sheets.

Popular Options:

The Beadery's 3-in-1 Jewelry Making Tool, Cousin Craft's 3-in-1 Jewelry Pliers, The Beadsmith's 3 pc Jewelry Plier Set and Making Memories 3-Pc Set.

Price Range: 2.97-23.97

Applications in Scrapbooking:

- Use them to shape wire into loops, custom shapes, letters and more.
- Use them to hold items that you are painting, gluing or otherwise treating.
- Use them to cut through wire and metal sheets
- Use them to wire things together securely.
- Use them to attach dangles, charms, etc.

What to Look For in Jewelry Pliers:

- A grip that fits your hand.
- A tool that combines all three functions is ideal.
- A good cutting mechanism—some of the less expensive 3-in-1 tools skimp in this area!

My Pick: I personally own a generic brand 3-in-1 tool that I buy at Joann's for \$2.97 and replace almost yearly. It handles soft metal wires and metal sheets like a pro—but when working with higher gauge metals it doesn't take much to wear it out. The thing is though, it fits my hand perfectly! So this is the part where I tell you that it really all comes down to what works best for you. If you were looking at the mid-level tools offered by Cousin Craft or Making Memories, you will be walking away with good quality pliers that will most likely meet your needs.

My Favorite Ways to Use Jewelry-Making Supplies in My Own Pages

Below are three ways that I use these tools in my own scrapbooking--but I'm sure you can think of many other ways to use these helpful tools if you try!



Create dimension and texture with a scatter of beads.

On a page from my travel journal I added this scatter of beads and shells to set the scene for my photos of the beach at Puerte Vallarta. Random scatters like this add a playful tone along with small but impactful details. I like to keep my scatters small and clustered so they take a little less time.



To create your own random-looking scatter of beads follow these steps.

1. Literally scatter your beads across your page—exercise control if you want your scatter to look like more of a cluster than a spray.
2. Then remove any of the beads that just don't seem to fit or stray into an area of your layout you don't want them.
3. Finally, using your trusty tweezers or needle nose pliers lift each bead individually, apply adhesive and replace.

If you don't want spend this kind of time then you can also use a matte clear gel mixed with colored acrylic paint. Apply generously to the area you want your scatter to cover by splattering it or applying it with a palette knife. Then sprinkle your beads over top. Use your tweezers to push the beads down into the mixture. You may get a more clumped appearance but you can remove beads here and there, until you get the look you want.

Get clean and precise edges on hand-cut accents.



We can all agree that hand-cutting isn't an exact science. Despite my best efforts I usually don't come away with a perfect extraction every time. When extracting an image or pattern, getting to those intricate details can be difficult. But by the time I was done with my precision files on my "Who's There" layout the only person who knew that my extraction skills were anything less than perfect, was me!

For perfect hand-cut accents every time I:

1. Use my craft knife to remove my design from my patterned paper or photo to the best of my ability.
2. Then I file around the edges and refine them by using the tip that best fits the different angles and cuts of my design.
3. Finally, I use adhesive to attach my hand-cut image to the page.

Have fun with handmade wire letters and elements.

In my layout "Almost 30" I used my 3-in-1 jewelry pliers to shape these turquoise wire numbers. Wire outline alphas and shapes are a nice way to add color and interest to your layout, while allowing you layers beneath to still shine through.

To make your own wire elements use the following tips:

1. Use the rounded tips of your 3-in-1 jewelry pliers to shape your wire elements—don't use the flat part-- it'll pinch the wire leaving kinks.
2. Secure the ends of your wire by looping it around the base of your element 2-3 times.
3. Slide your wire all the way back into the cutting mechanism for a clean cut.
4. Then tuck your cut end inside of the area of your wire element that has been wrapped.



For a fun spin on this technique you can fill in your wire alphas and shapes with glitter or a tinted-dimensional glue.

Don't Forget to Repurpose Your Broken or Out-dated Jewelry Too!



As a bonus--here are some fun ways you can repurpose your jewelry in your pages and projects:

- Old and tarnished chains can be turned into a great swag for your next banner.
- Pendants, locket and charms that you've lost the chain to will make beautiful embellishments on your pages.
- Use individual beads as the centers of your flowers for added charm.
- Turn your strings of beads into fabulous frames or loop-da-loop accents.
- Create a chain closure for your mini albums using your chains and clasps.
- Use the individual links of your chains to create charming dangles or to connect accents for a fun trim or border.
- Use jewels or rhinestones that may have fallen off out of their settings as bling on your pages.
- Post-style earrings can be re-purposed as brads.
- Use your hoop-style earrings as book rings.
- Accent a focal element with a bauble or pendant from your necklaces or dangle earrings.
- Use larger findings and links to connect your accordion-style minis.
- Use non-threadable beads and cabochons, as stylish accents on your pages.

Your Assignment:

In the Forum we're talking about:

- *Whether or not you own one or more of these jewelry-making tools.*
- *If not, do you think they might be beneficial in your scrapbooking?*
- *Your preferences and recommendations on the different jewelry-making tools available.*
- *Your favorite ways to use these tools in your pages and projects.*
- *Any questions you might have about the use of these types of tools.*

In the Gallery:

If you feel up to experimenting with these types of tools--show us what you come up with! Feel free to showcase a technique from this lesson or other techniques that involve incorporating jewelry making tools in your scrapbooking.