



Watch This

Beautiful Watchbands in just hours

By: Arlene Hildebrand

I admit it! I love watches! Maybe it has to do with just not having enough hours in a day to do everything I want to do so I make sure that I always know how time is flying by. Or maybe it has to do with the beautiful jewelry that is created to go with a timepiece. Whatever it is, I have always collected watches. Now at least half of my collection includes watches that I have made.

This project has multiple steps, but is not difficult. If this is your first try, you might want to keep the project simple and leave out the faceted stones. The instructions create a watch bracelet that is 7 ½ inches long. The size can be adjusted in one of two ways. The simplest method is to use more or less jump rings or chain to connect the bar of the clasp. Another size alternative is to adjust the dimension of the templates used to create the watchbands. (See template section for further explanation.)

For a curved surface, instead of a bracelet mandrel, I use half round plastic shape originally made to use in cake decorating. The ones I have found are called Flower Former Set and they are made by Wilton Industries. (See Photo 1) You can find them in any well-stocked craft store.

Find a watch face made for beadery with a center vertical hole at either end of the face. There are many really beautiful watches on the market (through catalogs or at your favorite bead store) so have fun finding one that really jazzes up the beautiful bands you will create.

Templates

Create templates for this watchband project using index cards. For a 7 ½ bracelet, you will need one template that measures 2 ¼ by 7/8 inches. This template will be used to make two watchbands, one for each side of the watch face. You will need two templates for the clasp. The first is 1 inch by 7/8 inch, this is the circle side of the clasp and I suggest curving the top of your template. The second template is a spacer for the bar side of the clasp and should be cut to ½ by 7/8 inch.

To create a 7 inch bracelet decrease the watchband template by 1/8 inch on each side. Also reduce the circle side of the clasp template by 1/8 inch.

To create an 8 inch bracelet increase the watchband template by 1/8 inch on each side. Also increase the circle side of the clasp template by 1/8 inch.

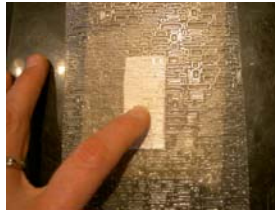
Remember you can still adjust the bracelet size when you complete the project simply by adjusting the number of jump rings used to attach the bar of the clasp.

Now let's get started!

Watch Bands

Cover the curved surface used to shape the watchbands with a Teflon Sheet. This will prevent the wet clay from sticking to surface.

1. Start with 15 grams of Art Clay Silver. Slightly knead the clay to soften. Shape clay into a rectangle and place on your work surface. (My work surface consists of an acrylic underlay for firmness and a piece of Teflon on top of the acrylic to prevent the clay from sticking. This surface works well, the acrylic provides the firmness needed for rolling out the clay and the Teflon allows for easy transport to the drying area.)
2. Using the acrylic roller and 1 mm thickness guides, roll out the clay into a rectangle shape a little larger than the template for the watchbands.
3. Lay the template over the piece of clay you just rolled into a rectangle. Trim the clay, using an exacto knife or tissue blade, to the size of the watchband template.
4. Place a texture plate on top of the clay, leaving the thickness guides in place, roll over the plate creating texture on the watchband. (If you prefer, rubber stamps, buttons, or other items may be used to create the desired texture in the clay.)



5. Using the blunt end of a paintbrush treated with a small dab of olive oil, gently push in on the long sides of the watchband creating a ruffled and curved look to the band.



6. On one end of the watchband use a toothpick and create two small holes in the clay. Do this by gently pushing the toothpick into the clay and twisting until you can feel the toothpick touching the work surface. Continue gently twisting the toothpick in the hole until the hole is nice and round. Don't overdo the hole at this point. The hole can be smoothed and enlarged later with a small file if needed. The holes should be placed 1/4 inch from the long side of the band and 1/8 inch from the short side of the band. These holes are for jump rings that will connect the band to the clasp.

7. If you want to place stones in the bands of the watch, now is the time to decide on placement. Using the method above create small holes in the clay at the future location for the stones. (Stones will be set in the clay after the bands are dry and in the leather hard state.)



8. Now is the time to shape the watchband. Remove the band from the Teflon. The wet clay may come off the Teflon easily or you may have to pick up the Teflon with the clay on it and gently pull the Teflon from the wet clay band. Center the wet clay watchband on the curved side of the bracelet mandrel or other curved mandrel and set aside.



9. Repeat steps 1-8 to make the other watchband for the other side of the watch. When both bands are on the curved surface place them on whatever drying surface you are using. (Food dehydrator, hot plate, hair dryer or allow them to air dry for at least 24 hours.)
10. When the watchbands are dry and in their leather hard state you can sand them and clean up any rough surfaces. Use a round needle file to clean and further ream holes made for jump rings and stones.

Setting Stones

11. With a round needle file ream the holes created for the stones large enough so that the bottom facet fits in the hole.
12. Using the Art Clay Syringe create a bezel by putting three layers of syringe around the outside of the top of the hole created for the stone.



13. Using a pair of tweezers, pick up the stone and place pointed facet in the center of the created bezel.
14. Using a toothpick, gently guide the stone into the bezel. Make sure the bottom facet is sitting nicely in the created hole.



15. Dry the piece,

16. Repeat steps 12 through 15 to set any other stones.

Watchband Tabs (used to connect the watch face to the bands)

Make four of these

1. Knead 2 grams of clay. Lay clay on work surface and using 1 mm thickness guides roll out a strip of clay that is 1/8 inch wide and about 1 inch long.
2. Take a small piece of angel hair pasta, wet it, and lay it down at one end of the strip of clay. Using the spatula tool, lift up on the end of the clay and guide the clay up and around the pasta one full rotation. (There will be two thicknesses of clay under the pasta.) Secure the clay rolled over the pasta to the rest of the strip with some paste.
3. Trim the strip of clay leaving a 1/4 inch tail from the bottom of the pasta roll.



4. Follow directions 1 – 3 above making three more tabs.
5. Place tabs on the drying surface.
6. When dry, sand and smooth as needed.
7. Using a small paintbrush, take a generous amount of Art Clay Paste and apply to the tail of the tab and attach the tab to the end of the watchband that does not have connector holes.



Tabs should be placed on the back of the watchband as close to each corner as possible. The rolled part of the tab should be touching or resting on the end of the band.



Dry the piece

8. With Art Clay Syringe type, go around the outside of the tabs. After putting the syringe down, use a paintbrush to help push the syringed clay around the outside of the tab. This will help secure the tab to the band and eliminate any air pockets that may have formed.



9. Repeat step 8 as needed to insure that the tab is securely fastened to the band and all air pockets are eliminated.

Clasp

The Ring

1. You will be making the ring side of the clasp and using the 1 inch by 7/8 inch template. Start with 10 grams of Art Clay. Slightly knead the clay to soften and shape. Shape clay into a rectangle shape and place on your work surface.
2. Using the acrylic roller and 1 mm thickness guides, roll out the clay into a rectangle shape a little larger than the template for the clasp.
3. Lay the template over the piece of clay you just rolled into a rectangle. Trim the clay, using an exacto knife or tissue blade, to the size of the clasp template.
4. Create the same texture on the clasp as on the watchbands (step 5).
5. Using the blunt end of a paintbrush treated with a small dab of olive oil, gently push in on the long sides of the clasp creating a ruffled and curved look to the band.
6. Using your 3/8 inch diameter circle template cut a hole in clasp to create the ring.
(Placement of the hole is at the curved end of the clasp and should be centered on the curve with the closest end of the hole about 1/4 inch from the end of the curve.)



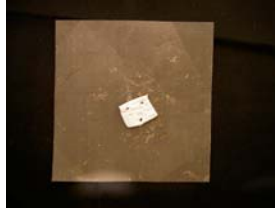
7. Create holes on the connector piece using the same method used in Watch Bands (step 7). The holes will be made on the 7/8 inch side. Create two holes on one end with the same placement as those on the watchbands. Create one hole on the other 7/8 inch side. This hole should be centered between the 1 inch sides and 1/8 inch from the end of the 7/8 inch side.
8. Place the ring end of the clasp on your drying surface.
9. When the piece is dry and leather hard, sand and smooth as needed. Clean out both the large and small holes with a round needle file if necessary.

There are two sections to the bar side of the clasp. The connector that will attach to the watchband and the bar that will be attached to connector with the needed length of jump rings or chain.

The Clasp Connector

10. You will make the connector side of the clasp first and use the 1/2 inch by 7/8 inch template. Start with 5 grams of Art Clay. Slightly knead the clay to soften and shape. Shape clay into a rectangle shape and place on your work surface.
11. Using the acrylic roller and 1 mm thickness guides, roll out the clay into a rectangle shape a little larger than the template for the clasp.
12. Lay the template over the piece of clay you just rolled into a rectangle. Trim the clay, using an exacto knife or tissue blade, to the size of the clasp template.
13. Create the same texture on the clasp as on the watchbands (step 5).
14. Using the blunt end of a paintbrush treated with a small dab of olive oil, gently push in on the long sides of the clasp creating a ruffled and curved look to the band.
15. Create holes on the connector piece using the same method used in Watch Bands (step 7). The holes will be made on the 7/8 inch side. Create two holes on one end with the same

placement as those on the watchbands. Create one hole on the other 7/8 inch side. This hole should be centered between the 1 inch sides and 1/8 inch from the end of the 7/8 inch side.



16. Place connector on your drying surface.
17. When the piece is dry and leather hard, sand and smooth as needed. Clean out holes with a round needle file if necessary.

The Bar

To make the Bar I use my Snake Rolling Tool. This is a tool that I made myself. I use a 3x4x1/8 inch piece of acrylic. On one side of the acrylic I attach an acrylic knob or drawer pull with E6000 adhesive. The knob becomes the handle for the tool. To use the tool, I take the needed amount of clay, knead it and shape it into a hotdog. I lay the hotdog on my Teflon sheet and then with my Snake Rolling Tool, I use a quick back and forth motion to roll the clay into a long snake. The final thickness of the shape should not be thinner than 1mm.

1. Use the above method the roll out a snake that is 1mm thick and 5/8 inch long.
2. Place the snake on your drying surface.
3. Us ¼ gram of clay, make a ball. Lay the ball on your work surface and flatten slightly. Using a toothpick create a hole in the center of the ball. Using a straight edge tool cut off the curve at one point of the ball creating a flat surface.
4. Place the ball on the drying surface.
5. When both the bar and the flattened ball are dry, sand and smooth as needed. Clean out the hole with a round needle file if necessary.
6. Using a small paintbrush, take a generous amount of Art Clay Paste and apply to the flat end of the ball. Attach the wet part of the ball to the center of the leather hard snake.



7. Dry the piece.

Fire and Polish the Watch Band

1. Use fiber blanket to create a curved support for each watchband. The curve of the watchband should be completely supported by the fiber blanket.
2. Place connector and clasp pieces on kiln shelf
3. Ramp kiln to 1600 degrees as fast as it will go, hold for 10 minutes and turn kiln off.
4. Take the pieces out of the kiln and allow them to cool off.

5. Clean the white residue off of the pieces with a steel brush exposing the silver finish.
6. Tumble the pieces in a magnetic or vibrating tumble to create a beautiful shine on the silver. An alternative way to create the shine is to highlight the raised portions of the textured design by using a burnisher.
7. Polish the pieces with a silver polish. I use Wenol for the shine and protection it provides to the silver.

Put it all together

1. Start with the right side of one of the watchbands facing you.
2. Using 2 ½ inches of sterling silver wire, insert the wire through one of the tab holes on the watchband.



3. Add one or two seed beads as needed.



4. Take the wire through the hole at the bottom of the watch face.
5. Add one or two more seed beads as needed.
6. Take the wire through the hole in the second tab on this watchband.



7. Once the wire is through the tabs and the watch face, bend the wire around to the back of the tab and up through the space between the watchband and the watch face. Trim the wire and use a needle nose pliers to secure the band to the inside of the tab.



8. Repeat steps 1-7 above to connect the other watchband to the other side of the watch face.

9. Using 3.5 mm jump rings connect both sides of the clasp.



10. Using a series of jump rings of length of chain connect the bar to the watchband. (This is the step where you can customize the size of the watch by adding more jump rings.)

SUPPLY LIST

Watch face – The type used by beaders with center hole for stringing. (Total length of watch face should be approximately 1 ¼ inches.)

40g Art Clay regular type

3-4 g Art Clay Syringe type

3-4 g Art Clay Paste type

2 to 4 faceted stones (size 3 mm)

5 to 7 jump rings (size 3.5 mm) or 1 to 2 inches of chain

5 inches 21 gauge sterling silver wire

4 – 8 seed bead

Acrylic or glass work surface

Teflon sheets (approx. 4X5 inches)

Acrylic roller

Snake rolling tool

Thickness guides (1 mm)

Tooth picks

Paintbrush

Index cards

Spatula Tool

Exacto blade or tissue blade for cutting straight lines in the clay

Texture plates

Circle Template (3/8 inch diameter)

Stepped metal bracelet or other curved surface.

Small needle files, sand paper (600 grit), other sanding surfaces

Steel bristle brush

Silver Polish

Needle nose pliers

Angel Hair pasta (very thin spaghetti pasta)

Olive Oil, or Badger Balm or Burt's Bee (used as a release for your hands and tools)

Hot plate, food dehydrator, or hair dryer

1 inch thick fiber blanket

Burnisher