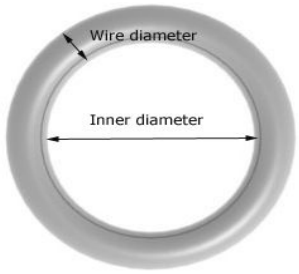
# Chainmaille intro

The most important technique in making chainmaille jewellery is opening and closing rings. Always open them sideways, in whichever direction feels most natural to you – a few weaves are easier to construct if the rings are opened in a particular direction. Never open the rings by pulling apart, the ends will be almost impossible to align due to distortion of the ring.

Practise closing rings until you can achieve an almost seamless closure. The ends should be aligned with no gaps showing between them. It is cheaper to practise with Aluminium or Copper rings before moving onto precious metals.

Aspect Ratio (AR) is the ratio between the inner diameter of a ring and the diameter (wire gauge) of the wire. For example, a ring made from 1.0mm wire with an inner diameter of 4.00mm has an AR of 4.




Getting the right AR can be critical for some weaves, eg. Jens Pind Linkage, but others can be made with a wider range of ARs.

In some of the tutorials I have used the terms “Round the Eye/RE” and “Through the Eye/TE”. These are explained where used.

Use glass-topped dressmakers' pins and a cushion to hold complex weaves in shape, especially at the start of the weave when the pattern is not obvious.

Using a pin to open the hole/path for the next ring can be helpful with dense or complex weaves.

Sometimes, opening a ring in the opposite way to usual is easier for a particular weave.

If it doesn't “look right”, undo to the last known point or simply start again. It is practically impossible to correct a misplacement in the middle of a completed piece, especially with tight or complex weaves.

Some weaves, eg. Half Persian 4-in-1, are easier to start if you keep a small “starter length” to attach to.

Using damaged rings or rings which do not close properly is a BAD idea. You, and others, will never be happy with the finished item.

Keeping a tag on which end of the chain is the beginning is easy with “marker rings” in a different colour or metal.

If you take breaks when mailling, try to always stop in the same place in the weave so that you remember what you are doing next.

Leaving aside enough rings for a “repeat” in the weave can also help you to remember where you are.

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