

If you're making necklaces, bracelets, anklets—even earrings—with chain, you know how crucial it is to have plenty of this versatile material in stock. There are many things to consider when selecting the right chain for your designs. This handy reference will to help you understand the language of chain, including how to:

- Familiarize yourself with chain styles so you can choose a chain that complements your piece.
- Plan how long the chain should be for the piece to hang correctly, and how much weight needs to be supported.
- Have a clear understanding of the characteristics of the metal type you're working with.
- Know the units that chain is sold in—finished lengths, pre-cut unfinished lengths or bulk spools.

Common Chain Styles

Choose a chain that complements your design and has the strength to support the weight of your pendant and other design elements. The chart below presents many of the chain styles available at Rio and explains the unique characteristics of each.

ANCHOR	Anchow chain factures and links that are bisacted across the	FIGARO	Figure shain features and langer link alternating with 2.5	
	Anchor chain features oval links that are bisected across the center; the links tend to be thick in proportion to their size.		Figaro chain features one longer link alternating with 3–5 smaller links; all are twisted to lie flat, similar to a curb chain.	
BAR & LINK		FIGURE-EIGHT		
	Bar & link chain presents small links alternating with bar- style links that may be straight, curved or fancy-shaped.)DGODGO	Figure-eight chain is characterized by the twisted, 8-shaped links that connect its round or oval links.	
BARLEYCORN	Barleycorn chain gives the appearance of small grains lined	FOXTAIL		
16" 16" 16" 16" 16"	up end to end. Alternating left- and right-facing teardrop- shaped wire links connect to form a smoothly interlocked chain design.		Foxtail chain is made with two rows of oval links arranged at 45° to one another and connected by small flat links.	
BEAD		FRANCO	Franco chain is an intricate but substantial weave that	
0000	Bead chain is characterized by spherical links, often hollow, that are joined by narrow connector wire or bars.		delivers a square profile and resists kinking so that is stays smooth and sinuous. From two of the parallel sides, the chain resembles a curb style; from the adjoining two, it resembles a wheat style.	
BEADING	Beading chain comprises small, elongated links that are closely connected to form a strong chain with a slender	FRENCH ROPE	,	
n, n, n, n, n	rounded profile fine enough to allow beads to be strung onto it.	L. S. S. S. S. S. S. S.	French rope chain features a double row of twisted links that are interconnected, producing a substantial chain with an obvious spiral, as if two rope chains were entwined.	
BEVELED-EDGE		HERRINGBONE	Herringbone chain is constructed of multiple rows of	
DOOD	Beveled-edge chain features links that are cut to create angled edges rather than the usual rounded profile.	1439474444484844494	V-shaped links, arranged so that the direction of each row is opposite the row next to it. The links lie flat giving the chain a low-profile, highly fluid look.	
вох	Box chain has squared-off links that resemble cubes; they are sturdy chains, ideal for pendants. In rounded box chain,	KRINKLE		
	the links are created from half-round wire, giving the finished chain a rounder profile.		Krinkle chain is a cable chain made with oval links that have been crimped to have curves and/or angles; also sometimes called a peanut chain.	
BYZANTINE	Formed by a repeating pattern of interlinked jump ring	LADDER	The links on a ladder chain are rounded on one side and	
	pairs, Byzantine chain tends to be substantial but highly flexible.	0000	on the other side narrowed and folded backward to form a hook. The hook then links onto the round end of the next link.	
CABLE	The most common chain style, cable chain is formed by	LONG & SHORT		
	connecting single links perpendicularly end to end. Links may be round, oval or other shapes.	2-0-	Long & short chain features one long link alternating with one or more shorter links.	
CURB	A curb chain starts as a cable design, then has its links	MARGHERITA	Margherita chain is made from flat, rectangular links that	
	twisted so they lie flat; the twist gives the links a slightly interlocked look that adds dimension to the chain profile.		are joined widthwise across their centers, so that the links present an ever-changing profile. The chain can appear to have a neat spiral twist or a random nugget look. Bright- finished links reflect quite a bit of light as they move.	
DIAMOND-CUT	Diamond-cut chain has facets precision-cut into the links	MESH	innsheu links lehett quite a bit of fight as they hove.	
1222222222222	with diamond-tipped tools. The facets are then polished to enhance the light-reflecting properties of the link surfaces.		Mesh chain is crafted of very fine wire woven to produce chain that has a fluid, fabric-like flexibility.	
DOUBLE ROPE	Double rope chain features link pairs, each connected to the	OMEGA	Omega is a wide chain comprising small, wide metal plates	
- 5 <u>5, 55</u> , 5	two previous link pairs in a continuous row. This doubling of links gives the chain a more substantial twisting effect, emphasizing the spiraled look characteristic of regular rope chain.		aligned next to one another and crimped to an underlying mesh substructure. This creates a bright chain with lots of surface area but limited flexibility.	

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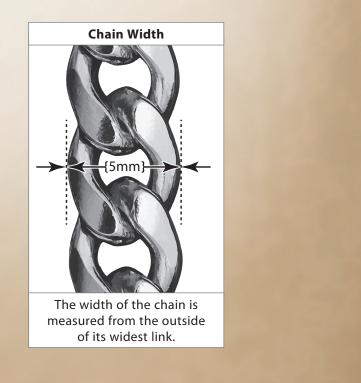
Common Chain Styles Continued

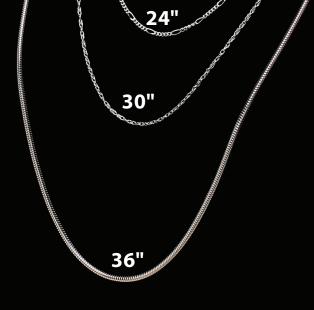
POPCORN	Popcorn chain is made with identical stamped hollow links that feature flat, concave or convex sides; once linked, the sides fit together to present a uniform surface texture that can look scaly, dapped or bubbled.	SERPENTINE	Serpentine chain features tightly formed and flattened S-shaped links joined end to end.
REVERSE ROPE	Reverse rope (and reverse double-rope) chain features links (or link pairs) connected alternately from the front, then the back, of the previous two links (or link pairs) in a continuous row. This alternating of the direction gives the finished chain a woven profile.	SINGAPORE	Singapore chain features links that are interconnected to form an elongated diamond structure that is then twisted and flattened to form the chain.
RING & CONNECTOR	Ring & connector chain features round ring links connected by round or oval flat-top links that serve as pads for attaching gemstones or findings.	SNAKE, UNSEAMED	Traditional (unseamed) snake chain is made from round, slightly curved metal plates or bands tightly joined together; the plates create a subtle zig-zag effect along the length of the chain.
ROLO	Rolo chain features links that are created from flat or half- round wire. The shape of the links may be round or oval.	SNAKE, SEAMED	Seamed snake chain is created with soldered, machine- made curb-style chain that is compressed twice, producing the snake-like appearance and leaving behind a telltale seam visible along its length.
ROPE	Rope chain features twisted links that are each connected to two other links in a continuous row. The twist creates a spiraled effect similar to the woven fibers of a rope.		Tinsel chain begins as a serpentine chain; the links are then hammered into an interlocking S-design before being twisted.
SCROLL	Scroll chain features links created from two lengths of wire spiraled outward in opposite directions from a center point. The spiral creates the scrolled look; the outer ends finish in a loop that allows the links to be connected to one another.	WHEAT	A variation of rope chain, wheat chain is made with alternating figure-eight links that are closely interconnected to present a braided look and an almost square profile.

Chain Width and Length

In determining width, take into account the overall size of your pendant or the design you are creating. Choose a chain width and thickness that accommodates a suitably sized bail or jump rings. If you buy finished chain, ensure that its end ring will fit through your bail (or plan how you will attach your design to the chain).

When determining your finished length use this photo showing the standard lengths as a reference.





16"

18"

20"

22"



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Metal Types and Finishes

Metal type plays a crucial role in the design of your piece—not only for its appearance but also for the value, durability and any maintenance required to keep it lustrous. This chart describes the characteristics of the most common metal types and finishes.

18 KARAT GOLD	
ALLER C	18-karat gold contains 75% gold and 25% alloyed metals and it provides a richer-yellow color than 14K.
14 KARAT YELLOW GOLD	14 karat gold is 50% gold and 42% alloyed metals and it
) 0000	14-karat gold is 58% gold and 42% alloyed metals and it provides the classic yellow gold color.
14 KARAT WHITE GOLD	White gold is an alloy of gold and at least one white metal,
	usually nickel, manganese or palladium. The purity of white gold is given in karats. Most chain is 14K.
ARGENTIUM® SILVER	Made with a touch of germanium, Argentium® Silver presents a bright white color that is closer to fine silver than
NINI AND	traditional sterling, yet is extremely slow to tarnish under most conditions.
STERLING SILVER	Sterling silver is the standard in silver jewelry and contains
KU QÜÜ QÜQULA Q	92.5% silver and 7.5% copper. It is more durable than pure silver but can tarnish if exposed to oils in the skin as well as contaminants in the air.

GOLD-FILLED	Gold-filled metals are available in yellow and rose and deliver karat gold at a more affordable cost than solid gold. 14/20 gold-filled material is made with 14-karat gold bonded to a base-metal core. The gold represents 1/20th of the total weight of the material.
SILVER-FILLED	Silver-filled chain offers your customers the bright white finish of sterling at a very affordable price. 1/10 silver-filled metal features sterling silver bonded to a base-metal core and is no less than 10% sterling silver.
BASE METAL	Base metal, such as copper, brass, and bronze is ideal for mixed-metal, alternative materials designs and are often used for plating. Most copper chain is raw and will patina over time; to maintain the desired color, or to prevent discoloration on skin, a lacquer can be used.
PLATED	Many chains are electroplated with other metals to add color and durability, protect against tarnish or to brighten finish.

Common Selling Units for Chain



When purchasing chain you should consider what units the chain is sold in. At Rio we offer pre-cut finished chain, by the foot or inch and bulk spools; each has its advantages depending on the type of work you are doing.

Pre Cut

Pre-cut chains are finished with a clasp and offered in most standard lengths. Bracelet lengths (commonly 7") are also available in several styles.

By the Foot or Inch

You have the option of ordering some chain by the foot (silver and base metals) or by the inch (gold). You can purchase the amount you need for your current project or forecast what you'll need over a period of time and purchase at your best price break.

Bulk Spools

Buying bulk spools (10, 20, 50, or 250-ft. lengths), when available, is an economical choice and can help ensure that you have whatever length you need on hand when you need it. With bulk chain, you must select a clasp and allow for the work steps necessary to attach it to your chain. Selecting your own clasp can add greater customization to your finished design.

Special Orders

If you're looking for a large quantity of chain, a specialty length of finished chain or a style you don't see on our website, we will do our best to special order it for you. Give us a call at 800-545-6566 or email us at info@riogrande.com to request a quote.

Soldered vs. Unsoldered

Most precious metal chain has links that are soldered together. This strengthens the chain by closing the links so that gaps won't form and cause the chain to break. Some chain, cannot be easily soldered and therefore the links are left open. Unsoldered chains should be used with care and you must make sure links are substantial enough to handle typical wear and pendant weight without stretching.





Give us a call at 800.545.6566 and talk to one of our experts.





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