



## Tutorial: Old Fashioned Chain

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This Tutorial teaches step by step how to create "old-fashioned chain". This is one of the very first things I ever learned to make, many, many years ago, and remains one of my favorites. It is an excellent technique to utilize all those pesky scraps staring at you from your workbench.

### Materials suggested:

- ✚ Wire ½ hard - square or round – 1 1/16 inch straight wire per link – 3 links per inch finished chain. Almost any gauge wire can be used, just keep in mind the larger the gauge, the harder the links are to form, and the higher chance of your fingers falling off ☺.
- ✚ 1 clasp of your choice

### Tools needed:

- ✚ Ruler
- ✚ Cleaning cloth
- ✚ Round nose pliers
- ✚ Chain nose pliers
- ✚ Flush wire cutters
- ✚ Permanent marker (Sharpie)

Please read through this tutorial in its entirety at least once before you cut any wire.



**Step 1:** I keep several cigar boxes on my workbench to hold usable scrap wire. I try to sort it by gauge 18 – 20 – 21 (the bulk of what I use for chain). When there is enough scrap, I sit and cut it to length and start making chain. If you don't have that much scrap handy or simply want a chain NOW, cut your wire pieces 1 1/16" long.



**Step 2:** Using a permanent marker, place a mark on your round nose roughly 5 – 7mm from the tip. I prefer smaller loops, but not too small.



**Step3:** The key to this technique is in how you hold your pliers. At first this will seem a little awkward, but will get easier with time. You start each turn with your palm facing UP! If you start with your palm down, as you would normally work, by the time you finish the turn, you will look and feel like you are trying to get into an impossible yoga position.

Hold your pliers in your dominant hand, and the link you are working on, on the index finger of your non-dominant hand.



**Step 4:** Grab the wire with your pliers roughly 5/16" from the end of the wire, and hold it against your index finger. Don't forget – "palm up" ☺.



**Step 5:** Turn your hand over - folding the wire – until the tip of the wire touches your finger, on the top-side of the wire.



**Step 6:** Turn the link around, so that the loop you just formed is at the top, and grab the free end of the wire again with your pliers, again 5/16" from the end of the wire. Don't forget "palm UP".



**Step 7:** Turn your hand over again – the same move as in step 5, this time stop when the tip of the wire touches your finger **inside** the first loop you formed.

Congratulations, you just completed your first link – Now you need to repeat steps 4 through 7 to form a fair amount of links (or your fingers fall off 😊).

Remember roughly 3 links form 1 inch of chain.



**Step 8:** The second essential technique to a good-looking chain, is that all the links need to face in the same direction. Open one link with the first loop facing 'up' (the same position in which you made it).



**Step 9:** Slip a closed link on the opened loop.

**Step 10:** Close the first link.



**Step 11:** Open the link you just added.



**Step 12:** Continue to repeat steps 8 through 11 until you've reached the desired length of chain.





**Step 13:** Add a clasp of your choice – either a standard one, or even a handmade one, and you’re all set to show off that gorgeous handmade pendant you made, on a equally gorgeous handmade chain.



This style of chain looks equally good in either round or square wire.....



You can even add twisted wire links to your straight links to create your own version of a Figaro chain.



I hope you've enjoyed this tutorial.  
If you have any questions or comments,  
please feel free to e-mail me at  
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