

metal clay chain making

etal-clay sheet has a much lower moisture content than its lump-clay counterpart. In fact, its dryness makes it feel like a thin piece of leather, which lends itself to usages not employable by traditional clay, including using paper cut-out punches. The medium's ease in handling led to this necklace's creation being featured on an episode of *Beads, Baubles, and Jewels,* a new jewelrymaking series appearing on PBS stations in January 2005. The bright lights used for filming didn't dry the sheet as they would have lump clay, and, with the handy paper punches, the project was completed in the 6½ minutes allotted for the segment. What could be simpler for the beginning metal-clay artist?

The addition of a double jump-ring chain gives this piece a relaxed feel, though a simple leather cord would be equally appropriate. This project is also appealing to men and could be embellished to resemble military ID tags.

[1] Layer the clay sheets. Using a small paintbrush, apply a thin layer of slip to one piece of sheet clay. While the slip is still damp, press the second sheet on the slip-painted surface, aligning the edges. Too much slip, or slip that is too wet, will cause the sheet to disintegrate, so apply sparingly. Allow the sheets to dry thoroughly before proceeding to the next step.

[2] Punch out the tag shape. With the paper punch wrong-side up, slide the layered sheets into the slot. Make sure the sheets are properly positioned left to right, top to bottom, so that none of the shape's edges will be omitted when the image is cut. Stand over the punch to apply even pressure and press



down firmly. Gently remove the shape and the remaining clay from the punch.

- [3] Make the appliqué and attach it to the tag. Using a single layer of sheet, punch out the appliqué shape in the same manner as you did the tag. Brush slip on one side of the appliqué and place it on the tag. Let dry.
- [4] Make a hanging hole. Using a 2mm-diameter straw, press through the sheet at the top of the tag to make a hole for hanging.
- [5] Add syringe work. Remove the cap from your clay syringe, but do not put the fine tip on the syringe. Form a dot of clay on the appliqué without using the fine tip. Let the piece dry.

















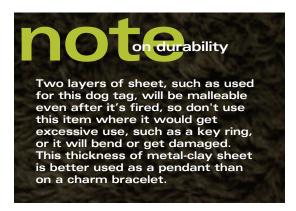


**[6] Fire and polish.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions and fire the tag on a piece of kiln fiber board to keep it flat. Polish the piece using a polishing cloth, tumbler, stainless-steel brush, or a combination of these three. If you desire, patina the piece with liver of sulfur following the manufacturer's directions. Use a polishing cloth to bring out the details.

[7–9] Make a chain. Open three 5mm jump rings and at least 200 3mm jump rings for a 17-inch (43.2cm) necklace. Link one 5mm jump ring through the tag's hole and close the jump ring. Close four 3mm jump rings. Take a second 5mm jump ring, link it through the first 5mm jump ring and the four 3mm jump rings, and close the ring; link the third 5mm jump ring through the same five jump rings.

Separate the four 3mm rings attached to the 5mm rings into two pairs. One at a time, link two 3mm rings through one pair of rings. Continue linking two jump rings through the previous pair to create a 2×2 chain. Work on one side until the necklace measures approximately half the desired length. Repeat the process on the remaining pair of 3mm rings attached to the 5mm rings.

Check the length, allowing for the clasp, and add or remove 3mm rings as needed. Use a single jump ring to attach each half of the clasp to the last pair of rings on each end. See Primer, *page 90*, for basic wireworking techniques.



# materials

## Tac

- 2-3 sheets of metal clay
- Metal clay slip
- Metal clay syringe
- Liver of sulfur (optional)

## Chain

- 1 troy ounce of 18-gauge 3mm sterling-silver jump rings
- 3 16-gauge 5mm sterling-silver jump rings
- Clasp

## tools

## Tag

- Small paintbrush
- Tag-shaped paper punch
- Star-shaped paper punch
- 2mm-diameter straw
- Kiln with fiber board
- Polishing cloth, tumbler, or stainless-steel brush

## Chain

 2 pairs of chainnose pliers or 1 pair each of chainnose and bent chainnose pliers