



How to Make a Heart Bead

By Diane Woodall

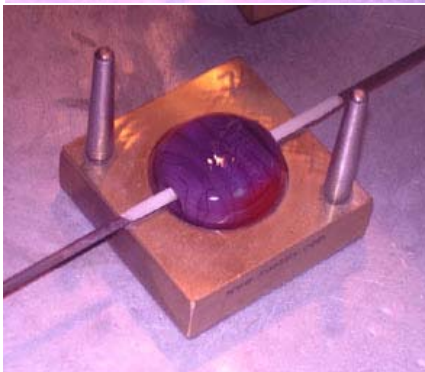
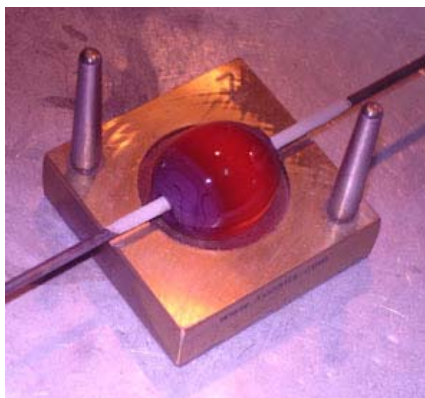
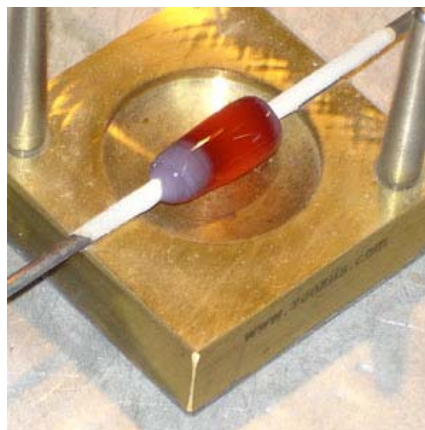
Making a heart bead with the hole going horizontally is actually quite easy. All you have to do is make a nice, fat tabular bead and then use a little heat to shape it. Some of my photos are a little hard to see because we took them through a dydineum lens, but you should be able to get a good idea of the steps. The real secret is to start with a gather that is at least as tall as it is wide. You DO NOT want a football shaped gather to make a good heart.

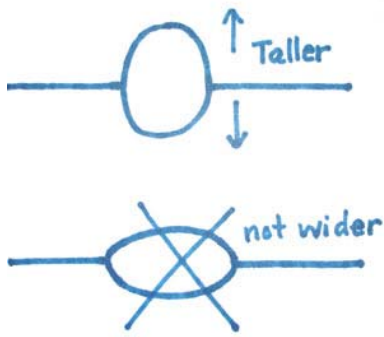
I use a straight sided lentil press for my hearts because it gives me a nice, even press and will handle a large gather of glass than hand held mashers will. The size I'm using here is a Zooziis Large+. First, wind on a gather narrower than your press.

As long as you keep your footprint narrower than your press you can make hearts of any size with the same press. Shape your gather into a barrel that is a little on the fat side. My gather here could be even fatter (taller, not wider). Marver if you need to in order to create nicely puckered ends. Before you press your bead should be a well shaped barrel, tapering towards the mandrel.

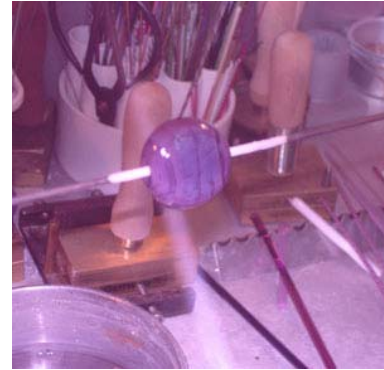
Lay the gather into the press and press gently.

You don't want to flatten it into a straight sided lentil, but just press enough to flatten your gather somewhat. You can use any tool to flatten your bead, but if you have a straight sided lentil they work beautifully. The key here is to make the gather narrower than the press so that the glass is forced vertically (north/south) and not out towards the mandrel. Ideally you'd like for your finished press to be taller than wide. Mine in this photo is OK, but I would have liked for it to be a bit taller.

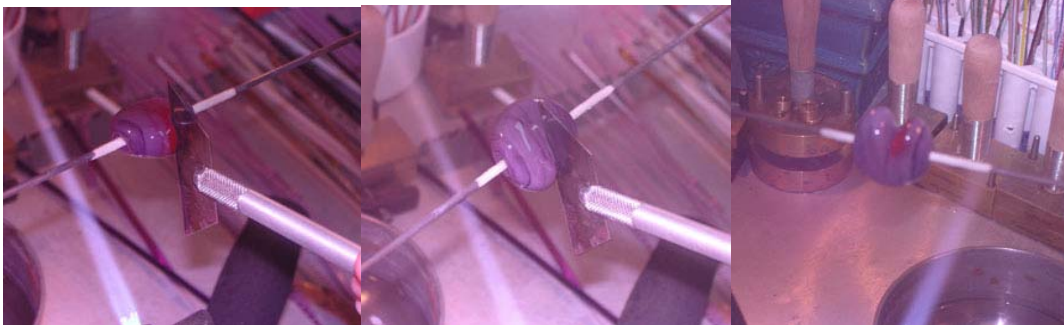




Once you have made your initial press, heat your bead thoroughly to remove the chill marks and check to make sure your holes are puckered. If the holes are not puckered at this point you will have to melt your glass back down and shape it again. You must start with puckered holes before you press or you can't create them later.



Using a razor tool, press the "butt crack" into the top of the heart and then move around to both sides and press a crease. Using the same tool, open the crack by moving the razor from side to side so that you create a "v" at the top of the bead.

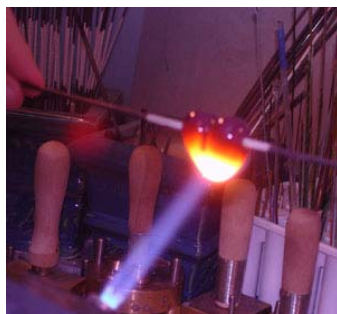


Return your bead to the flame and gently heat it to smooth out the cheeks of the heart, but don't overdo the heat. You are really just trying to plump up those cheeks. Apply just enough to shape your bead but not enough to let it lose its shape. Also, remember to keep the bottom warm too.



At this point heat control heat control becomes very important. You don't want to overheat the shape you are creating, so aim our heat where you want it and then back off.

After you have shaped the top of the bead begin to apply heat just to the bottom, moving the bead so that you heat both the front and back sides. When you have the bottom glowing you can allow gravity to pull it down or you can swing the bead quickly back and forth letting centrifugal force pull the glass down. This is really fun!



Once the bottom of the bead has been stretched as much as you want, gently heat it again and either create a nice finished tip or, using a commercial stringer, twist the end into a pretty curl. This shape was inspired by Mary Jarvis and it makes a nice heart which is also more durable than other types of hearts. The center photos shows me using my razor tool to sharpen up the indentations in the heart that were lost during heating. At this point the heart is finished except for any surface decorations you might want to add. Heat gently in the flame to warm the entire bead and place in the kiln to anneal.

