The Adjustable Wire Wrapped Cabochon Ring

By Don Christensen

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This pattern is based off of the Macintosh adjustable design but with a few modifications that I have made to reflect my own preferences. The ring offers clean styling that can be worn by both men and women and an adjustable band to make sizing the ring to fit easy.

Tools List

- Wire wrapping pliers including flat nose, needle nose, round nose and a wire cutter.
- Ring Mandrel
- Raw hide mallet
- Tape
- Pen, pencil or marker
- Polish cloth

Material List

- 22 gauge square wire, dead soft or half hard
- 21 gauge half round wire, half hard
- Cabochon in an oval or cushion cut. *

*The cut of the stone determines whether or not wires will need to be pulled over the top of the stone to secure it in the setting. If the stone is cut with a high dome and a steep slope bevel all the way around, then the wire can be laid against the stone and secure it without any additional wire work over the top of the stone. Since I cut my own stones, I can cut the stone to meet the needs of my jewelry designs and control the ultimate look of my jewelry.

Instructions

1. Cutting the wire to length used to involve a complicated formula for measuring the stone, adding inches, etc., but after wrapping dozens of these rings, I have found that a standard 10” length to be more than sufficient for all of the stones that I wrap. 10” should be more than sufficient unless your stone is extremely large.

    - Cut 4 strands of 10” square wire, straighten with a polish cloth and tape the bundle together on one end. Mark the center of the wire bundle and then mark about ½” out on either side.

2. Bind the bundle together. Using half round wire, make 3 bindings on each of the marks. Set the center binding, but DO NOT set the left and right bindings. I prefer to make my bindings 3 wraps each.

3. Mark the Center of your stone with a piece of tape on the top of the stone. This will help you align the bindings to the stone and help make a symmetrical wrap.

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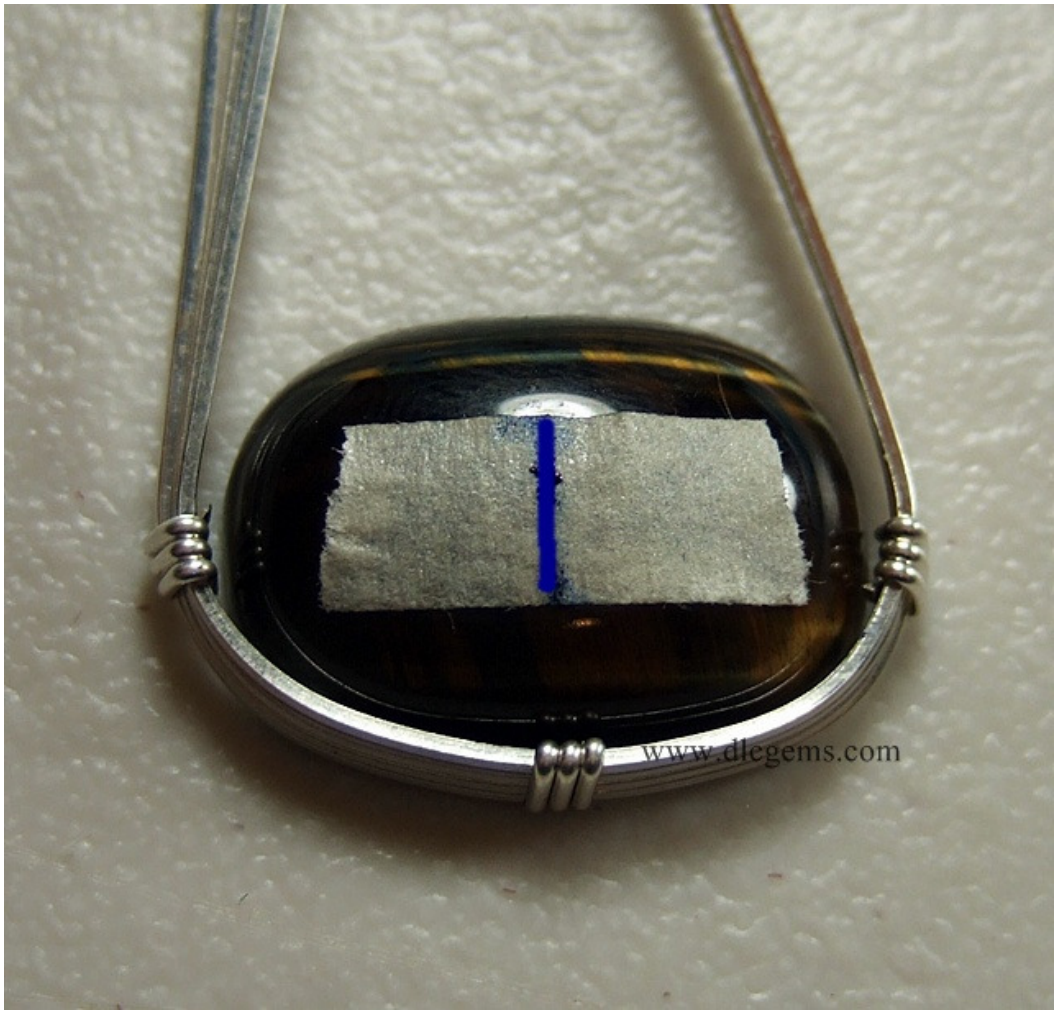
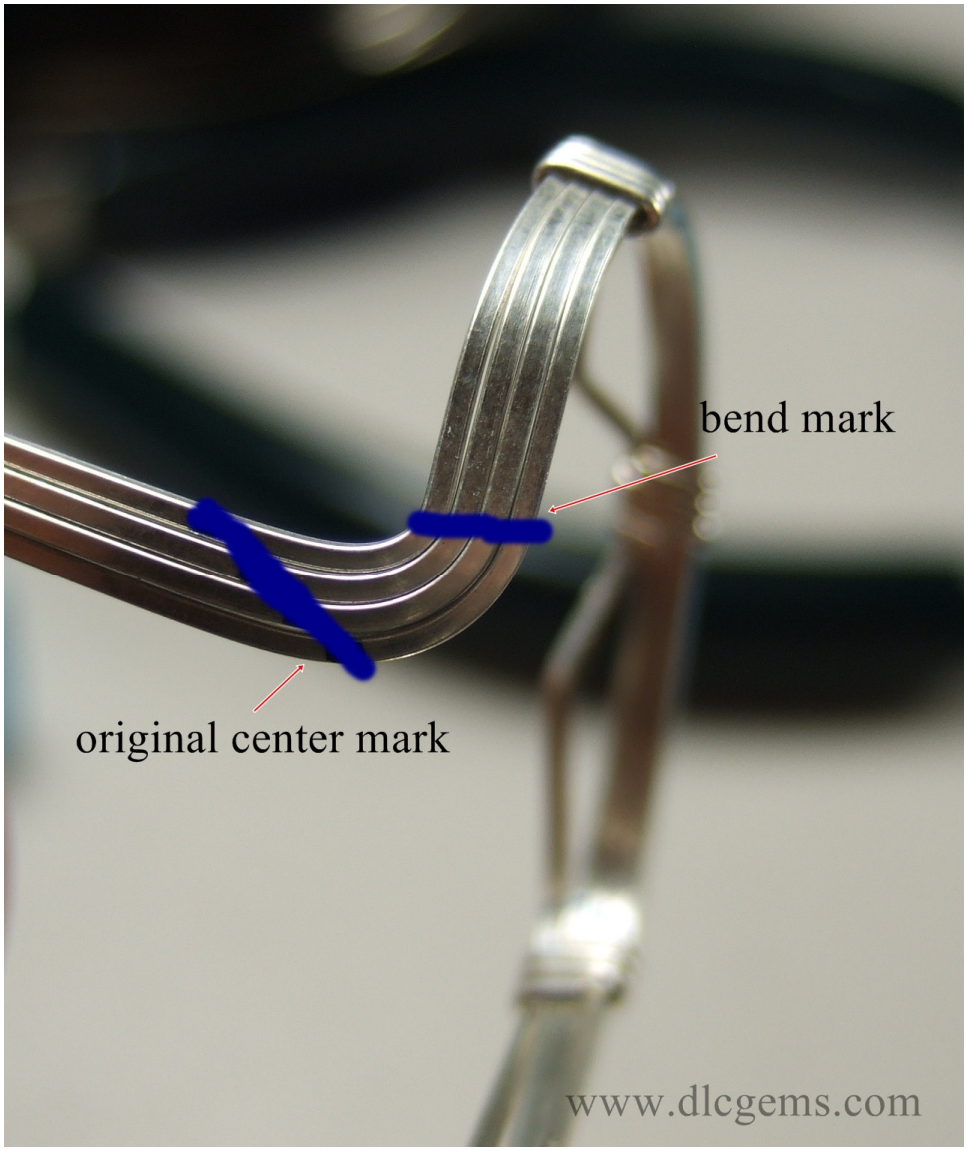
4. Align your center binding with the center of the cab and begin shaping the wire around the cab. Move the left and right bindings as necessary to get them centered on either end of the cab. Set the left and right bindings when you have the alignment correct.



5. Wrap one leg of wire all the way around the cab and then transfer the center mark on your cab to the leg of your wire bundle.

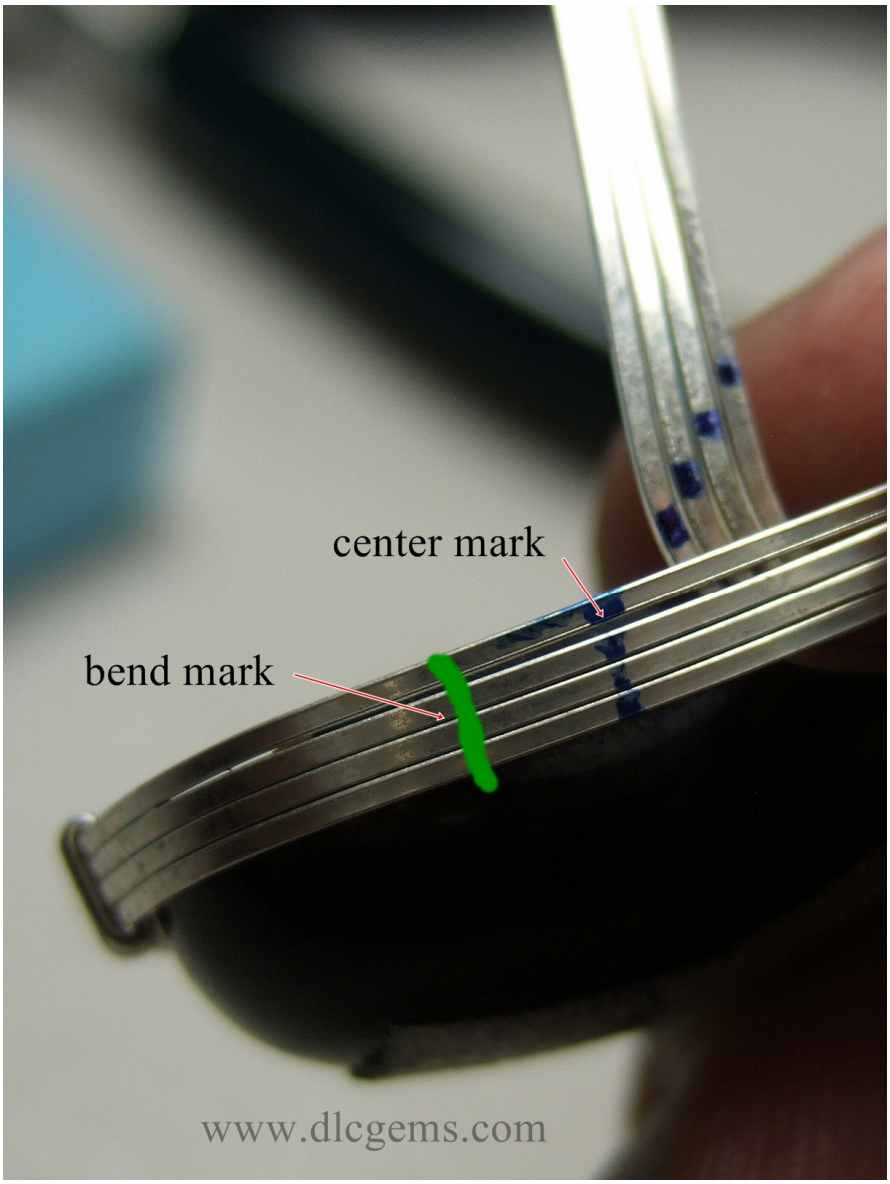
6. Before we form the first arm of the ring shank, take a moment to bend the back wires for the cab setting. Just bend the back wires around the center bundle for now.

7. Now we can form the first arm of the ring shank. Take the mark that you had made in **Step 5** and then subtract the thickness of the wire bundle from that mark. You may wish to mark this spot on your wire. This is where we're actually going to start the bend. I subtract the thickness of the wire from the center mark on the "leg" because the bend we are going to create is going to fill in that space. If we don't subtract the thickness from the center mark, our "arm" will stick out too far and we'll miss the center of the cab. This is the most important step in making this ring, and is my biggest deviation from the basic Macintosh design.



8. Repeat the process for the other arm of the ring shank.
    - Bring the wire around the cab, mark the center line on the wire.
    - Subtract the width of the wire from the center mark and make your bend mark.
    - Bend the wire to form the arm.

The two arms should line up in the center of the cab. If they don't line up exactly, it is better to be a little too short than a little too big. If you need to, take some time to "tweak" the bends on both arms until your setting is tight against the stone and centered.

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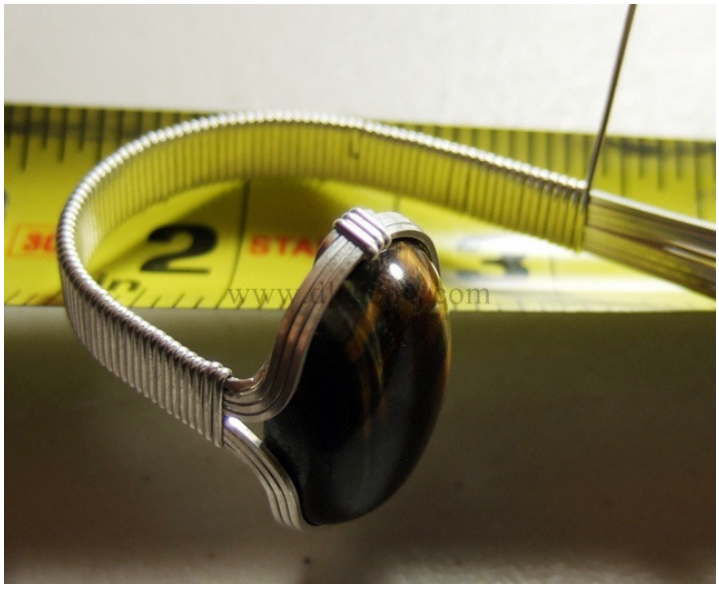
9. With the frame basically formed, we can begin wrapping the shank of the ring. I like to get this started prior to adding the stone so that I can get the two arms bound tightly together and then bend the back wires to lock the stone in place.

    - For wrapping the shank of the ring, you will want to cut a piece of half round wire 3-4 Feet in length.

    - Start the binding for the ring shank, set the first 6 wraps, add the stone, and bend back the bottom wires to complete the back of the setting and secure the stone.

    - **At this point, you may need to bend top wires over the top of the stone to secure the setting. Use a thin blade or your finger nail to pull the outermost wire over the edge of the stone. There should be enough play in the wire to bring the wires up over the edge of the cab and lock it in place.** I don't have to do this with my stone because of how I cut it.

10. Finish wrapping the shank to your desired length. I have found that 2 ¾" plenty for sizes 6-10 and 3" long for larger sized rings size 10+. I've wrapped this one to 3". Put the tag end of the binding wire on the outside of the ring shank (note picture is showing on the inside of the shank…oops)



11. Trim the leftover wires of the ring shank to about ¼" and bend over the cut ends to the **outside** of the ring shank, over the trimmed tag end of the binding wire. Thanks to Frogandbearcreations @ RTH for this tip!

12. Shape the ring shank over a ring mandrel and tuck the open end under the cab.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13. Clean and polish the completed wrap. I always buff my finished wraps with a soft bristle wheel charged with zam on my flexshaft rotary tool. This helps take the silver to a high luster and soften or remove any minor tool marks left on the wire. I should note that I only do this with sterling silver or argentium silver wire; you run the risk of ruining the outer coating on plated wires and gold fill.

14. Finished!


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