

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A glossary of common types of findings and chain

Want to know the difference between a fishhook clasp and a fishhook? An illusion setting and an invisible setting? How about a filigree chain and a foxtail chain?

If so, you're in the right place. Below and on the following pages you'll find definitions and descriptions of a wide range of chain and component parts. The next time you contact your supplier, make sure you have this guide ready, so you can speak the same language, and your order for 200 14k fishhook clasps doesn't become a shipment of 200 14k French wires—a.k.a., "fishhooks."

The Findings File

Editor's Note: MJSA thanks Elizabeth Brehmer of Stuller Inc. in Lafayette, Louisiana, for serving as technical editor of "The Findings File."



marine link chain with toggle clasp



bail

Airplane Back: See "Link Connector."

Baguette Setting: A low setting designed to hold a baguette-cut stone, straight or tapered. Ends of the setting terminate with either a bar or prongs.

Bail: An oval-, teardrop-, or D-shaped metal component used to connect pendants to a chain. It is meant to slide onto the chain rather than to be soldered to it.

Bar Pin: See "Pin Back."

Barrel Nut: A barrel-shaped clutch

with a rubber-type insert that grips a pin; generally used for stickpins or earrings.

Basket Setting: An open-sided setting in which the lower portion of a stone is visible.

Bead: (1) A hollow metal form that is swaged from spinning seamless tubing or flat stock, then separated and rolled into its final shape. It generally has two holes. (2) Any small or rounded component, made from a variety of materials, with a hole through it; to be strung singly or with others in a sequence.

Bead Clasp: Typically, a clasp mechanism that is hidden in a bead or pearl. Also, a round or patterned clasp used as a closure for pearl or bead strands.

Bead Tip: A concave metal piece, attached to a metal loop, used to attach a thread to a clasp. A knot sits inside the concave piece, and the curved loop hooks to the clasp.

Belcher Setting: A ring mounting in which the claws for the setting are formed from the shank of the ring.

Bezel: Generally, a type of solid-wall setting into which a continuous seat has been cut to hold a faceted or cabochon stone. The metal above the groove is burnished over the edge of the stone to secure it.

Bezel Cup: A type of setting designed to hold flat-backed cabochon stones, in which the top of the setting is burnished over the stone to secure it in place. Gener-

ally available in plain edge, serrated edge, or rolled edge styles. Rolled edge styles require the stone to be glued in place.

Bezel Wire: See “Gallery.”

Box Catch: A catch used for flat chains and bracelets. Formed from flat sheet stock into a box shape, with a snap-plate front to accommodate a separate tongue. May be a fully shaped box or an open-top box, depending upon the application.

Box Setting: A square or rectangular walled setting, grooved inside and generally used for mounting a stone on a ring or pendant. The top edges of the groove are swaged over to secure the stone.

Breloque: A small item, such as a charm, designed to be suspended from a chain.

Brooch: Any piece of jewelry that may be pinned to clothing.

Brooch Back: A complete brooch pin, hinge, and backing to which an element can be attached. No mechanical assembly required.

Brooch Pin: A length of hardened wire with one flat end containing a hole and the other end sharpened to a point.

Bullet Clutch: A barrel-shaped clutch with a rubber or mechanical insert that grips a friction earring post.

Bunch Rings: Inexpensive rings with small center mountings for inexpensive stones. Generally sold in bunches intended to be worn together. Also known as stack rings or stackable rings.

Buttercup Setting: Typically used for pendants and earrings, this deep, six-prong setting is shaped vaguely like the buttercup flower. The prongs are distinctly flared at the base, which has a scalloped outline when viewed from the top. Available in closed-back or open-back form. Also called a scallop setting.

Butterfly Clutch: A clutch with two curved wings and an internal tension mechanism that grip a grooved or notched post. Also called a grip fastener or a military grip. See also “Ear Nut.”

Button Hook: A flat, stamped, round covering for a shirt button. It slips over the button and is attached to a chain using a jump ring.

Catch: In brooches, a piece of hardware designed to accept and lock a top wire or a pin-stem; see also “Joint, Catch, and Pin-Stem.” In necklaces and bracelets, it is the locking or closing mechanism; see also “Clasp.”

Cathedral Setting: Usually a very tall, slender setting. The name references the height of the setting.

Chain End: A flat, stamped, double-ended tapered shape bent into a U and soldered on each side to the end of a flat chain. A clasp hooks onto it. The chain end can carry the karat quality stamp of an item.

Chain Tag: A flat metal piece, usually a small square or rectangle, with a hole in each end. Its specific function is to carry the quality stamp or trademark of the manufacturer, and to provide an easily handled attachment point for spring rings. Also known as a quality tag or a plaque.

Channel Setting: A setting in which the stones are fitted into grooves in two parallel walls, as opposed to being held separately by prongs.

Channel Wire: Narrow flat stock that has been formed into a channel. Also known as bezel wire, eyeglass wire, and U-wire.

Charm: A miniature object designed to be attached to a chain bracelet. Charms can depict figures, sports, occupations, numbers, and letters, among the many representations available. Generally designed for bracelets, charms may also be used as pendants, or hung from brooches and watch chains.

Chaton: A foil-backed glass or man-made stone.

Clam Shell: See “Bead Tip.”

Clamp: A metal prong or claw on a gemstone setting. Also called a cramp.

Clasp: A fastening device, such as a

catch or hook, used to hold two or more objects or parts together, as with chains.

Claw: See “Prong.”

Click-in Lever Back: A specialized lever back mechanism. The lever snaps over a formed ear wire, capturing the ear and securing the mechanism with a clear “click” sound.

Clip: A two-part piece attached to the back of an earring. The two pieces close around the earlobe, using mechanical pressure to hold the earring in place.

Cluster Setting: A metal form, generally circular, for setting multiple stones close together.

Clutch: A device that uses tension or a mechanical methodology to grip a post and secure a piece of jewelry. See “Butterfly Clutch,” “Ear Nut.”

Clutch and Bar: A tie tack clutch with a small chain attached to a bar. The bar is designed to pass through a buttonhole to secure a necktie.

Clutch Back: See “Ear Nut.”

Collets: British term. See “Setting.”

Comfort Back: A small foam pad that slides over a clip back or Omega clip, cushioning the ear from the metal.

Comfort Disc: A plastic disc that fits over the post of a pierced earring for greater comfort.

Corrugated Bead: A hollow metal sphere, with two holes, made from corrugated tubing. Twist-corrugated beads have corrugations that spiral around the bead horizontally instead of vertically.

Crimp Bead: A very small piece of cut tubing used to finish off a strand of beads. The wire cord goes through the crimp, through the clasp, and back through the crimp, which is then flattened with crimping pliers or needle-nosed pliers to secure the cord. Also called crimps.

Crown: See “Setting.”

Cufflink: A jewelry item designed to close buttonless shirt cuffs (French cuffs). It consists of two decorative pieces con-

nected by a bar or chain that fits through the buttonhole and locks the cuffs together. See also “Link Connector.”

Dome: Any convex decoration. It can be made manually with a dapping block and a dapping punch, or by using a power press.

Doublet: Any stone made of two component parts, frequently genuine stones combined with glass, plastics, or synthetic stones.

Drop: A small ornament suspended from a piece of jewelry.

Ear Back: See “Ear Nut.”

Ear Clip: An alternative to a pierced earring, it consists of a decorative front portion connected by a yoke to a back clip or a hinged lever. The lever snaps over the yoke, creating tension and securing the clip against the ear.

Ear Nut: An earring back with a hole and a friction or tension element through

which an earring post is passed to secure the earring to the lobe. Also referred to as an earring back, clutch, friction back, push back, or clutch back. See also “Butterfly Clutch.”

Ear Post: See “Post.”

Ear Screw: A U-shaped earring with a front pad and rear pad, as well as a parallel, built-in threaded mechanism. When turned, the mechanism moves the rear pad toward the front of the earring, applying pressure to the ear until the earring is secure. Also referred to as a French earring.

Ear Wire: A bow of wire, looped to fasten an earring to a pierced ear. It is generally made of precious metal or hypoallergenic surgical steel. See also “Fishhook,” “Kidney Wire,” “Shepherd Hook.”

Earring Back: See “Ear Nut.”

Earring Clutch: See “Ear Nut.”

Earring Jacket: A separate decorative component that can be added to an ear-

ring (or interchanged with other components) to create different looks. For example, various decorative backings that can be attached to an earring and changed.

Earring Post: See “Post.”

Enhancer: A bail-like finding that may be opened to fit over a strand of pearls or beads and then locked closed. Also known as a pearl enhancer.

Etching: See “Metal Etching.”

Euro Wire: See “Lever Back.”

Eye: A loop, made of wire or other material, used as a connector for chains, pendants, etc.

Eye Pin: A wire of varying length that has been manipulated at one end to form a loop to which decorative stones or beads can be attached.

Eyeglass Wire: See “Channel Wire.”

Fancy Gallery: See “Gallery.”

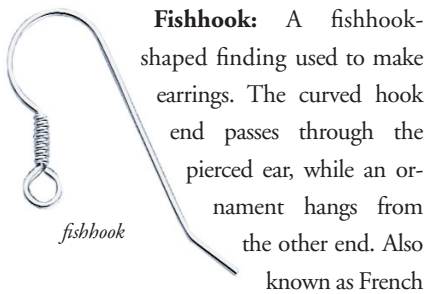
Ferrule: A metal band or cap that is fitted to the end of wire, thread, cord,

wood, or other material to prevent fraying or to add decoration.

Festoon: A pendant with rings on both sides, through which chain or cord can be attached. It usually functions as the centerpiece of the necklace.

Figure-Eight Safety: A type of safety catch in which a figure-eight- or hour-glass-shaped hinged wire snaps over a pin. Used as a safety snap on a bracelet or box catch.

Filigree: Ornamental work formed of bent wire that is soldered into delicate and complex designs, somewhat reminiscent of lace patterns. It also may be stamped or cast.



Fishhook: A fishhook-shaped finding used to make earrings. The curved hook end passes through the pierced ear, while an ornament hangs from the other end. Also known as French

wire or French ear wire. See also “Kidney Wire,” “Shepherd Hook.”

Fishhook Clasp: A style of pearl clasp with a locking mechanism that resembles the shape of a fishhook.

Fob: A decorative charm or extension off a chain or ribbon that is attached to a pocket watch. Used to pull the watch out of a pocket, or to attach the watch to clothing with a pin.

French Clip: An elegant variation on the standard ear clip, it has a spring-loaded rear pad and a pad-tipped screw; the screw adjusts the tension of the pad against the ear.

French Earring: See “Ear Screw.”

French Wire: See “Fishhook.”

Friction Post: See “Post.”

Fusion Post: A post used in the fusion- or percussion-welding process. It resembles a normal post but has an “initiating nib” at the end. During assembly, when the positively charged post contacts the negatively

charged base, an electric arc occurs that fuses the post to the jewelry item.

Gallery: A name for metal strips used to make settings for stones or used as a decorative design element in a piece of jewelry. A gallery is generally manufactured as a continuous strip with a repeated design. A highly decorated example is referred to as a fancy gallery.

Gallery Wire Setting: A setting made up of multiple wire work levels or galleries. It may be fabricated from metal or wax masters.

German Ear Wire: See “Lever Back.”

Grip Fastener: See “Butterfly Clutch.”

Guard Chain: A small chain with one end attached next to the clasp of a necklace or bracelet, the other end to a loop or link on the opposite end of the piece. It is used as a fail-safe in case the clasp opens.

Head: See “Setting.”

Headed Pin or Head Pin: A wire of varying length and diameter with a flat or domed end that is of slightly larger diameter than the rest of the wire. Used for stringing or attaching beads, in which the bead is seated on the flat or dome of the head pin.

Heishi Beads: Small shell or other disc or short tube beads, usually white, of American Indian origin.

Hidden Screw Clasp: A necklace fastener consisting of two short barrels with screws that connect. The clasp is partially buried in the bead or pearl, giving the necklace a clasp-less look when screwed together.

Hollow Wire: Tubular stock used for making beads, bracelets, or chain. May be solder-filled.

Hoop: Metal wire or tubing that has been formed into individual rings. Used for earrings, bracelets, or necklace segments.

Hoop Wires: Short, shaped ear wires that are used at the top of a hoop earring. Usually, they have a loop or hole at one end so they can be riveted into a match-

ing joint.

I.D. Bracelet: Usually a link-type bracelet with a curved center plate on which a monogram is engraved.

Illusion Setting: A type of prong setting containing a faceted metal plate that surrounds the girdle of a diamond, thus making the diamond appear larger.

Invisible Setting: A variation of the pavé look, this type of setting applies only to multi-stone arrangements. It is designed to hide all metal around the stone. Rather than having beads of metal hold the stone in place, the stones are cut in a way that allows them to snap into a hidden metal grid.

Jacket: See “Earring Jacket.”

Joint: The U-shaped part that serves as the fulcrum of a hinged mechanism, to which another component part (such as a pin-stem) is riveted into place, allowing for movement of the part. The riveted part may be designed into the joint as one complete unit. Commonly used for brooches and earrings.

Joint, Catch, and Pin-Stem: An assembly used to affix jewelry items, such as brooches, to clothing. The joint serves as the fulcrum on which the pin-stem pivots. The catch is a hook into which the pin-stem fits when closed. (See also “Safety Catch.”) The pin-stem is a sharply pointed pin (suitable for piercing clothing) with a base fashioned into a hole or T-shape to facilitate connection with the joint. See also “Pin Back.”



jump ring

Jump Ring: A plain wire ring of any size, usually round or oval in shape, used for attaching jewelry parts. In general, the ends of the wire are bent together, sometimes soldered. Also called a loop.

Kidney Wire: An ear wire with a continual curved, kidney-like shape. The end curves back to the front of the unit, where a hook catch is formed with the wire (as opposed to a fishhook or shepherd hook,

which remains open). See also “Fishhook,” “Shepherd Hook.”

Lapped Border: The polished edge of an item achieved by using a non-yielding surface, such as a stiff felt wheel or a wooden wheel. It gives the appearance of a rounded edge.

Lever Back: A mechanism comprising a hinged lever that is riveted into place on a yoke; the lever snaps shut against the yoke to secure an earring. The term also describes a finished earring that contains the hinged-lever mechanism to secure an ear wire. Also called a Euro wire or German ear wire.

Link Connector: A finding attached to a decorative cufflink element, it is placed through the buttonhole and is then secured to lock cuff ends together. The most popular style of link connector is vertically inserted, then swiveled to a horizontal position, ensuring cufflink security. Also called airplane back or wingback.



lobster claw

Lobster Claw: A clasp shaped somewhat like a lobster's claw. The “pincer” arm is under tension by an internal spring mechanism that is opened and closed by a lever on its side.

Locket: A small, hollow, hinged pendant. The wearer can keep photos, locks of hair, or other mementos inside.

Locket Bail: A metal component used to connect pendants, specifically lockets, to a chain. It is meant to slide onto the chain rather than to be soldered to it. Also called a clip-on bail.

Loop: See “Jump Ring.”

Mechanical Back: An earring back containing a spring mechanism, which applies pressure to triggers that grip an earring post. Pressing the lever extensions releases the post from the mechanical back.

Melon Bead: A round bead with a large circumference that tapers at either end, similar to the shape of a melon.

Mesh: A finely woven metal fabric.

Metal Etching: A method of creating a design on metal using acid. Parts of the metal are covered and protected from the action of the acid, while the exposed parts are eaten away to form a design.

Metal Stamping: An ornamental metal part generally formed by die-striking.

Milanese Mesh: A flexible mesh created by weaving interlocking wire spirals. It can be made into various shapes and forms, such as necklaces, bracelets, rings, etc.

Military Grip: See “Butterfly Clutch.”

Mordant: An acid used to etch the surface of metal, glass, stone, etc.

Mounting: A piece of jewelry onto which a stone or stones will be set. It can take several forms, such as a ring, a pendant, a bracelet, or a necklace.

Navette: Term that describes a marquise shape.

Neck Chain: A chain that can be used to hang a variety of ornaments, such as lockets, crosses, and beads, around the neck. It varies in length and can be worn separately or in multiples.

No-Hole Ball: Either a hollow metal sphere swaged from seamless tubing or a solid metal sphere machined from rod. (Solid no-hole balls are generally brass, while hollow no-hole balls are available in both base and precious metals.) After swaging, the ball is separated and rolled into shape. Mostly used as ball earrings with posts.

Omega Clip: Used as a clip earring, it has a rear clip in the shape of the Greek letter omega (Ω), which is formed from smooth round or semi-flattened wire. The wire is attached to a hinged mechanism on one end of a yoke; a decorative element is soldered to the other end.

One-Hole Ball: A hollow metal sphere with one hole. It is made by drawing flat stock into a cup, then rolling it until it forms a sphere, leaving a small opening or “hole.”

Pad Insert: A molded rubber insert that fits into or over the clip portion of a

clip earring for greater comfort.

Pavé Setting: A method of setting small stones as close together as possible, so that the piece literally looks “paved” with stones.

Pearl Cup: A cup designed to hold a pearl secured by adhesive. It sometimes has a small peg that fits into a hole in a partially drilled pearl for added security.

Pearl Shortener: A hinged ring that may be used to shorten an opera-length pearl strand. The strand is doubled and the two resulting loops are hooked into the shortener.

Peg Setting: (1) A peg, often set into a metal cup or hemisphere, that fits into a hole drilled into a pearl. The pearl is then fastened by cement or epoxy. (2) Any setting with a post or peg on the bottom that fits through a hole drilled or cast in a ring or plate, and which is then soldered in place to secure the setting.

Pelican Clasp: A clasp similar to a lobster claw in construction but narrower and slightly curved. See also “Lobster Claw.”

Pendant: An ornament designed to be suspended from a chain or necklace.

Pendant Bail: See “Bail.”

Photo Etching: See “Metal Etching.”

Pin Back: A joint, catch, and pin-stem assembly that is pre-assembled on a metal plate (the ends of the plate are actually formed into the joint and catch). The unit may be attached to a piece of jewelry by soldering or gluing. Also called a bar pin. See also “Joint, Catch, and Pin-Stem.”

Pin-Stem: See “Joint, Catch, and Pin-Stem.”

Plaque: See “Chain Tag.”

Plate: A decorative element—flat or domed, plain or fancy—that can be added to jewelry. May be set with a stone or contain a design.

Post: A pin-like finding attached to an earring. It passes through the pierced earlobe and is usually secured by a clutch. A “friction post” often has a single or double

notch to keep a clutch from slipping.

Prong: A claw or curved wire used to fasten and hold a stone in a setting. See also “Prong Setting.”

Prong Setting: A setting consisting of a series of prongs (generally three, four, or six) that hold a stone.

Push Back: See “Ear Nut.”

Quality Tag: See “Chain Tag.”

Rabbit Ear Bail: See “V-Bail.”

Ring Blank: A stamped finger ring of any style that has yet to go through the various finishing processes.

Rolled Bead: A cut metal bead that has been rolled. The term is applied only to round beads, not to oval or oddly shaped beads.

Rondelle: See “Roundel.”

Round Setting: A round-shaped metal form that uses prongs, bezels, or any other means of clamping the stone securely.

Roundel: A doughnut-shaped bead of precious or base metal that is used as a spacer or an accent in stringing applications.

Rub-Over Setting: See “Bezel.”

S-Hook: A clasp formed in the shape of an “S” with one closed curve and one open curve that interlock with each other.

Safety Catch: A small mechanism with a flat pad bottom and a rotating center that opens and closes a small jaw. It is used to secure a pin stem, and is affixed by soldering the flat pad bottom to the jewelry item. It comes in various configurations: top open, side open, or tube style.

Safety Chain: See “Guard Chain.”

Scallop Setting: See “Buttercup Setting.”

Screw Back: An ear nut or clutch that screws onto a threaded post.

Screw Back Ear Clip: An ear clip with a threaded screw that tightens an earring against a non-pierced earlobe for tension adjustment. See also “French Clip.”

Screw Clasp: A necklace fastener consisting of two short barrels with screws that connect.

Screw Eye: A straight, short wire with a ring at one end. The straight end is inserted into a pearl with adhesive to convert it into a pearl drop.

Scrolls: Term used to describe a friction earring back that is formed by rolling two lengths of material into curled scrolls toward a center hole. The scrolls apply inward pressure on the friction post to secure the back to it.

Semi-Mounting: A mounting that is only partially set. It usually has side stones, but no main or center stone.

Setting: A metal form into which a stone is set and secured by prongs, a bezel, or any other means.

Shank: In a ring, the shank is the part that surrounds the finger. The shank and the setting in which a stone is to be set are collectively referred to as a ring mounting.

Shepherd Hook: A pierced earring wire shaped like a shepherd's crook—similar to fishhook wire but with a longer shaft. See also "Fishhook," "Kidney Wire."

Shoulder: The part of a shank that is closest to the setting; it is usually tapered.

Sister Hook: Two hooks connected by a hinge; when opened outward, they form the shape of a heart. Used as a clasp.



slide clasp

Slide Clasp: A clasp made of two tubes that slide into each other; the friction fit forms a lock. (Some slide locks have a magnetic security mechanism.) The clasp contains multiple rings, onto which strands of beads or pearls can be tied. Often used for multi-strand bracelets or necklaces. Also called a tube clasp.

Snap Plate: A rectangular flat plate that is specially notched to accommodate a clasp tongue for a box-style catch.

Solder-Flushed Finding: A type of finding that has a solder coating, facilitating assembly with quick heating.

Solitaire: Generally used to describe a ring with a single center stone, or the stone itself.

Spacer Bar: Thin strip or bar with perforated holes, used to hold multiple strands of beads or pearls in place (the strands are threaded through the holes during stringing). May be decorative or plain.

Split Ring: An oval or round ring in which the metal spirals two turns and functions just like a split key ring. It provides a solderless solution for joining elements, as well as added security when attaching charms or ornaments to necklaces or bracelets.

Spring Hinge: A hinge that incorporates a spring in its construction to always keep a piece, such as a bangle bracelet made of two halves, in the closed position.

Spring Ring: A circular tube—just short of a complete circle—inside which a



spring ring

coiled spring presses on the inner end of a curved wire. The wire projects from the tube to complete the circle. By pressing on a small lip, the wire can be pushed back into the tube, forming an opening and allowing the ends of necklaces, bracelets, etc., to be attached.

Stamping: The process or operation by which a press is used to strike and form metal in a die. Generally feasible only when long runs are anticipated due to set-up time and tooling costs.

Stick Pin: Long piece of hardened round wire with a flat pad on one end and a tapered, sharpened end on the other. Used to add a decorative element to clothing, it is pushed through the material and secured on the end with a stopper protector.

Stopper: A non-precious-metal cap end, usually containing a rubber or silicone core, that is pushed onto the sharpened end of a stick pin to secure it.

Strips: A continuous line of settings, usually in a predetermined length. Also referred to as a strip setting.

Swivel Clasp: Used to attach watches or other finished jewelry items to the end of a chain. Usually has an oversize metal loop on one end that can be opened and firmly closed.

Tag: A small stamped shape with one or two holes. Used to carry a stamped hallmark or trade name.

Threaded Post: A screw post that requires the use of a threaded ear nut.

Threaded Post & Back: Earring posts that have a length of the post finely threaded to accept a specialized ear nut with a complementary thread configuration.

Tie Bar: A metal clip that uses spring tension to attach the mid-portion of the tie to the shirt.

Tie Tack: A short, sharp pin with an ornamental top, used to hold a tie to a shirt. Often secured by a butterfly clutch.

Tiffany Setting: Generally a taller, round, six- or four-prong setting in which the prongs flare out gracefully and rest over the stone to secure it in place.

Toggle Chain: A short piece of chain that connects two functioning parts, such as a key ring and a spring ring. It allows for flexibility between the parts.



toggle clasp

Toggle Clasp: The method of attaching necklaces or bracelets whereby a rigid metal bar (plain or highly decorated) is inserted through a ring. When the bar is turned sideways,

it is prevented from coming back through the ring, providing closure.

Top Wire: (1) A straight or curved wire with a loop at one end. The loop attaches to a hoop or dangling earring, and the wire passes through the lobe. (2) A triangular wire with loops at each end, used to secure a dangling earring to a clasp.

Trigger Clasp: A teardrop-shape clasp with a loop at its base and a trigger mechanism. The mechanism opens the jaws of the clasp to receive a jump ring.

Twist-Corrugated Bead: See “Corrugated Bead.”

Tube Clasp: See “Slide Clasp.”

U-Wire: See “Channel Wire.”

Unit Cluster Setting: Any flat or domed plate drilled to accommodate melee.

V-Bail: A two-loop bail that looks like a “V” from the front. Also known as a rabbit ear bail.

Vermeil: A heavy gold electroplate (not less than 10k) over sterling. According to FTC standards, the minimum thickness of the plating must be equivalent to 100 millionths of an inch (2.5 microns) of fine gold.

Watch Bar: A bar-shaped length of metal that has a closed ring applied at the center of the bar. The watch bar is usually attached to a chain end and is fed through a button hole on clothing to hold the chain in place.

Wingback: See “Link Connector.”

Yoke: A Y-shaped part that connects earring components and provides the base against which a lever can snap securely.

The Chain Gang

Editor’s Note: MJSA thanks Steve Martin of National Chain Group in Warwick, Rhode Island, for serving as technical editor of “The Chain Gang.”

Bar Link: The term bar link is used to refer to two different chain types. The first type consists of a straight bar alternating with one or more round links. The bar may be round, rectangular, or twisted, and



Gucci version of a bar link

is usually of the same metal as the round links. This type of chain can be used either as stand-alone necklaces or as a special pendant chain. The second chain called bar link is also sometimes called a Gucci chain. This is a modeled link, usually oval like a bagel, with a bar crossing the center opening horizontally. The term “Gucci” is a trademarked name, however, and cannot be used by other manufacturers.

Basket Weave: As its name suggests, basket weave chain looks like a reed, cane, or rattan basket, with wires woven alternately over and under one another. Overall widths



basket weave

can vary widely. This chain is particularly suitable for bracelets and watch bands.

Bead: Bead chain—also sometimes called ball chain or toilet chain—is made from thin flat stock or tubing formed into balls or beads. The formed beads are connected internally by wire, which starts out in a continuous length and is formed into small “dumbbell” shapes that hold the beads together and allow flexibility.

Belcher: See “Rolo.”

Bismarck: Bismarck chain starts as a cable or curb chain, then the sides are



bismarck

soldered together. Its appearance resembles a chain-link fence, but with a much tighter mesh. It is most often used as a bracelet chain.

Boston Link: Named after the U.S. city, this chain is made from cable chain that is put through a hammer die. The process elongates each link and squares it, creating the same box-like pattern on all four sides of the chain. The solid link does not offer a large degree of flexibility, therefore it is usually worn alone. This link is soldered and is made in medium to heavy weights.

Box: Perhaps one of the all-time classic chains, box chain is made from round wire rolled flat. A chain machine designed expressly for making this style allows the square links to be produced very close together. The end product is a sturdy, lustrous, silky-feeling chain composed of many small, square links alternating vertically and horizontally. Box chain can be highly polished or diamond cut, and because it is extremely durable, it can be worn either with or without pendants. It is worn in styles ranging from a bracelet

or anklet to a 30-inch-long necklace. Also known as Venetian or square link chain.

Byzantine: The Byzantine chain is an intricate design based on the parallel or double cable chain. Three open links are added to each connection; two of the three are placed diagonally on either side



byzantine

of the connection, and the third is placed throughout the two extra links and the vertical double link. This extra layering of links repeats on each side of the connection. It is available both “flat,” where it lies against the skin, and “round,” where it has an enhanced three-dimensional appear-

ance. The Byzantine is also available as a graduated piece, where the width becomes larger toward the center of the necklace.

C Link: The C link, otherwise known as the C chain, is composed of tiny, solid C-shaped pieces that cup into one another in a set repetition. This chain lies flat, similar to the herringbone, but has more flexibility than the herringbone due to its link. It is normally worn alone. Variations include beveled edges, which slant down toward the base of the chain. There is also a fancy C chain where designs are imprinted over the links; these designs can range from slash and nugget markings to classic vertical lines.

Cable: The cable chain is a basic open link where one oval links horizontally and one oval links vertically. This repetition enables the chain to be one of the strongest available: Cable chains can often be found hauling large machinery and bear-

ing anchors on ships. In jewelry, cable chain is commonly used as a pendant necklace. Variations on this link include double or parallel links, usually titled fancy cable; rectangular instead of oval links, titled square link; and the long and short, where the size of the link alternates. See also “Figaro.”

Cobra: Cobra chain starts off as a basic cable chain, which is then hammered into a swaged chain with flat, triangular links.

Curb: Curb chain is a flat, open-link chain.

Diamond-Milled: A chain that has undergone a decorating process in which a pattern of sharp cuts is created in the metal by a machine with a diamond-tipped tool. The process leaves a bright finish that doesn't require buffing or polishing.

False Snake: False snake chain—also known as seamed snake chain—is made by starting with a curb chain. The curb chain is then compacted and formed into a tubular shape, which makes it look like a snake chain. When properly made, the seam where the two sides join is not visible to the naked eye. Although the chain feels like a traditional snake chain, it is considerably easier to make, since there is no scrap and no intricate linking of die-struck pieces. It is, however, heavier than traditional snake chain because it is more nearly solid than the somewhat hollow structure of snake.

Figaro: Also sometimes called a long and short chain, Figaro chain can be either a curb or a cable chain with a variable-length link. For example, this chain



Figaro

may be made with three short links and one long link, with one short link and one

long link, etc. The length of each series of short links is usually equal to or greater than a long link.

Figure Eight: A chain with variable-length links, in which alternate links are twisted into figure-eight shapes. This chain is made from either a cable or a curb chain, and the links can be hammered flat with a fancy pattern or a diamond-cut.

Filigree: Filigree chain is created by long curb or cable links, the surface of which have a Florentine pattern that gives the chain a lacy look.

Foxtail: Foxtail chain is made from stamped links with bent ends. These links are connected without solder. The chain can be hammered into a square or rectangular pattern, or it can be diamond-cut.

French Rope: French rope chain is made from wire that is flattened on a machine. Each wire link is then woven into the next link, and all links are connected without solder.

Herringbone: Herringbone chain starts out as a double or triple rope chain. The rope chain is then curbed to take the twist out of the chain and is hammered flat. The finished chain resembles a herringbone tweed pattern.

Marine Link: Marine link chain is made with wire curb or cable links that have a bar soldered in the center of the link. The links may be hollow or solid.

Mesh: There are different types of mesh chain. Milanese mesh, for example, is woven wire that can take both tubular and flat forms. Another type, stocking mesh, is actually formed by a knitting process: Like a hosiery machine, needles knit a continuous seamless tube that can then be drawn into various diameters. With end caps attached, it can be used for necklaces, bracelets, and watch bands, and can even be flattened.

Nugget: Nugget chain—also called twisted serpentine and tinsel chain—is a standard serpentine chain, which, after

it is soldered, is hammered into an interlocking “S” design, then twisted to create a nugget look. The chain is normally soldered in a chain soldering oven.

Omega: Omega chain is created in two steps. First, a mesh substructure is created in continuous footage. This substructure is then fed into another machine that places stamped gold sheet over the substructure.



omega

The gold sheet is snapped in place, section by section, until the continuous footage is used up. The footage is then cut into standard lengths and locks are added before final polishing and clean up.

Popcorn: Popcorn chain is made of identical interlocking die-struck segments, which are continuously stamped from thin strips of flat stock. These segments are hollow and may be rounded, flat, or concave for greater reflection. This chain is made in a similar manner to traditional snake chain, and generates a great deal of scrap.

Rolo: A chain made up of connected symmetrical links (usually half round or oval). Also known as a belcher chain.



rolo

Rope: Rope chain is made on a cable or curb-chain machine with a head that turns at different degrees. This makes it possible to run two or three links and weave them together into double or triple chain.

Scroll: Scroll chain is made by a special chain machine that performs like two machines in one. The machine has two arbors that are fed wire from two different directions. The wire is curled by the arbors into the scroll design. The chain is then soldered. Scroll chain can also be hammered and diamond-cut.

Serpentine: Serpentine chain is produced by swaging (or hammering) a curb chain while it is positioned on its side. If you stand a curb chain on its edge lengthwise, you can begin to see the “S” pattern, which is accentuated by hammering.

Singapore: Singapore chain is produced by lightly swaging a double curb chain, thus flattening an area of the chain and creating a luster that greatly enhances the basic double curb. It is then twisted for a spiral effect.

Snake: Snake chain is produced from star-shaped stampings made from flat stock. These stampings are then piggybacked, one on top of the other, to produce a soft, supple chain. This method of producing chain is slow, however, with most machines generating perhaps 200 feet per day.

Sock: Sock chain is a hollow mesh chain made from wire. The hollow nature of the chain makes it resemble a sock or a straw. The casing of the hollow tube is made from woven wire and is very flexible.

Square Link: See “Box.”

Swaged: Any chain that has been hammered to flatten or otherwise change the appearance of the links.

Tigertail (or Tiger Tail): This chain comprises multiple strands of very fine wire that is usually twisted together and then coated with nylon or plastic.

Venetian: See “Box.”

Wheat: The wheat chain is a machine-made rope chain that is twisted under tension to tightly nest the links, giving the chain the appearance of a wheat tassel. It can also be made on a left-right curb-chain machine.