

Braided Rim

Barbara Bellchambers

Courtesy of Bill Usher, Wood Turner, who taught me

MATERIALS:

Lace - leather, suede, or artificial lace, 3/32" or 1/8"
Leather needle
Pliers, needle nose, and optional: "split ring"
Drill and drill bits 1/16", 1/8"
Scissors
Awl
Optional - beads, feathers

Tape Measure
Math compass
Narrow tape - masking or similar
Pencil, pen, or narrow marker
X-acto knife or similar kind of knife
Glue that dries clear

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT JOINING LACE:

When you run out of lace and need a new piece, do not panic. It is simple to add another piece of lace. In fact, you will add the piece at the front of the gourd, and no one will notice.

Pull the short lace **over and under** as usual, leave an inch or so of lace in front.

Put the needle on the new piece of lace, and follow the same path as the short piece of lace, only going **under, under and over**, directly under the short piece of lace. Put glue on the last 1/2" of this lace, and pull it into place under the other lace, with the end tucked in.

Loosen the short lace, and put glue under the lace for the first inch after it comes out of the hole. Pull it tight into place above the new lace.

Hold the lacing in place for a minute for the glue to dry.

Cut off the end of the short lace, pulling so you can cut just below where it went under. Hold for a minute to be sure the lace is caught. You should not see any ends of lacing! When you are finished, it should be hard to find this spot!

PREPARATION:



Using a compass, draw a pencil line all the way around the gourd 1/4" from the rim.

Using the compass again, mark the position for the holes 1/4" apart along the line. Rarely do the holes work out perfectly! Stop 2" from the first hole, and work out whether you need to make your next holes slightly larger or smaller to fit the space left.

Use an awl to pierce the skin of the gourd. This makes it easier to drill the holes.

Your final hole size will be 1/8", but start with a 1/16" drill bit. It is easier to come back and enlarge the holes later. Starting with a larger drill bit on a curved surface can be difficult.



Although I have not done this on the examples, if you paint above the holes and on the rim with the colour of the lacing, the gourd does not show through the finished braiding. It gives a nicer finished look.



Use a piece of tape that is long enough to reach at least 8 holes. Place tape below the holes, and print the numbers from left to

right.

Cut the lace. You need 9 times the diameter of the rim of the gourd to complete the project. For example, if your gourd measures 18" around the rim, you will need a total of 13 1/2'.

Trim the end of the lace, to fit in the 2-prong leather needle. If using suede, thin the lace in the last 1/2". Please trim away from yourself!

Braided Rim Tutorial – cont'd

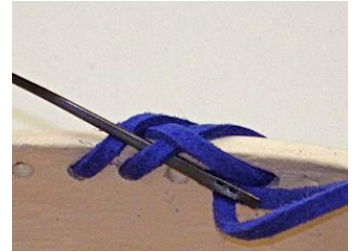
Attach the needle to the end of the lace. A pair of 'split ring' pliers are great to hold the needle open.

You can also use another needle! Use needle nose pliers to tighten the lace into needle and to make the prongs grab the lace.

I find that bending the needle with pliers makes it easier to slide under the stitches.



Now, a new step for you! Before you leave the inside of the gourd, you need to pass your needle **under** the first lace as you head diagonally to the "northwest" (\), and then **over** the next lace.



SEWING THE BRAIDED RIM:

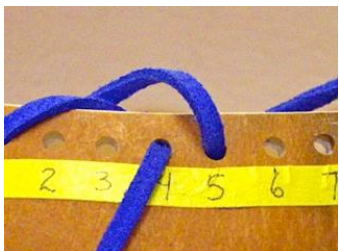
You will always be sewing from the front to the back of the gourd, that is, the needle will enter the holes on the outside of the gourd, going through to the inside.



gourd to keep it in place.

Starting with your needle at the front, push it through hole #4, leaving enough lace on the outside to touch near the bottom of the gourd. Put some tape over the lace on the outside of the

Return your needle to the front of the gourd, and pass through hole #1. Make sure your lacing is flat, with no twists.



Go through hole #5, front to back.

Bring your needle to the front again to go through hole #2.



Turn your gourd around so you are looking at the front again, and go into hole #6.

Bring the needle to the front of the gourd, and hold it down so it goes over hole #3. Notice that you go over 2 laces on the front of the gourd.

Take your needle back, and this time go **over** and then **under** the laces as you head to hole #3.



Pass through hole #3 from front to back.



On the back, you are always going to head diagonally "northwest" (\), crossing 3 laces: going **over** the first, **under** the second, and **over** the third. This is

where the bent needle really helps, getting under that second lace.

Bring your needle forward, and go to the right into hole #7.

Okay, are you ready for something new? This is the last thing you need to learn until you get back to hole #1.

You are going to go **over, under, and over** the laces as you head left to hole #4. Yes, hole #4. This will be the second stitch in this hole.



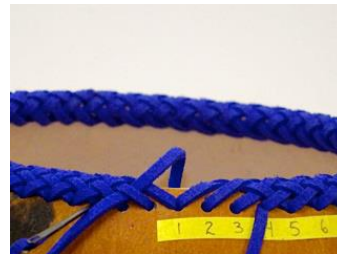
Braided Rim Tutorial – cont'd



You may need to use the pliers now and then to help pull the needle through the holes with a stitch already in it. It can be a tight fit!

From now on, you will be going back through holes that have one stitch in them, as you head to the "southwest" (/) in the front of the gourd. Do not skip a hole!

To untwist the lacing, stop pulling it through the hole when approximately 5" remain inside the gourd. Pull your fingers along the lacing from the hole at the back, straightening it. Keep your fingers on the flattened lace, and pull the twisted lace through until you reach your fingers, and then pull the flattened lace through. You will be able to use this method as you continue lacing, going under other laces.



Heading left from hole #1, go **over, under, over, over**, and through the next hole on the left that has only one stitch.

Now, you are going to go **over, under, over, under**, to hole #2.

At the back, go **under, over, under, over** and through the next hole on the left that has only one stitch.



Go **over, under, over, over, under**, to hole #3.



Go **under, over, over, under, over** to the hole left of hole #1.



Now the stitches will be the same as you go around the gourd.

GO OVER, UNDER, OVER AND THROUGH THE NEXT HOLE FROM FRONT TO BACK.

As you head right to the hole, you will be going to the next empty hole.

As you head left, you will do the second stitch in the next hole with only one stitch in it.

DO NOT SKIP HOLES! Keep checking. Go through hole #1 again.

Okay, this the most rewarding row of all, as well as your last row.

Go **over, under, over, under, over, under** and **STOP** in front of hole #4. Do not go through this hole!



You are ready to add beads, and then you will be done!

CONGRATULATIONS!