

# Rock Stars

By Christi Friesen

Create these sculptural beads using polymer clay accented with stones and pearls to add real star power to your next necklace project.

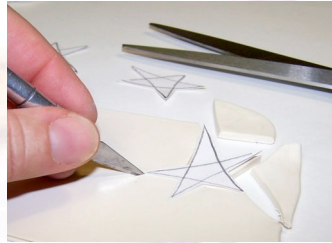
## Mixing the clay

Condition clay by repeated rolling and folding, or running through a pasta machine until clay is pliable. Combine equal parts of white and pearl and about one fourth as much ecru to create a creamy-white blend that will be used for all the stars. You can mix thoroughly, or allow streaks of unmixed color to remain unblended for contrast.



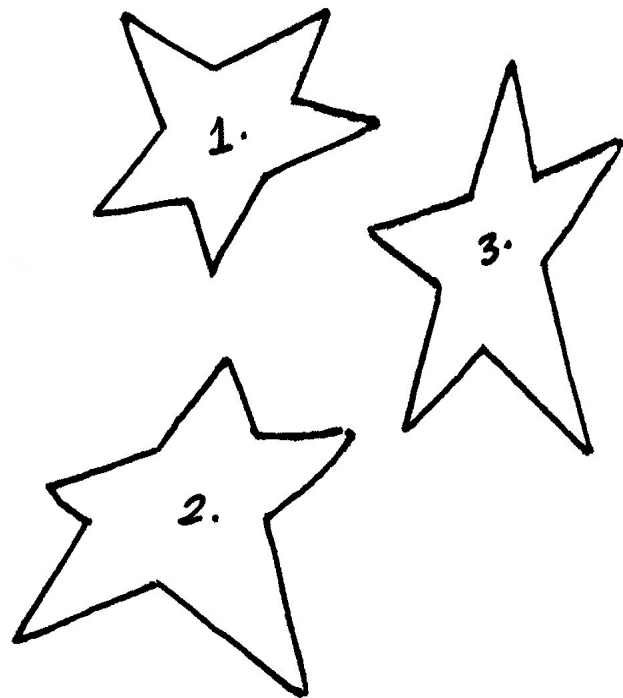
## Cutting the star patterns

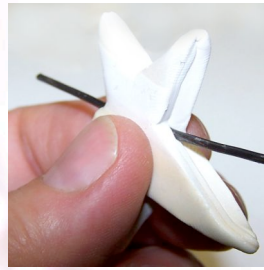
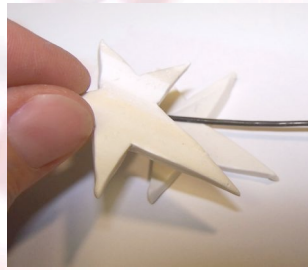
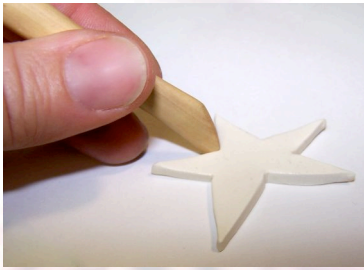
Roll out the clay (use the largest setting on your pasta machine, or flatten to about an eighth of an inch thick.) Cut out the paper pattern and lay it on the clay. Cut the clay out around the pattern with a craft knife. You will need two identical stars for each bead. Work the clay directly on a piece of cardstock, or index card. This will keep your clay from sticking to the work surface, and you can bake the piece on this paper, too. Make four different stars using the three patterns.



## For this project you will need:

- ✓ Sculpey Premo! **clay** in white, pearl and ecru (approx. 2 oz. of each)
- ✓ 10+ inches of 16-gauge **wire**
- ✓ several feet of 28-gauge craft **wire** (gold or silver colored)
- ✓ 5 pieces of faceted stone **beads** (fluorite, moonstone or similar, or substitute crystal or glass beads)
- ✓ 6 seed **pearls**
- ✓ acrylic **paint** (your choice of colors - to match the faceted stone beads) Sculpey Glaze Satin, or other clear coating
- ✓ **Tools** pasta maker (optional), craft knife, assorted wooden sculpting tools, wire cutters, flatnose pliers, needle-nose tweezers (optional), paintbrush, sponge.





### Assembling the stars

With a wooden sculpting tool and fingers, smooth all the cut edges. Be sure to smooth in the notches

between the stars arms. Cut a snippet of 16-gauge wire about two inches long and lay it on top of one star. This will save open the stringing hole, so position it between two star arm notches for stability and so that the star will hang nicely later (positioning it in the center would cause the star to tip unsteadily once it is strung on a necklace later.)

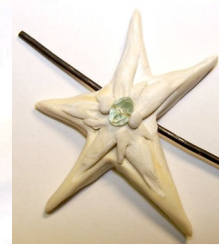
Now, lay the second identical star on top, lining up the arms and press the stars gently but firmly together. You can press the point ends together slightly more firmly to taper them a bit more to a point. Smooth the joint between the two halves with a finger or wooden tool.

### Adding clay details and stone embellishments

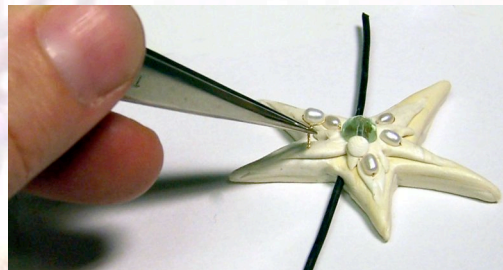
We will do four different stars, each with a different combination of stones and details. It doesn't matter which of the star patterns you use for each.

**Rock Star #1 -- Starburst:** Roll out five little bits of clay like small teardrops and press them firmly into the clay with the fat ends in the center and the pointy ends radiating outward, one on each arm of the star. With a wooden tool, smooth the points into the base if you like. Add five smaller little teardrops of clay in between each of the clay pieces you just added.

Next, wire a faceted stone for the center by cutting an inch piece of 28-gauge wire and threading on a faceted stone (I used fluorite.) Hold the ends of the wire with pliers and rotate the stone with your fingers until the wire twists firmly against the stone (don't overdue it or the wire will snap.) With wire cutters cut off the excess wire to leave a tail that is little less than an eighth inch or so from the stone. Embed this, wire side first, into the center of the star. (If the wire pokes through the back of the star, gently pull it out and cut off a little more of the wire and reposition the stone.) The stone should be embedded slightly into the clay so that no wire shows, if possible. Then, wire five seed pearls in the same way and add them to each of the arms of the star, again pressing the bead firmly into the clay.



Next, texture the star with your wooden tool by pressing lines into each arm. I recommend a feathery pattern by making straight lines that run diagonally down each side of each arm. If you want, you can bend the tips of the star arms for a lively look.



Lastly, texture the star with your wooden tool by pressing lines into each arm. I recommend a feathery pattern by making straight lines that run diagonally down each side of each arm. If you want, you can bend the tips of the star arms for a lively look.

**Rock Star #2 -- Curlicues:** Wire three faceted moonstones in the same way as before. Embed them into the star sideways by pressing the wire and stone into the clay, this time the wire will still be visible.





Roll out several little rice-shaped pieces of clay and roll them up on one end like a snail's shell. Place the rolled end directly over the exposed wire, covering it. Be careful not to make the curl too big or it will cover too much of the stone. The rest of the clay piece should flow down to touch the star's base clay. Smooth that end of the clay into star base with your wooden tool. Repeat with additional curled clay until all three stones are secured and their wires covered. Remember that clay will not adhere to stone, only to other clay, so all the clay details should always be attached somewhere to other clay. Add

additional curlicues to the star as you prefer.

**Rock Star #3 -- Dot's Nice:** Wire a double bead by using a longer piece of wire and threading on a seed pearl and twisting. Next, thread on a larger faceted stone (I used another fluorite.) It should have a large enough hole to slide on the twisted wire all the way up to the base of the pearl. Again snip off the excess wire - leave about a quarter inch this time - and use that extra wire to bend over into a staple. This will give the clay a little something extra to grab into since you have a second bead to support that will not be pressed into the clay.

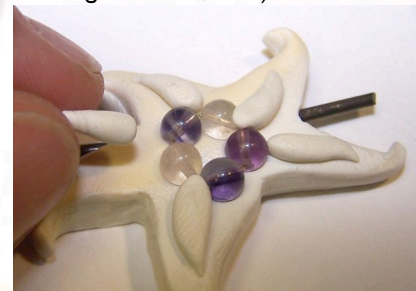


Roll a small ball of clay and press, flattening it, into the center of the star. Push the double bead directly into the center of this. Now add additional little balls of clay of varying sizes, pressing and flattening them slightly. Finally, texture with a pointy tool for an all over dimpled effect.



**Rock Star #4 -- Pinwheel:** For this star, curve each arm in the same direction for added motion. Now wire five round stone beads on a single piece of wire and twist the ends as before, making a circle of the beads (again, I used fluorite - so many colors to choose from with that stone, and variegated ones, too!) After

trimming the wire end (leave about a quarter inch this time) fold it up into a staple and then bend the wire at a right angle. Press in the wire and slightly embed the beads so that they lay flat on the top of the star. Add teardrops of clay for detail and texture as desired.



### **Baking**

Bake your stars on their card stock by placing on a baking sheet and cooking in a preheated oven according to the manufacturer's recommendations. I use Sculpey's Premo clay and it bakes at 275°F (130°C) for about a half hour or more.

Cool completely. Remove the straight wire to open the stringing hole by gently twisting and pulling the wire out with pliers.

### **Finishing**

Patina adds color and accentuates the detail work. Add a patina to the hearts by mixing acrylic paint in your choice of colors. I chose to match the paint color to the color of the focal stones, as well as browns for an earthy feel. With a dry (or very slightly damp) brush paint the color directly on to just a small portion of the star and immediately rub off with a damp sponge (the sponge should be very well rung out.) The point is to rub away the surface of the painted color, leaving it only in the crevices and textures. The more you rub, the more paint will be taken away, until you will leave paint only in the deepest cracks. Adjust how much you rub away to suit your preferences.

Rinse and wring your sponge often. Repeat for the whole of the star and then allow it to dry completely.

Next, coat with a clear varnish to protect the color. Brush the coating on the top of the star, avoiding the stone beads and pearls. Dry, and coat the back. Dry completely.

Finally, place the stars on fresh card stock, right side up. Cook again for 10-15 minutes at a cooler 200 degrees. Allow to cool completely.

Your rock stars are ready for their solo number! String 'em up and show 'em off!



*Christi Friesen's work ranges from individual beads to intricate art jewelry and sculptural fine art pieces. She has authored several bead project articles for various magazines. Her art can be found at shows, galleries and on her website: [www.CForiginals.com](http://www.CForiginals.com)*

### **Resources**

beads, tools, wire: [www.CForiginals.com](http://www.CForiginals.com)

wire, beads: your local bead store, online: [www.FireMountainGems.com](http://www.FireMountainGems.com)