
Five-Strand Braid Crafts with Anne Weil

Chapter 1 - 5-Strand Braid Crafts

Overview

(upbeat music) - I'm Anne Weil. I'm a maker and designer. I blog at flaxandtwine.com where you'll find all kinds of crafty DIY's and I also am author of the book *Knitting Without Needles*. Do you guys remember making friendship bracelets when you were younger? I do, it was one of my favorite past times. In fact, I made a lot of friendship bracelets. This is gonna be the adult version. I'm gonna teach you how to make a five-strand braid and we're gonna create three fabulous projects. First, I'm gonna show you how to make a five strand embroidery thread and leather bracelet. Next, I'm gonna show you how to make a twine belt. And lastly, I'm gonna show you how to make a seven strand braided key fob. They're all really cool and I think you're gonna love them. (upbeat music)

Materials

- To make the bracelet, you're going to need five colors of embroidery thread. I'm using Valdani thread in a size 12, and I'm gonna use multiple strands of that. You can also a DMC floss, size five, that you find at your craft store as well. You need coordinating thread. We're gonna use a leather half inch leather strap as backing for the bracelet, and then we need some jewelry fittings. So you need ribbon clamps, half inch, and then you also need a clasp, like a lobster clasp, and then some jump rings and jewelry pliers. For the belt, you're going to need about nine yards of two millimeter cotton twine and about nine yards of two millimeter hemp twine, coordinating thread, and a half inch belt buckle. And you can find these belt buckles at your local craft store or at your local sewing store. For the leather key fob, you're gonna need about three and a half yards of 3/32 leather cording, coordinating thread, and then you're gonna want a little bit of hardware. I'm using a gold keyring and a gold swivel hook. To make all the projects, you're gonna need a clipboard or something to hold your braid down. You're gonna need a measuring tape, scissors, and a sewing machine.

5-strand friendship bracelet

- I've got size twelve Valdani thread here, and I need you to bulk that up a little bit, so I have seven strands for each color. You would use a different number of strands for each color, depending on the size embroidery thread you use. For example, if you use a size five DMC thread, you would probably only want about four strands of that. So, and you can play with it, it all depends on how thick you want your braid. So we've got our five colors here, and I like to lay them out in a nice graded color range. And I'm gonna pick 'em up in order, over my hand. I'm just gonna pick 'em up like this. It's pretty basic. You're gonna start with a knot at the top. So I've got my five colors. They don't stay perfectly in order, but it helps separate them out a little bit, when you've got this knot. So you just do an overhand knot, really simple. Trying to keep them kind of lined up a little bit. And then you're just gonna tighten up that overhand knot. Just like that. And you can have a couple of inches up here. And then you're ready to roll. We're gonna grab our clipboard. You can use a lot of different things to hold it down, I'm sure you all had your favorite method from when you were little, you can hold down the braid with a clipboard, you can use packing tape and just tape it to your knee, you can pin it to something in front of you, to a tablecloth, something like that. So just use whatever feels comfortable. But it does help to hold the top of that braid down, to give yourself

some tension. It makes your braid smoother and look nicer. You wanna put that knot underneath the clipboard, and it does need to be a tight clipboard. You know, one that really is snug. And then you wanna separate out your colors, into strands. Just like that. Your braid will always separate out into a side with three and a side with two. And the way you do this, is you take the outside most strand, with the side that has three, and you bring it over the first one, and under the next one. And you bring it over to the left. And now you can see my left side has three. And you're gonna take the outside most strand there, and you're gonna bring it over the first one, and under the second one. You can see that our right side has the three strands, we're gonna bring the outside most strand, over the first one and under the next one, and bring it over to the left. And you can start to pull these apart here, up top, that's how your braid gets started. We've got three to the left. We're gonna go over and under and back to the middle. And you can kind of like pull them wide. You don't want to pull this too tight, you wanna leave that tension kind of nice and loose, so it forms really pretty braids. If you do it too tight, you won't be able to see that pretty braid. So I went over and under, right over to the left, go over and under, right over to the right. See how it's starting to come together there, and do it again. So if you wanna hold it in your hand, I find it really hard to do that from a flat position, I like to prop up the board a little, or this is where, a lot of times, I just tape it onto my jean leg, and hold my leg at an angle, and I like doing that. But here we are, if I've got this underneath, it props it up at enough of an angle that I have more of a hold on it. Now when I do this, and I've got my two strands on the left, I hold them in my hand here, one more in my palm and one in between some fingers, and then on my right, I've got the same thing. I've got kind of all three strands over here, and if you've braided hair before, you know you kind of can pull that middle strand out, and at the same time you're pulling that outside strand over. So you can see when I do this, I grasp it with my forefinger and my middle finger, and I have the outside strand with my thumb and my forefinger, and I bring it over and under, and I grab this outside strand with my left forefinger and thumb, and bring it over. Straighten that out. Cause now we're gonna go to the left side, and we're gonna do the same thing. We now have three on the left, and we're going to bring the left outside strand over and under, and now we've got three on the right again, and you bring that, you separate those two where we're gonna go over and under, with my fingers, and bring that outside strand through, and I use my left hand to grab it across to bring it over to the left hand side. And you kinda gently tighten it, you wanna make sure it stays flat. I'm gonna show, if I tighten it up, it gets all wonky like that. That's what I don't want. I want a nice relaxed, and you can just do this as you go. Kind of squeeze it down flat, make sure its flat. So you've got these three strands on the left again, we're gonna go over and under, I'm gonna grab that outside strand with my right, and bring it across, I'm gonna do that same thing here, on the right. Don't get too hung up on exactly which fingers where, and what you're grabbing with what, because you'll really develop your own rhythm, and hand motions to do this, just keep in mind, when you have three on the right, you go over under, and you have three on the left, and you go over under with that outside strand. And you'll be getting it in no time. When it gets long, away from the clipping point, you may want to scoot it up so that you maintain that even tension, you know, I like working with it so that it's got that hold to it. Alright, I think we're coming to the end here, where we've got enough length, to check and see if it will fit our wrist. We've got that all tucked in there, and you can see as you bring it around your wrist, that's enough, and like I said, I like to have a couple extra inches, to cut off the kinda odd tension at the top, and at the end. Instead of finishing with a knot, you can see here how that knot brings the ends together, and makes this bunch up, I like where it starts nice and flat here, so I'm gonna sew, I'm gonna skip this part here that's bunching up, and I'm gonna sew a zig-zag stitch

right across here where the braid starts getting nice. You want a really tight zig-zag, one that's gonna bind off those stitches, so I like to do my zig-zag at a 2 and a .4. So we're gonna bring this braid right in here, we're gonna put our presser foot down, and we're gonna go across the braid, I'm getting this really lined up, so that it doesn't widen out the braid. You wanna keep your braid tight, and we're gonna go across it and then back, so we're gonna go forward in that tight zig-zag, and then we're gonna backstitch back across it, and then go forward again. Now that I have my braid nice and flat and secure, I'm gonna attach it to my leather piece. So you can see our initial zig-zag here, I'm not gonna use that line to attach it to the leather, cause it'd be a lot for the needle to go through, but I'm gonna go right next to it. And this initial zig zag is really just holding that braid flat, and in place for us to attach the rest of it to the leather. I'm gonna go ahead and stick it in here. I'm gonna bring down that foot, and we're gonna sew through that with that tight zig-zag. And you wanna really make sure your braid is lined up and flat. We're gonna zig-zag across it, Okay, and then you wanna backstitch back across that line. Now keep in mind you're working with leather here, you're not working with fabric, you've got leather, you've got embroidery strands, you've got things moving around, so it may not look perfect, but the fact is, it's gonna be in that ribbon clamp, you're not really gonna see that end. So the main point is to just secure it, and keep it flat against the leather. So here you can see my zig-zag line, and we've attached it to the leather strapping right in the center. And what you wanna do is, you're gonna cut right along that edge, along that zig-zag stitch. So right here, we're gonna cut, and that zig-zag stitch, most of it's gonna be hidden in that ribbon clamp, when we're done. But right now it's secure to the leather. So now we're gonna get to the measuring component of this, and what you wanna do is bring it on your wrist, you don't want those ends to meet exactly, because when you finish off the clasp, you can see on this one, you add a lot of space to that. Do you see how the braid is loose on top? And you're gonna want that taught against the leather, on your wrist. So what I like to do is, you're gonna sew here on the leather, but just bring that braid down a couple millimeters, so that you've got that tightness, so that when it's on your wrist, it's gonna be really snug to the leather. You've got your mark, and you wanna just bring it in here. We're gonna zig-zag through this. So you wanna zig-zag right across that braid and the leather, and then reverse back across, and go across again, and reverse again. That's it. Yay you guys! Look how pretty it looks. I'm so excited. I love how this looks against the leather. Here we have our final attachment point here, and we're gonna trim these threads, and then we're just gonna go ahead and trim the leather and the braid, right here, up against the zig-zag stitch. And now all we need to do is add our fittings. People get freaked out about jewelry fittings, but they're super easy to use, and they really elevate a piece to another level. These are called ribbon clamps. And what you do is you just slide in that end piece, and we're gonna clamp that down, with a jewelry plier. So you take your jewelry plier, squeeze it down, it's just what it says, it's just a clamp that gets down on top of that leather, and braid, squeeze that down and that holds in. If you want you can add a layer of glue if you're really nervous, but it's really more just about the strength of that clamping, You get down there. Then you turn over to your other end, and this is where, like if this got wonky, or if your stitches aren't perfect, most of it's gonna be hidden, you can see, all of that gets hidden in that ribbon clamp. Squeeze down on that. Tuck this braid in a little bit. Just like that. And this looks so nice! Okay so now you've got those two ends on there, the next part is adding jump rings, to take it from the ribbon clamp to the clasp. So these are your jump rings, and on fine jewelry, what happens is they solder these jump rings down. In jewelry that we're just making for fun, we don't solder them, see they just nicely come apart. Slip that ending on, and you just squeeze that jump ring together, just like that. Squeeze it in line, and you can squeeze it together a little bit

this way. You want those ends to be touching. So on your other side, you wanna take the clasps you have, and attach that to your jump ring. Slide that jump ring in with your pliers, and you wanna bring your jump ring through the clasp, and you're gonna do the same thing we did on the other side. You're gonna squeeze that jump ring together. Just like that. And then bring it together. Squeeze this way And that is all. It is super super easy. And you have this awesome, beautiful braided bracelet. And I wanna show you, a couple of the other ways that I describe finishing it. So you can see, with some other materials too. So let's take a look. We've got this simple one here. That's just the braid with a sewn edge, and the hook and eye. You can step it up one level, and add the ribbon clasps at the end of that simple ribbon. Or simple braid. You've got here, the version that we did in class, that's on top of the leather. Or you can switch up materials, and do something different. Here we just have leather strand, and the twine. We're gonna use both these materials later in class, but you can see they make fabulous bracelets as well.

5-strand twine belt

- I'm so excited to show you guys how to make the belt. This is one of my favorite projects. I love to use natural fibers like this hemp twine. The hemp is a little stiff when you're braiding it, so I like to use the cotton twine. It fills in some of the holes and it adds a little textural interest and it softens the whole piece all together. It makes a really nice piece. What you want to do for the belt, is we're gonna measure our waist. Here you've got to measure where you're gonna wear it. So if you want to wear it on your jeans, measure where your jeans hit. I'm gonna measure this one at my natural waist to put on top of shirts or dresses that I like. My waist is 36 inches, so I need one and a half times that length in twine, so I cut my twine pieces to be 54 inches. You want to cut five of each one. You can see here, I have five of the cotton and five of the hemp. We're gonna knot them up and when I do that I like to put them side by side in the order they're gonna be. It doesn't come out perfectly when you knot it, but it's more likely to be closer to how you want it laid out in your braid if you do it in advance. Here they are. All in order, hemp, cotton, hemp, cotton. All the way across and you're gonna wrap this around your finger and just bring the end through. It's just a regular over hand knot. You just pull that tight. We're gonna go ahead and secure this. I'm gonna use a clipboard, you can use whatever format you like the best, tape or pen or whatever you want to do. What you want to do is you want to arrange your threads back in that order that we talked about. So you've got cotton, hemp, cotton, hemp. I like to keep them in the same order. It keeps it very neat looking. Now this is a little bit trickier because all of the strands are the same, you're not gonna be seeing that different color per strand. They all look the same. Which is doable because it's just the same pattern, over and over again. So I'm just gonna remind you how I did that. We're gonna split the braid strands into three on this side and two on this side. If you remember that outside strand goes over, under. This is a little bit harder to deal with 'cause of the length, but you'll get it and then this one goes to the left and you go over, under, and pull that through. Now I've got the three on the right, go over, under. Now, I find it easiest when I'm working with these two kind of loosey goosey strands to really do it while I'm holding it. When you hold it in your hands like this, you've got more control over the strands. So I like to just move that outside one over and under, outside one over and under. I like to make sure that my cotton always stays to the right of that hemp and that just keeps that consistent thing so the cotton is always on the same side all the way across. Go over, under. That keeps it nice and flat as well. When you tighten this you can pull the three to the right and the two to the left on each side as you go, that helps make that braid tight and organized without being too loose when you do that. You see that nice? So I'm pulling that three to the left and the two to the

right, once I switch sides and I'm keeping that over, under pattern as I go. See here, you can see my twine popped on the other side of the cotton so I'm gonna pull that cotton through to organize those threads in the way I want. If you pull too tight it will start to curl up, so you want to just make sure it's staying flat. Continue braiding until you have enough length to go around your waist and I have my finished one here. It will look something like this. You just want to make sure that when you come around your waist, those ends meet. That's kind of where you want to measure it. We're gonna undo this knot. Flatten out this braid piece. I'm gonna sew right across there 'cause that's nice and flat and even with the rest of the length. If it's tight and weird up front, just go a little bit down to where it's nice and smooth. You're gonna put this under the foot. We're zigzagging this. You just want the zigzag close enough so that it's catching everything. Machines are different, this one is at a three zigzag and a one millimeter stitch length. I'm gonna go ahead and do this. Zigzag across and then we're gonna backstitch back across that zigzag and then forward, and then back. (machine whirring) All right, so you've got your zigzag stitch holding those strands and it doesn't need to be perfect, it's gonna be behind. It's a little bit harder stitching through all this rope and twine instead of fabric, but we're just gonna go ahead and trim right above those zigzag stitches. I'm gonna feed that sewn edge through the hardware and bring it down about three quarters of an inch. Just like that. It's about an inch. We're gonna bring it over to the machine and we're gonna secure this hardware on there with a straight stitch. Bring your hardware just outside the foot and bring it down. (machine whirring) I'm gonna go nice and slowly here so I don't go past the length, then we're gonna backstitch back across it. And we're gonna go one more time. Then we're gonna backstitch across it just like that. Okay, so now you've got your hardware attached. We're gonna clean this end up a little bit. We're gonna trim off the threads here and I like to trim this end a little bit back here. You have one end of your belt all fixed and looking nice. Now we're gonna take the other piece of hardware and we're gonna feed the other end of the braid through that hardware. Now you want to make sure, go ahead and check, make sure that your belt is totally flat all the way around 'cause you don't want to put it on twisted. Then that's no fun. Bring your braid through all these ends. Then, what you want to do is put it on your waist one more time, get that fit just right and then we're gonna go ahead and sew that straight line just like we did on the other side and then trim the ends off when you're done. I have my finished belt here and I'm thrilled. I love the look of these natural fibers. It's gonna make a great belt! I hope you love yours, too.

7-strand leather key fob

^- The last thing we're gonna do ^is make this fabulous leather key fob. ^We're gonna do it in a seven stranded braid. ^Which, don't panic, it's not any harder ^than what you've already done. ^So you'll pick it up really fast ^because the technique is the same. ^So we've got our seven strands of leather lace. ^We're gonna go ahead and tie that into a knot. ^We wanna leave a little bit extra ^for the tassel part of the key fob. ^So that knot's going to be a little bit lower ^than maybe you might otherwise put it. ^I like to have at least three inches. ^I'm gonna secure the top in my clipboard here ^and I want you to pull the strands apart. ^Now this time, we've got seven strands. ^So the way to think about it is, ^you divide that number of strands in half ^so you've got three and a half. ^But what we want to do is put three ^of those strands on one side ^and four of the strands on the other. ^And like the five stranded braid, ^when we had three, we went over, under, over, under, ^and when we had two we were just in the holding pattern. ^The pattern is the same. ^The side with the four, ^we're gonna do over, under, over, under. ^And the side with the three is kind of the holding side. ^So I'm gonna show you here, ^starting on the right side ^we're gonna go over, under, over, ^and

now you see the four is over on the left side. ^So we're gonna go over, under, over. ^Now four is on the right side. ^We're gonna go over, under, over. ^We're gonna pull that up tight ^and again with the leather it's easier ^if we're doing ... we're holding it as well ^to keep that leather lace flat and nice and orderly. ^I showed it to you flat, ^so you can see the pattern again. ^But I find it really works best to hold it in your hands ^to get that tension for the over under ^and keep the leather lace flat ^and looking nice, but you'll find what works ^best for you and you just keep practicing. ^So here I am on my clip board, ^I have three in my right hand and four in my left ^and I'm gonna go over, under, over ^with that outside strand and you tighten it ^by pulling it apart, the two sides. ^And now I have my four in my right. ^Go over, under, over, ^pull it apart, ^and make sure those stands stay flat as you go. ^Over, under, over. ^I've worked up about six inches of braid ^and if you see here, I still have about three inches left ^to make my tassels. ^I just wanna show you something here, ^you can imagine if we we're doing instead ^of seven strands, we were doing nine strands, ^you would have four strands over here ^and five over here ^and you would just follow the same pattern: ^over, under, over, under, ^and then they would transfer to this side. ^Over, under, over, under on the way back. ^So once you know this, this is the seven, ^you can do nine, eleven, and so on. ^It just follows the same pattern. ^Okay we're gonna go ahead and put our key fob together. ^So you want to undo your knot here. ^Just like this, flatten those strands out a little bit. ^Now, you can choose what you want ^on your key fob. ^I love having this hook ^because I like to hook it onto my strap ^so I don't lose it in the bottom of my bag ^and obviously a key ring here for keys. ^But you could just do the ring ^if you wanted or just the hook ^for something fun and decorative. ^But you put both of them on, ^before we finish it here ^and then what you wanna do ^is fold your leather right in half ^just like this, match up your ends. ^Just like this. ^And we're gonna sew a little bit up from the bottom. ^So don't sew down here. ^Don't sew your line down here ^because it'll be splayed out a little bit more. ^You wanna go up about an inch. ^But just keep in mind, ^your machine may not be up for handling leather, ^you may need a leather needle. ^But there's some other options for closing, ^you could glue both of the sides of leather closed, ^you could wrap it in twine or some fluorescent thread, ^or embroidery thread, that would be really neat too. ^To really secure that, you wanna sew it ^back and forth across that about three times ^and do a couple lines of that. ^So the final step is to trim this fringe ^as long or short as you want it. ^Sometimes you can do it an uneven length too, ^but I think that looks pretty good. ^This is about four inches and it looks so nice! ^I'm so excited, I hope you love it. ^We're all done with our three braiding projects today, ^but you can see that the possibilities are endless ^for what you can create with these. ^You can do bag straps, headbands, barrets, ^you could do anything you want, just add a braid to it. ^And I hope you really enjoy using your new technique.