

# THE LEARNING CIRCLE

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## DREAM CATCHER EARRINGS

Dream catcher earrings have been evolved by crafters over the past several years using a variety of materials and several variations on the pattern and technique. It is the nature of cultural art that each crafter add their own twist or combination of materials for unique looks and originality.

These instructions give you the basics that will result in the more simple design of the dream catcher earrings. It is up to each maker to add their own techniques and ideas.

The materials needed include the hoops, either plain wire or stamped, thin wire or metallic thread, and a pair of french hook earwires, sometimes called fishhook earwires.

From our experience, it is easier to learn to make the earrings using the stamped hoops and solid core wire. The stamping provide a natural marker for planning the loops, and the solid core wire, 28 gage or preferably smaller 34 gage, holds in place better for learning the spacing and tension needed. These instructions are written with these materials in mind. We also are right handed, so adjust the instructions for left handers.

Start by using a 1 1/4 diameter hoop as it is easier to learn the technique on the larger hoop. Cut about a 18 inch piece of wire. When using solid core wire you have to be careful to not kink the wire as it will break easily at that point if you try to straighten the kink out.

Tie the wire to the drop loop which is inside the hoop by twisting the wire around itself several times. Trim off any excess wire end. Some crafters will then bend this loop upwards to the back of the hoop to put it out of sight from the front.

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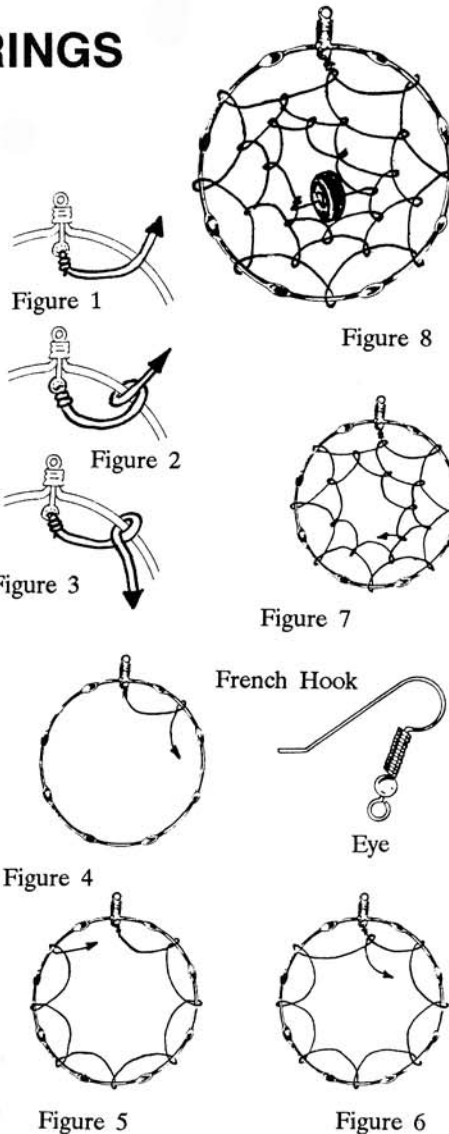


Figure 1, 2, and 3 show the basic hitch used to do all of the tying. You will tie in a clockwise direction around the hoop. First pass the wire over the top of the hoop. Thread it back to the front to the left as shown in figure 2 and continue the twist to pull the wire tight to the hoop. Then as in figure 3, pull the wire back inside the hoop in the direction of the next hitch. The larger view of this is shown in figure 4.

As you make each hitch, rotate the hoop in your left hand, holding the loop you are working on between forefinger and thumb as you tie the hitch. This allows you to hold out the right amount of wire in each loop for spacing around the first row in the web. Continue around the hoop as in figure 5 for the first row, tying each hitch half way between each stamping.

Figure 6, 7, and 8 show the sequence of the simplest form of completing the inside web. In figure 6, begin the second row by hitching over the wire near the starting point. Use the same pattern of hitch as in the outer row. Next loop to the midpoint of the next outer row loop and tie a hitch. Continue on as in figure 7.

Figure 8 shows the completion of the web leaving a small hole at the center. When using solid core wire you can tie off the end by making several tight turns around wire where you are ending. If using the softer tiger tail or thread you will have to tie a knot. Usually a half hitch will do.

Using this pattern, the center hole is often slightly off center. We show here the placement of a seed bead in the web as is often done. It can also be placed in an earlier part of the web.

Finish your earrings by attaching french hook earwires. Using a long nose pliers, twist the open side of the eye of the earwire sideways, thread through top hole in the tab of the hoop, then twist the eye of the earwire back into position. Avoid pulling the eye open as this usually ends up misshaped when you try to bend it back.

Where you tie your wire of each loop, how many times you loop around the hoop on the first row, and how much slack you leave in each loop will affect the patterned look of your web. It is in this skill and consistency where each earring crafter has perfected their own individual "look" to this earring.