

# Troubleshooting

It takes practice to master bead weaving, and trial-and-error is an important part of the learning process. When mistakes occur, do not be discouraged; your skills become stronger every step of the way. When you experience a problem, check the following table for possible causes and solutions. If you need more help, consider posting your questions online through one of the Web sites listed under “Information, Patterns, and Projects”.

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Possible Cause</b>	<b>Solution</b>
The beadwork is too flexible, or appears to contain “holes.”	One or more areas of loose thread tension.	Using a new thread or an existing tail, weave into the beadwork in the loose areas, following the path of existing thread. Pull the thread taut, and occasionally make half-hitch knots to secure the tension. Then, weave-in to end the thread as usual. To avoid loose tension, gently tug on the thread after each stitch.
The beadwork curls or puckers in undesirable ways.	One or more areas of overly tight thread tension.	Rip (pull the thread and remove the beads) until all areas of overly tight tension are removed. Resume beading, making an effort not to pull the thread tight as you stitch.
After ripping, the working thread is not long enough to continue using or to weave-in.	While ripping to correct a mistake, the thread broke, or you needed to cut the thread in order to remove beads.	Rip the beadwork some more, until the working thread is long enough to weave-in and end. Then, begin a new thread and resume stitching.
The thread becomes tangled and knotted.	The thread twisted and doubled over itself, creating a knot.	First, try using a beading awl to gently undo the knot. If that fails, or if it damages the thread, cut the thread just below the knot. Then, either continue stitching with the now-shorter thread, or begin a new thread. To avoid tangling, use thread conditioner on nylon thread (reapplying as necessary), and pull the thread through beads very slowly, especially when you use very long lengths of thread.
A bead looks crooked and/or thread is wrapped incorrectly across the top or side of the bead.	The thread has split; that is, the needle passed through the fibers in the thread.	Rip to remove the bead affected by the split, reapply thread conditioner (with nylon thread), and resume stitching.
A loop of thread protrudes from the beadwork, or thread crosses one or more beads incorrectly.	This can occur if the thread accidentally caught on those beads while you completed a stitch.	First, gently pull the needle-end of the thread in an attempt to close the protruding loop of thread in the beadwork. (If the thread crosses over a bead, you may need to use a beading awl to carefully lift it up over that bead.) If that fails, rip to just past the loop or crossed thread, and resume stitching from there.

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Possible Cause</b>	<b>Solution</b>
The needle becomes stuck in a bead.	The bead hole is too small, or too full of existing thread, for the needle to pass through.	First, try switching to a smaller needle. If that fails, rip the beadwork to remove the problem bead. If the needle becomes stuck again, consider starting over with a smaller size thread, or with beads that have larger holes.
A bead within the beadwork breaks.	A bead may break when you try to force a needle through its hole, or you may have dropped or accidentally crushed the beadwork.	If you have not completed the project, rip to the location of the missing bead, and resume stitching from there. If a completed project is damaged, try hiding the damage by weaving-in with a new thread, stitching-in a replacement bead, and then weaving-in to end the repair thread.
A completed project looks stretched, leaving areas of thread visible and elongating the design.	The nylon beading thread has stretched. This can happen naturally over time, but exposure to water makes it much worse.	Try tightening-up the beadwork by weaving through it with a new thread, following the path of existing thread. If that fails, you need to start over. In the future, pre-stretch and condition nylon thread as well as you can (see Chapter 2); practice stitching with even, taut thread tension; and protect beadwork from moisture.
The bead colors do not match the pattern in the first few rows or rounds of beadwork, even though you picked up beads in the correct order. This can occur especially with flat and tubular peyote stitch, and can even cause a stripe of color to “disappear” in a striped tubular design.	Beads in the first and second row or round “flipped”; that is one or more beads that should have remained in the first row or round were mistakenly stitched into the second row or round. (Note that in the case of herringbone without-a-base row, you may not have picked up beads in the correct order; see page 150 in Chapter 8 of the book.)	Rip the beadwork, or cut it from the thread, and start over. Stitch the first few rows or rounds slowly and carefully, using your thumb to properly position each bead so that it aligns according to the pattern.
Peyote stitch rows do not come together properly for zipping-up.	The beadwork has an odd number of rows, and you need an even number of rows to successfully zip-up the peyote stitch.	Either stitch one more row, or rip the last row on one end of the beadwork.