

Bead Octopus

They make great pets.

Bead octopuses (octopii?) are cute and quiet pets that can decorate your desktop or the top of a pencil or pen. They don't eat and they don't make a mess on the carpet (except when the string breaks). They are made with standard seed beads. You can use string or wire to make them; the string octopus has floppy legs and wire octopus can be posed. You will need:

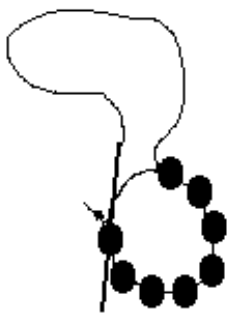
- beading needle
- approximately 45 inches of string or wire
- seed beads of two contrasting colors, one for body and one for eyes and feet

Hint: It is best to start with "skinnier" beads, and then move to fatter beads in the fifth row.

The Body

Tie a knot in one end of the string. The knot will remain visible so that you always know where your starting point is. You can trim it off when you are finished.

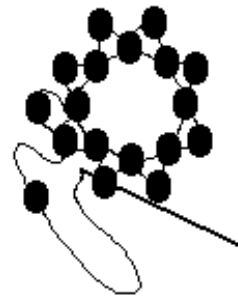
Start with eight beads of the first (body) color. Loop the thread through all the beads, but do not pull it tight (yet). Pass the string through the first bead in the loop, then begin. Pick up a bead, and pass the string through the next bead in the loop. Repeat for the whole row. Count the beads at the end of the second row to be sure you have eight beads "sticking out." If the beads are too loose, take time now to tighten them. If the beads are so tight that row two does not fit comfortably between the beads of row one, then loosen the beads. Start row three in the first bead of row two. You can tell when you have finished a row by checking where the knot at the top is.



First Row



Second Row

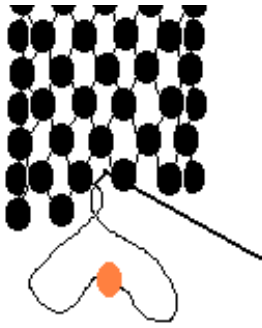


Third Row

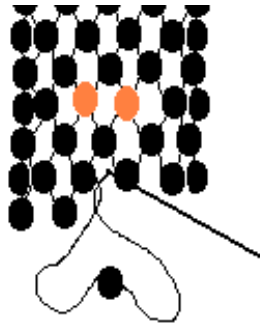
The Eyes

Continue row three, pulling the string taut between each bead. Pattern will start to "bend" in the fourth row into a vertical column. Continue to the tenth or eleventh row

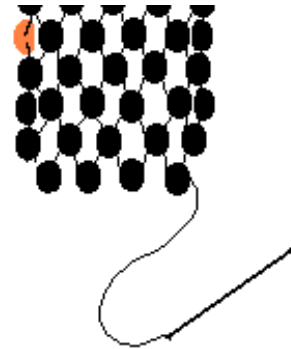
(number of rows will be dependant on bead sizes). Stop when you get half way through the tenth or eleventh row and switch to the second bead color for two consecutive beads to make eyes. Then continue with the first bead color until it "feels finished" (approximately fourteen rows); the last row begins the legs. If you feel the octopus will be too tall, you can shed a row; if it's too short, you can add a row.



First Eye



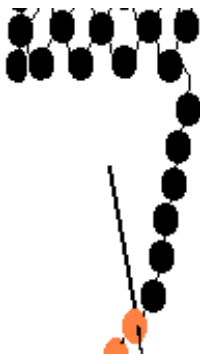
Last Row



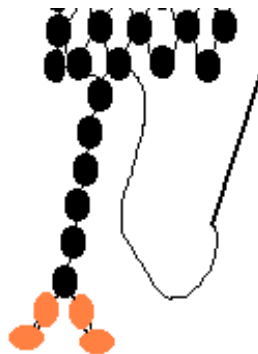
Ready to start legs

The Legs

String eight beads, six beads of the first color and two beads of the second color. Pass the thread back through the seventh bead to create the first toe. String two more beads of the second color. Pass the bead back through the entire leg, creating a second toe on the foot. Pass thread through the next bead in the last row of body, then go on to a second leg. Continue till you have made eight legs.



First Toe



Second Toe



Eighth Toe
Finish: cut off string

Finish

Finish by passing the string back through many body beads in the rows. Pass the string through a leg and cut off it at the bottom (but watch you don't cut off the foot!).