

# JEWELRY PRIMERS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRIMER (AND NOT FORGETTING ANYTHING)

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## GUIDE

APPRÊTS BIJOUX : LE  
GUIDE DU DÉBUTANT  
POUR BIEN CHOISIR



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You've got your beads, your thread, your ideas... but just as you're about to finish the bracelet, you realize that something is missing. A clasp? An end piece? A ring of the right size? It's time to discover the world of jewelry primers. Those little pieces that make all the difference between a creation that holds together and one that frays on first wear.

This guide is for you if you're just starting out and don't know where to begin. We go through the 8 main primer families, explain how to choose, and offer you a simple starter kit to create serenely from day one.

## What is a jewelry primer?

A primer (or "finishing" in English) is a non-decorative component used to assemble, finish or wear a piece of jewelry. Jewelry primers are divided into broad families according to their function: closure, bonding, finishing, support. To avoid getting stuck in the middle of a project, it's best to know them before you start. Here are the 8 families of jewelry primers you need to know:

### 1. Clasps: for opening and closing

The clasp is the part that allows the jewel to be put on and taken off. It is used on bracelets and necklaces.

The most common types:

- Snap hook: quick to use, sturdy, ideal for everyday necklaces and bracelets. Opens with a simple push. The most versatile clasp for beginners.
- Toggle (or T-clasp): aesthetic and fashionable, consisting of a bar and a ring. Perfect for thick bracelets or statement necklaces, but less practical for smaller sizes.
- Spring clasp (or spring ring): small and lightweight, common on bead necklaces. Sometimes less robust than the lobster clasp.

¶ For a detailed comparison, check out our dedicated guide: [Which jewelry clasp to choose?](#)



### 2. Rings: for connecting everything

The junction ring is the most widely used primer in DIY jewelry. It's used to link elements together: connecting a clasp to a wire, attaching a charm to a chain, assembling links.

How to choose the right ring size?

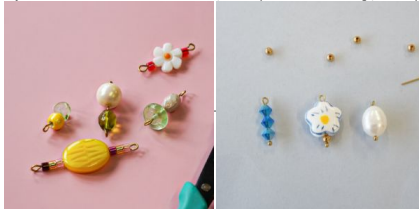
- The inside diameter must be adapted to the thickness of the wire or chain running through it.
- For standard use (necklace, bracelet), a 4 to 6 mm ring is appropriate in most cases.
- For heavy charms or thick chains, 8 mm or more is preferable.
- The thickness of the ring's wire also counts: the thicker it is, the greater its tensile strength.

There are also double rings, which are stronger, and oval rings, which are useful when space is limited.

### 3. Rods: for mounting pendants

Rods (or "headpins" and "eyepins") are simple, rigid wires with a particular end.

One end is flat, round or ball-shaped, a bead is threaded through, and a loop is formed at the other end to create a pendant. They can be used to transform a bead into charms, or to suspend elements in earrings, for example.



### 4. Settings: to set off cabochons and stones

A setting is a metal support designed to receive and frame a cabochon. They are available in square, round, oval or teardrop-shaped settings... The cabochon is simply glued to the setting or attached to it (in claw settings, for example). It's the ideal primer for creating personalized rings, earrings or pendants. Stainless steel settings are particularly recommended for sensitive skin: resistant and hypoallergenic, they keep their shine over time.

### 5. Bélières: to create a pendant

A bélière (or pendant fastener) is a small metal piece that attaches directly to a pendant: a stone, a crystal, a cabochon, to enable it to be slipped onto a chain or cord.



### 6. Crimp beads: for blocking and securing

Crimp beads are small metal beads that are placed on the thread, then crushed with pliers to secure it permanently. They're a must-have on wired assemblies, and allow you to secure a clasp neatly without visible knots. Crimp beads are used on top to hide the crushed bead and give a neat, rounded finish. It's a small detail that really makes a difference.

### 7. End caps: finish a cord in style

Working with leather cord, waxed cotton, suede or paracord? The cord end is the primer you need. It can be placed at either end of the cord, closed with pliers, or slipped on with a glue dot and used to attach a clasp directly. The result: a clean, professional finish with no visible knots. The key point to remember: the size of the end cap must correspond precisely to the diameter of your cord (0.8 mm, 1 mm, 1.5 mm, 2 mm...). A tip that's too large will slip, and one that's too small won't fit.

¶ To find out which end fits which cord, consult our [guide](#).



### 8. Customize basics: to create without starting from scratch

Bracelets, necklaces, earrings: ready-to-decorate bases are a valuable shortcut for beginners. The structure is already there, all you need to do is add your beads, pendants or charms.

- Bracelet bases: rigid band, flat cuff, perforated support...
- Necklace bases: fine chain choker, adjustable choker...
- Earring bases: stem hook, clip with tray or cup...
- Ring bases: for cabochons, to personalize with charms or to wear as is.

Ideal for testing compositions without worrying about technical assembly.

### Which metal for your primers? Quick guide

The metal of your primers has an impact on durability, price and skin tolerance.

Use	Metal
Permanently worn jewelry	Stainless steel, 925 Sterling Silver
Contact with water (pool, sea)	Stainless steel
Sensitive skin / nickel allergy	Stainless steel, Gold Filled
Tight budget for beginners	Gold-plated brass, silver-plated metal
High-end jewelry	925 Sterling Silver, Gold Filled

For full details on metals (composition, durability, care), see our complete guide: [Choosing the right materials for long-lasting DIY jewelry](#)

### 4 classic mistakes when choosing primers

Avoid these common faux pas:

1. Buying the wrong rings. A 3 mm ring will be too small on a thick chain. A wire too thick for the charm hole and assembly is impossible.
2. Choosing a clasp that's too small for a wide bracelet. It won't be easy to open and you'll soon regret it.
3. Choose Crimp beads in which the wire passes only once. If your wire is 0.6 mm long and the diameter of the bead to be crushed is 1 mm, you might think "Perfect, that'll fit! Don't forget that the wire passes twice through the bead to be crushed. For a 0.6 mm wire, choose a bead with a 1.2 or even 1.3 mm hole.
4. Mixing metals. A brass ring on a stainless steel chain can be quite noticeable, especially over time. Why is this? Because the two metals don't age in the same way. It's a shame for your jewelry!
5. Buying shanks that are too short. To mount a large bead, you need length. A 3 cm stem doesn't leave enough wire to form a beautiful loop.

Would you rather avoid all these questions? If you're just starting out, the simplest solution is to opt for a ready-made jewelry kit. Everything is already selected and matched: beads, wires, clasps, rings - all that's left to do is create.

Check out our [DIY jewelry kits](#): they're ideal for making your first pieces of jewelry without any headaches, and often come with a step-by-step tutorial.

Result



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