



# Gimp Weave Tubes

## Materials needed for 2 woven tubes of your desired *length*

- Silicone tubing, 2.5mm OD/1.5mm ID – 2 pieces @ *length*
- 18 gauge copper wire – 1 piece @ *length* + ~6"
- Optional: 5-8" of lighter-gauge wire (24ga – 28ga)
- Pliers for wrapping a wire coil
- 6mm ID cylindrical cord end caps (4)
- Superglue
- Flush-cut shears or scissors to cut leather (They may get superglue on them, so don't use your best pair!)
- 0.5mm round leather cord – four equal lengths determined as follows:

This weave pattern uses four strands of cord. These instructions create a 'clean start' by using two strands of double-length leather folded in half for each tube. If you wish to make a four-color weave instead, tie pairs of colors together, make your woven tubes slightly longer than desired, then finish the initial end in the same way these instructions finish the final end. (You may want to try a folded two-color weave first to get the hang of things.)

The lengths estimated below are the total length needed to complete two woven tubes of the quoted length. To make a single tube, you need half as much leather. To make a pair of two-colored cords, you need half the length in color1 and half in color2. To make a pair of four-colored cords, you need  $\frac{1}{4}$  the length in each color plus an extra 6-10" on each (for the knot and finishing). In the end, you want to have four equal-length pieces of leather (either tied or whole) to make two woven tubes.

The actual diameter of "0.5mm leather cord" can vary quite a bit. The fatter the cord is, the more you will need in order to make a woven tube of a particular length. If you are weaving more than one color and you can tell they are not the same diameter, add extra length to the fatter color(s). You cannot add leather later, so be generous with your lengths!

240" (60"x4) leather cord  $\approx$  6" woven tube  
360" (90"x4) leather cord  $\approx$  8" woven tube  
480" (120"x4) leather cord  $\approx$  10" woven tube

## Instructions

1. **Make your wire form.** Wrap about 6" at one end into a tight spiral. If desired, 'tie' the spiral in place by wrapping it with the lighter-gauge wire, **Fig. 1**. (This is your handle for pulling the wire

core out of the finished woven tube, and I find that the extra wire-wrapping helps prevent the spiral from uncoiling when I pull.)

2. Run your fingers down the wire form so it is reasonably straight. (A slight curve won't be a problem, but get rid of any sharp bends.) Slide one of the silicone tubes onto your wire form so that the wire end sticks out at the bottom (**Fig. 2**). The silicone is stretchy; try to keep it in a relaxed state as you work. (In figure 2 you can see I've cut all my lengths at the same time, and put one set of leather and silicone aside for the second tube. Also, I can feel that the pink cord is fatter than the violet, so I've added an extra 12" of the pink.)
3. Fold each of your two leather cords in half and pinch the fold to mark the centers. Make a "+" by crossing the two cords at their centers (**Fig. 3**).
4. **Begin the weave.**<sup>1</sup> The stitch proceeds around either clockwise or counterclockwise, producing a left- or right-handed spiral in the final tube, respectively. These instructions move clockwise; when making your second tube you may want to work in the other direction if the handedness of the pattern is noticeable. (If you're weaving all one color it will not be noticeable.)
  - a. My "+" has the pink strand under the violet one, so I begin with the pink strand at 12:00. Make a bend in the pink so the half of the strand that was pointing towards 12:00 now lies over the violet strand at 3:00. Pink now has both ends pointing to 6:00, and violet runs through the loop made by pink. (**Fig. 4**)
  - b. Take the violet at 3:00 and lay it over both pink strands. Both violets now point to 9:00 and are linked under and then over the rightmost pink.
  - c. Take the leftmost pink at 6:00 and lay it over both violets to point at 12:00. (**Fig. 5**)
  - d. If you're seeing the pattern now, the next step should be to take the topmost violet and lay it pointing to 3:00 over two 12:00 pinks. But what you have is one pink pointed at 12:00, and then a pink loop. Pass the violet over the 12:00 pink and down through the pink loop. (**Fig. 6**)
  - e. Your knot is complete – it only needs to be pulled tight. You should have pink at 12:00, violet at 3:00, pink at 6:00 and violet at 9:00. Pull on each strand a little bit at a time so the knot stays centered on the "+" as it comes together, but stop when your knot is still ~10-15 mm across. (**Fig. 7**)
  - f. This step requires three hands. If you don't have three hands, hold the spiral-wrapped end of your wire form in your mouth while you pick up your knot with both hands so you can pull all four strands simultaneously. I pinch one strand between thumb and forefinger. A

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<sup>1</sup> Many people have done this weave with plastic "gimp" tape. (Flat tape makes a square tube; round leather makes a round tube.) If you have a method that works for you, go for it! Read through the weave instructions to pick up some pointers customized for the LED strand application, but form the knot the way that works for you.

second strand is pinched between pinky and palm, runs between ring finger and middle finger, and is braced by the knuckle of my middle finger. (**Fig. 8**) Now do the same thing with the other hand at the same time! Put the end of the wire form through any one of the four holes in your knot. Holding the wire form upright with your mouth, tighten all four strands simultaneously until the knot is snugly and fairly symmetrically attached around the bottom of the silicone. (**Fig. 9**)

- g. Take a moment to congratulate yourself – that was the hard part!
5. You will need to hold the wire form upright for about ten stitches before it will stand by itself. Each stitch is the same and it doesn't matter which strand you start with, so you can put this down without losing your place! Pass strand 1 over the strand to the right to make a loop; pass strand 2 over what was strand 1 and the next one to make a loop; pass strand 3 over what was strand 2 and the next one to make a loop; pass strand 4 over what was strand 3 and then down into the loop formed by strand 1. Pull symmetrically to close down all the loops. Don't pull so aggressively that you deform the silicone; that can cause problems when you go to run an LED strand through the tube.
6. **Finish the ends.** When your woven tubes reach the desired length (or you run out of leather), give a little extra cinch to the final knots then pull the wire form out. I generally delay finishing the ends until I'm ready to assemble the necklace, so that I can string the end caps and the woven tubes onto the LED strand before I glue the end caps in place. It is often, **but not always**, possible to guide the LED strand through the end cap and into the silicone tube hidden inside.<sup>2</sup>
  - a. String your LED strand with focal and other beads as desired, then string a cord end. Using the *2-folded-strands* method of starting the weave left one end of the weave looking "finished"; string the tube onto the LED strand with the finished end first and fit it into the cord end. You should not need to glue this end cap in place. (Be careful not to kink the LED strand as you work.)
  - b. At the unfinished end, place a dollop of superglue on the end of the weave between each loose end, squooshing it between the penultimate and final rounds of knots. Wait briefly for the glue to partially set, then clip off the loose ends as close as possible to the weave. Before the glue fully dries, string on the cord end and work it over the end of the weave, making sure all the cut ends are inside the cap.
  - c. Add an end kit to the LED strand to complete the necklace. (See Starter Kit Instructions.)

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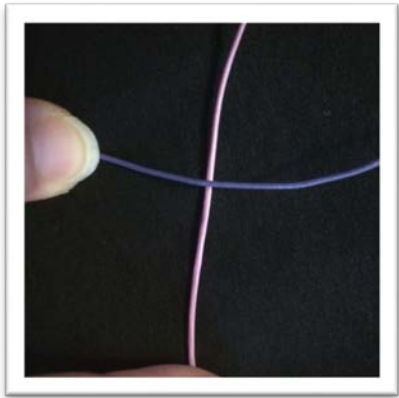
<sup>2</sup> Insider's tip: if you're having difficulty sliding the LED strand through the silicone tube, there are a couple of tricks to try. 1) Trim ~¼" off the end of the LED strand. The ends are stripped to make testing easier, but the exposed wires can be grabby. 2) Put a very thin film of hand lotion or dish soap on the LED strand. 3) As a "hail mary", you can try taking the silicone tubing out of the leather weave by pulling as gently as possible on an exposed end. This will make more room inside the weave and solve problems caused by kinks in the silicone, but also exposes many places for the strand to get hung up.



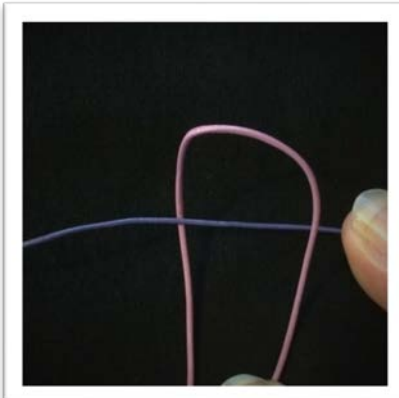
↑ Fig. 1 – The finished wire form.



↑ Fig. 2 – Silicone on wire form; two sets of leather cut.



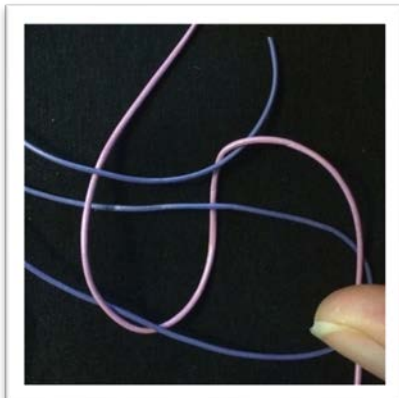
↑ Fig. 3 – Cross the centers to begin the weave.



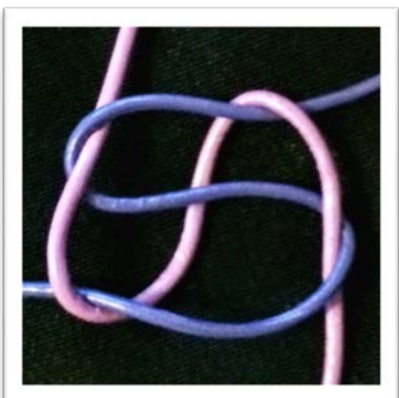
↑ Fig. 4 – Pass pink over violet from 12:00 to 6:00.



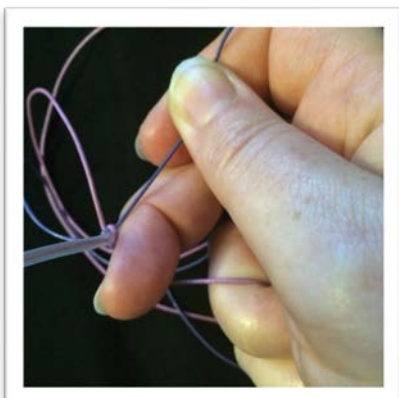
↑ Fig. 5 – Pass violet at 3:00 over 2 pinks to 9:00; pass left pink across 2 violets to 12:00.



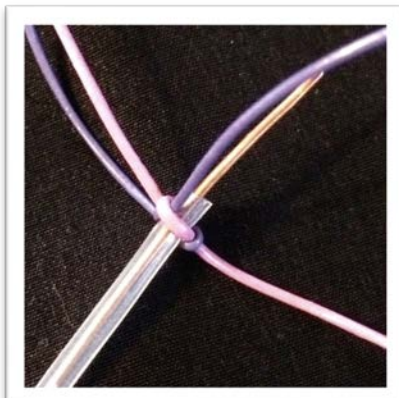
↑ Fig. 6 – Final step: pass top violet from 9:00 over pink then down through pink loop.



↑ Fig. 7 – Start to tighten the knot.



↑ Fig. 8 – Hold two leather strands in each hand.



↑ Fig. 9 – Cinch the knot onto the end of the silicone tube on the wire form.