

Flurry Bead

A beadmaking tutorial by Laura Sparling



Lots of people have asked me for a tutorial for my 'Flurry' beads so here it is.

The bead is an implosion. There are several tutorials out there for implosion beads but this is my take on it. When I first started making these a few years back I liked them but I had trouble producing consistent results and you know how much I like consistent results! After much experimentation and tweaking I've finally discovered how to make them pretty much uniform.



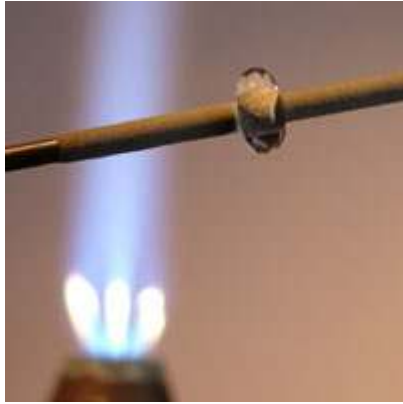
For this tutorial you will need to be comfortable with building disc-shaped beads and you will also need good heat control. It's not a bead for a complete beginner but it's not mega-complex either.

I have a Carlisle Mini CC torch and for this demonstration bead I used Vetrofond clear and Creation Is Messy Lapis. I used a 1/16 mandrel.

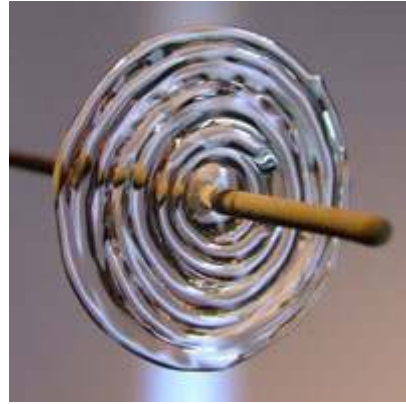
You will also need some small mashers or a similar tool.

Flurry Bead – Step By Step

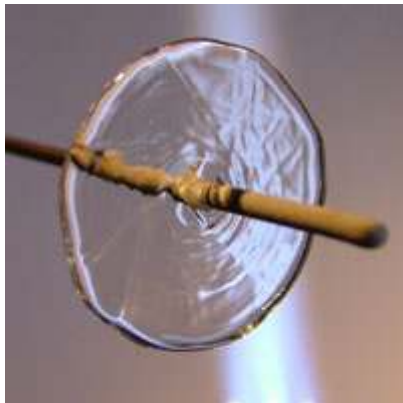
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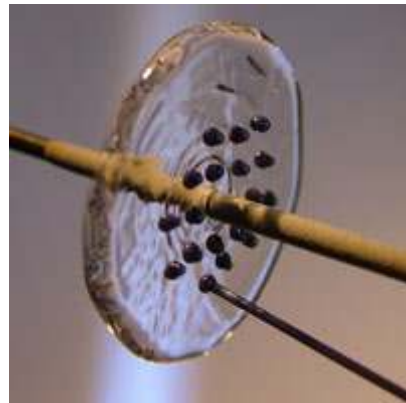
1. Using your clear glass make a very small donut-shaped bead. I tend to make this about 2mm wide.



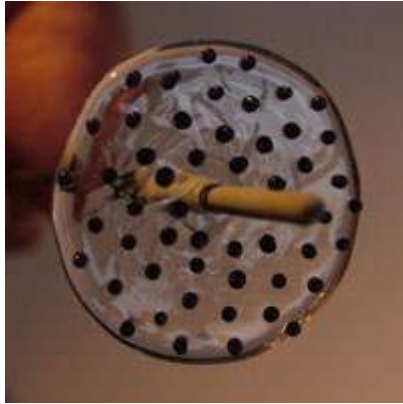
2. Build a thin disc on top of your base bead. Just keep coiling the glass around and around until you've built the disc up to about 15-20mm in diameter.



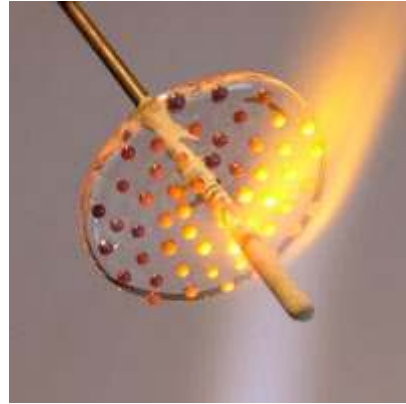
3. Gently bring the disc to an even glow and softly mash it with some small mashers (or a similar tool) until it has nice smooth surfaces. This is important or you could end up with a messy, bubbly bead. Go very careful with your mashing as you don't want to break the bead release.



4. Take your coloured stringer and add some small dots to the disc - on the surface nearest the tip of the business end of the mandrel. You don't have to be precise. Just add lots of small dots, not too close together but not too far apart.



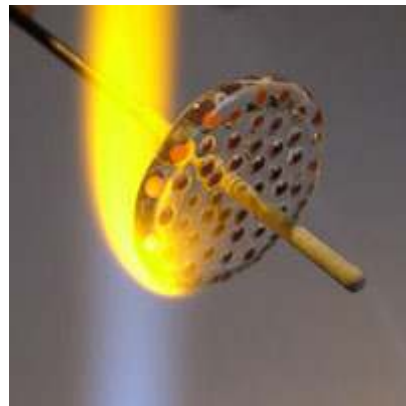
5. Your disc should end up looking a bit like this. Add dots right up to the outer edge of the disc.



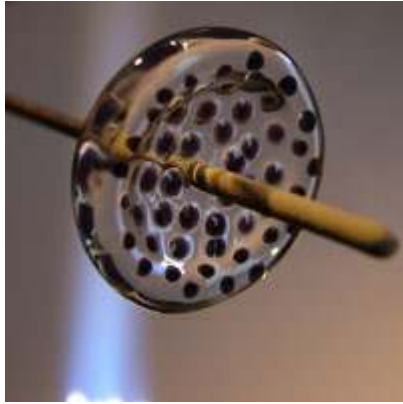
6. Now gently heat the dots until they are almost flush with the surface of the disc. Do this slowly and gently.



7. Here is the disc with all the dots melted down. As you can see, there are no holes or coil marks in the disc.



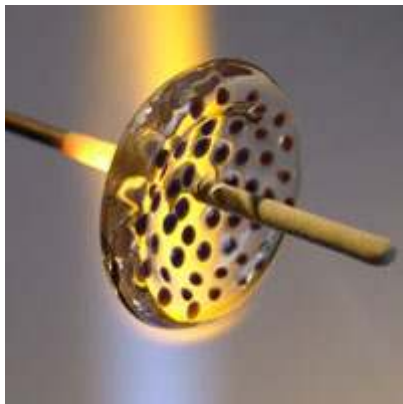
8. Hold your mandrel underneath the flame so that you're aiming the heat at the edge of the disc. It helps if you turn your hand so that you can see the disc end on so that you can see exactly what's happening.



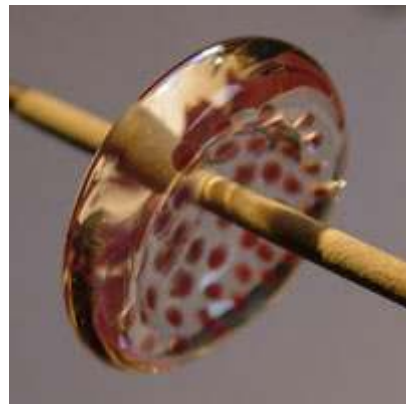
9. As you turn and heat the edge of the disc you will see that it starts to fold in on itself. This is fine – it's exactly what you want to happen. Just keep heating slowly.



10. I can't stress how important it is that you take your time and go slowly, steadily and gently here. If the bead starts to get too glowy and hot bring it out of the flame to cool down slightly.



11. Keep heating the edge of the disc, turning the glass in on itself but try and maintain the disc shape. If you get it too molten it will collapse and fail.



12. To maintain a disc shape, try tilting your mandrel up and down as you heat so that the glass can't slither down and gloop all over the mandrel. You really need to watch your heat control here.



13. The folding in of the disc is almost complete here. Just keep going, slowly and steadily until all the dots are enclosed and the clear glass finally touches the mandrel.



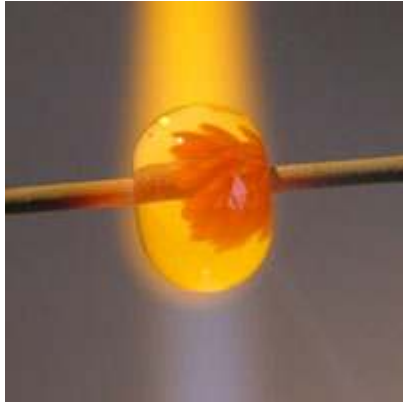
14. I call this bit the 'touch down'. All of the dots that were once on the surface of the disc are now inside the clear and you should have something that looks a little like a sea anemone.



15. Don't forget to bring the bead out of the flame to stabilise it if needs be.



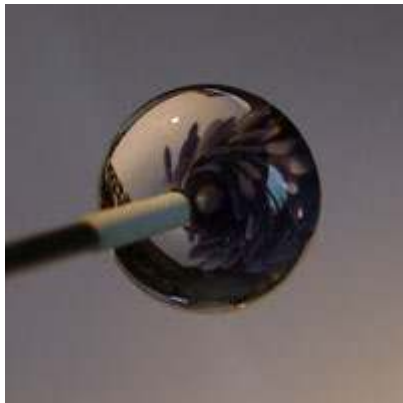
16. At this point you can add some clear glass to the bead in order to round it up and/or get it to the exact size you'd like.



17. Now for a little twist. I heat the bead to an even glow, pause momentarily and let the glass droop ever so slightly before resuming normal mandrel turning. This little step is what turns your anemone into a flurry.



18. It creates a little vortex of glass within the bead which gives a fantastic sense of movement. Your bead should have nice neat dimples around the bead holes. If you need to add more glass for size or rounding up purposes you can do so here.



19. When you're happy with your bead place it into a hot kiln for annealing.



20. The finished Flurry bead.

Hints & Tips

As I've said, you really need to go slowly when making these. The glass needs to be heated and moved gently and evenly.

You don't have to use clear glass. Why not try experimenting with pale transparents?

Certain opaque glasses work better than others for this. White can be very tricky as it turns clear when molten which makes it near on impossible to see during the folding over part of the process. I wouldn't recommend glasses that have a tendency to 'bleed' such as Effetre Dark Ivory or some greens.

Some good opaque colours to try are Effetre Turquoise and Dark Red and CiM Olive, Creamsicle and French Blue.

Don't just stick to one colour. Try using two or three colours within one bead for some really pretty results.

Experiment and have fun. Happy melting!



Thank You

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If you have any questions or if you'd like to send me photos of your own Flurry beads made with the aid of this tutorial please send me an email at laura@beadsbylaura.co.uk.

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