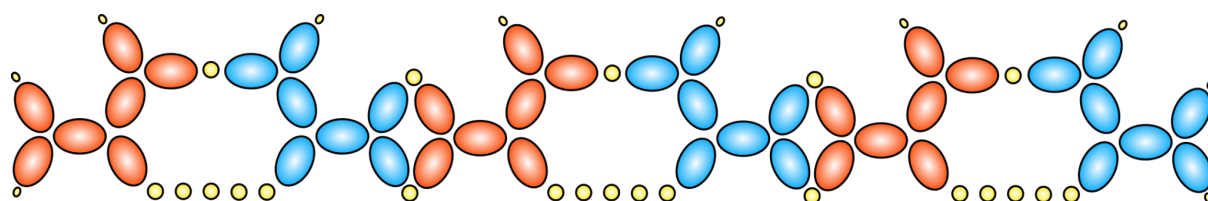


Sarah Cryer - The Indecisive Beader



Balloon Dog Weave - a silly new stitch! International Beading Week 2024



The 2024 theme for International Beading Week is 'celebration'.

All celebrations need balloons, and the very best balloons are those fabulous sculptures made by twisting and shaping long thin balloons. The most glorious of these is undoubtedly the simple Balloon Doggy. Even Jeff Koons makes art from them - you can see one we spotted on the Grand Canal in Venice below, so this year I thought I'd try to make some in beads. Once I'd made an individual one for fun I started to see that they could be linked together to form a chain of doggies. Additional links to mirrored pairs stabilise the weave, and give you a whole pack of doggies to play with.

This isn't a full tutorial (mine usually contain much more detail), it's just a quick stitch guide/outline made as a gift from me to you, which you can play with as you will - do show me your balloon doggies in the IBW Facebook Group, or on my own social media (links below) - I'd love to see them please!

See more of my work and find links to purchase my full Tutorials, Beading and Goldwork supplies:

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Materials

I've tested this with 6x4mm Czech Oval 'Rice Pearls' as beads A & B, mainly in the opaque colours rather than the pearlescent, but either are fine as balloons come in both options! If you're making the linked versions you'll need at least 2 contrasting colours so you can see the doggies clearly. I've used 15 seeds for the end stop beads (S), and 2mm rounds (Z) for the end of the nose and the linking sections (11 seeds also work).

If you have them, you could substitute Swarovski or equivalent Rice Pearls (usually 4x3mm), you'll probably need to stick with the same 15s and rounds as there isn't much smaller. You could also use Fire Polished ovals, or indeed any oval or olive shaped bead of any size - you just need to scale up the seeds and linking beads to match - have a play.

Each doggy needs 7 ovals, plus a varying number of rounds and seeds depending on the layout you're using. As usual you'll need a beading needle, scissors & thread (I use KO or Miyuki but honestly any beading thread will work for these, you could even have a play with using very thin wire).

Sources for the Rice Pearls - UK Tanzee Designs, US Jill Wiseman Designs.

Tips

This is a bit of fun, rather than a serious stitch, so you'll find it has its flaws. In the basic form it will twist and you'll lose sight of your doggies - exactly what happens when you don't twist the balloons enough in real life. However, when you add the second mirrored layer the legs and noses are tied in place, and you have a great width for a bracelet or cuff.

In the written out steps the *sections in italics* describe which part of the doggies you've just added or woven through, so you can get the hang of their anatomy as portrayed in beads.

Key



A = 6x4mm Rice Pearls Colour 1

B = 6x4mm Rice Pearls Colour 2

Z = 2mm Rounds or size 11 seeds

S = size 11 seeds

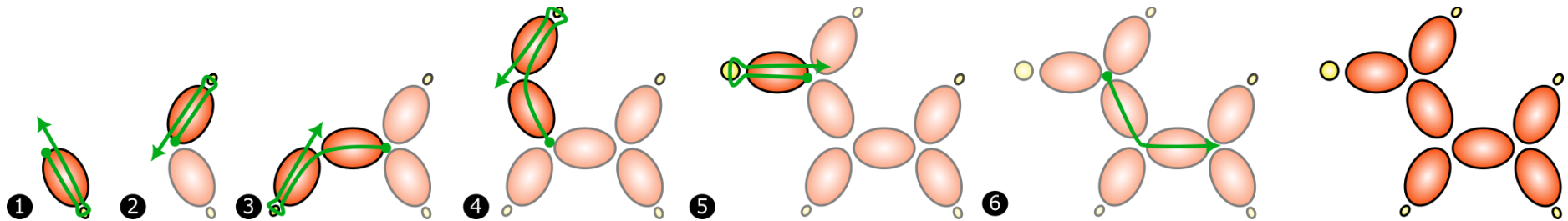
Copyright

This pattern has been conceived and developed by me as a gift for beaders all over the world for International Beading Week 2024, run by the Beadworkers Guild. As such, I'm happy for you to make this design to sell (in small quantities only) so you can buy lots more beads (and tutorials), but please make sure you give me full credit as designer, and explain that the pattern formed part of International Beading Week. Please respect my rights as a designer and do not pass finished pieces off as your own design, teach the design, or reproduce this tutorial or the images in it in any way without my express permission.

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Single Doggy (earrings or a pendant)

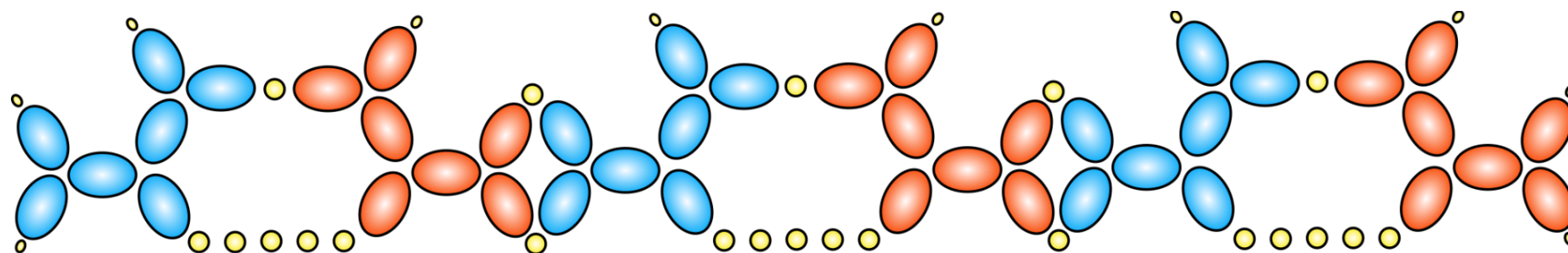


1. Pick up A, S and go back through the A (*back leg*)
2. Pick up A, S and go back through the A (*tail*)
3. Pick up 2A, S and go back through the second A only (*body & front leg*)
4. Pick up 2A, S and go back through the second A only (*neck and ear*)
5. Pick up A, S and go back through the A (*nose*)
6. Pass back through the neck A & body A to get back to your starter thread. Knot securely.



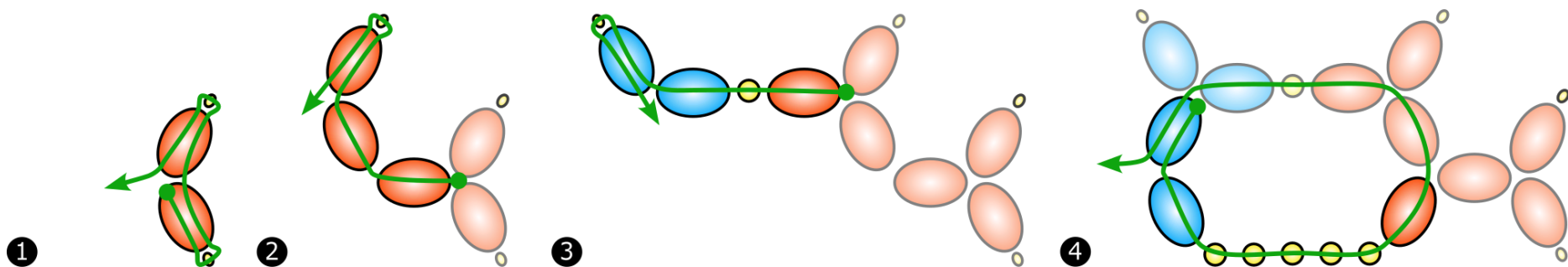
You now have a teeny tiny balloon doggy - use the remainder of the thread to weave through to your chosen location and add a jump ring or similar to make a cute earring. Left you can see I've made a 'huggy' style earring by attaching the nose to the front of a stud and the tail to the butterfly - this has the added advantage of making the doggy hang nicely and not twist around.

Linked Doggies (bracelet or necklace)

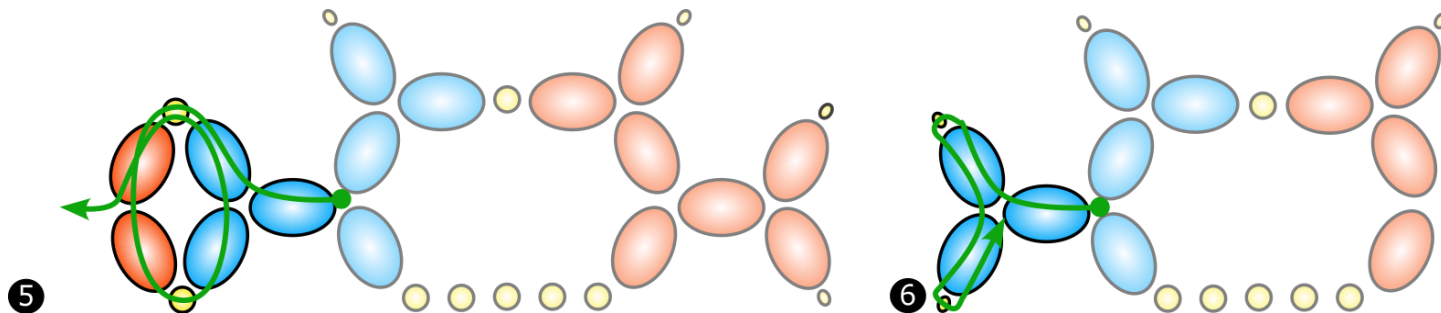


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1. Pick up A S, back through A (*back leg*), leaving a 6" tail. Pick up A, S, back through A just added (*tail*).
2. Pick up 3A S, back through last A (*body, neck and ear*).
3. Pick up A Z 2B S, back through last B (*nose A, join, nose and ear B*)
4. Pick up 2B 5Z A, through A A (*neck & nose A*), Z (*join*), 2B (*nose & neck B*)



5. Pick up 2B Z 2A Z B (*body & tail B, join, tail & back leg A, join, back leg B*). Go back through second B just added, through Z and first A just added

Repeat 2- 5 until you're happy with the length. On the final set, stop at 4 and jump to step 6 to complete the rear of your last doggie.

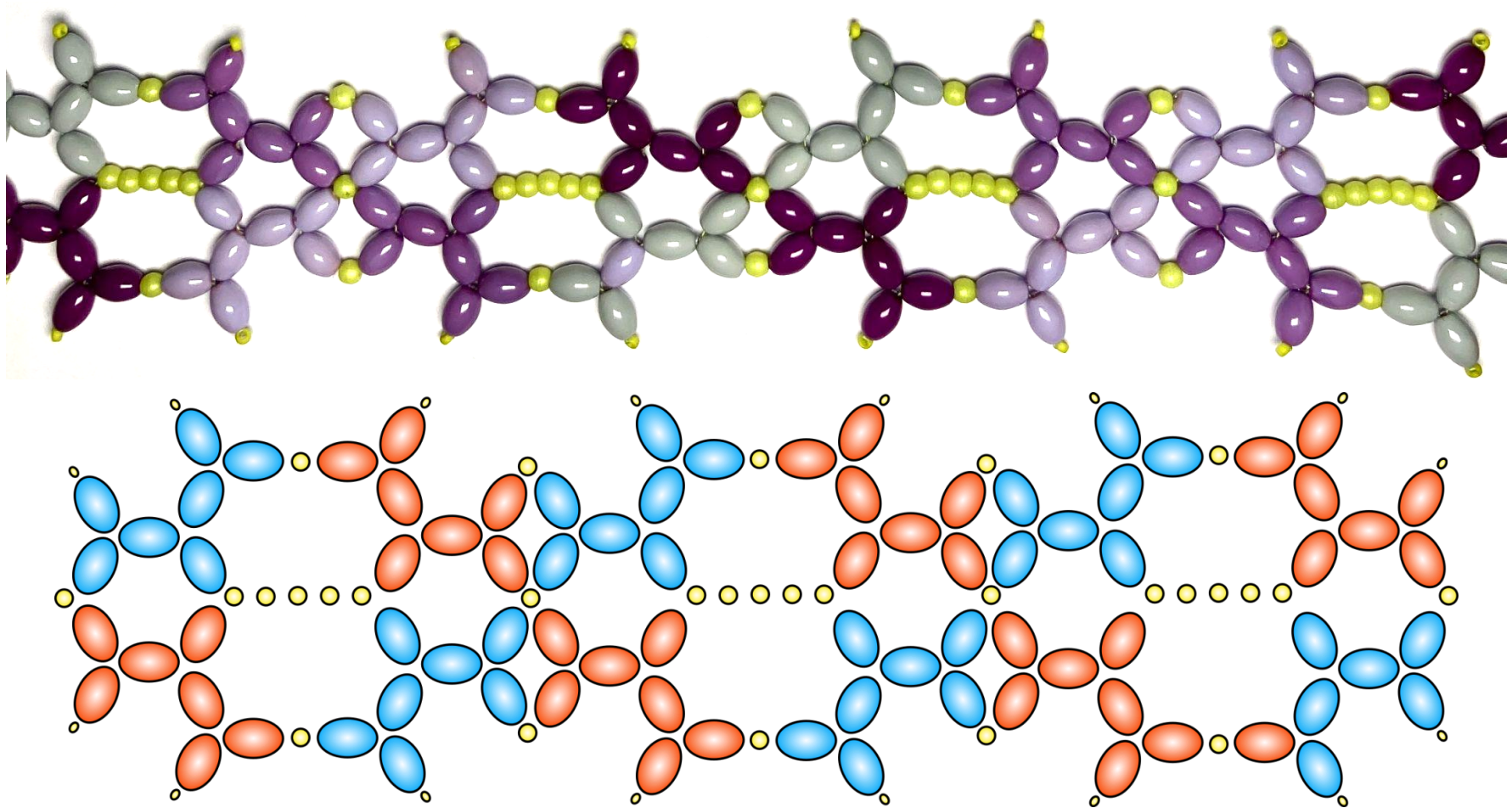
6. Pick up 2B S back through last B (*body & tail*), pick up B S back through B.

Add any required findings, secure your thread ends and cut.

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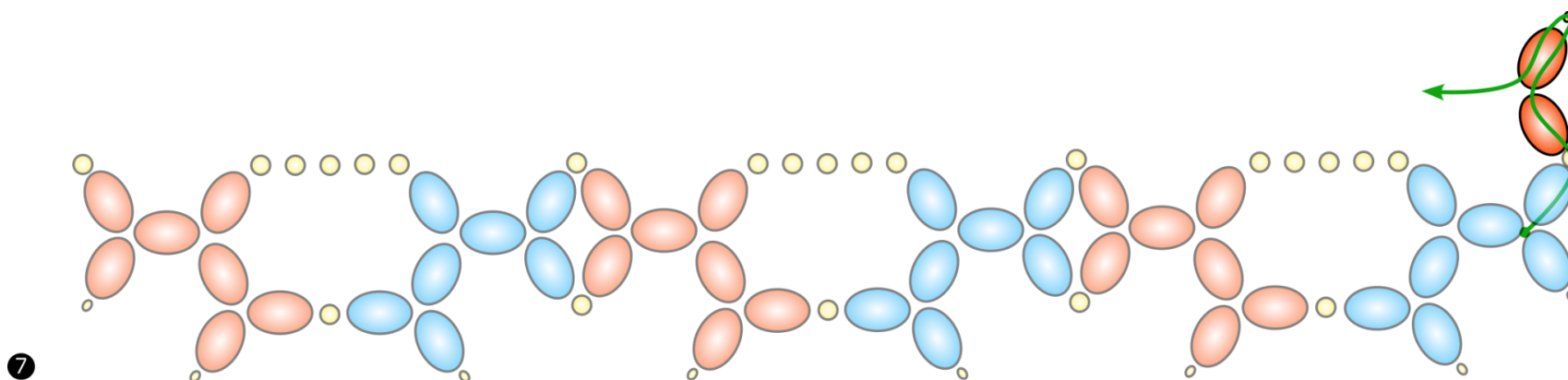
Double Doggies (cuff)



For a Double Doggy, giving you a flat stable weave suitable for a cuff, start by beading your required length in Linked Doggy using steps 1-6. **However**, in step 1, substitute a Z for the first S (*end of the back leg of the first unit*), and do the same in step 6 for the second S (*back leg of the final unit*). Then:

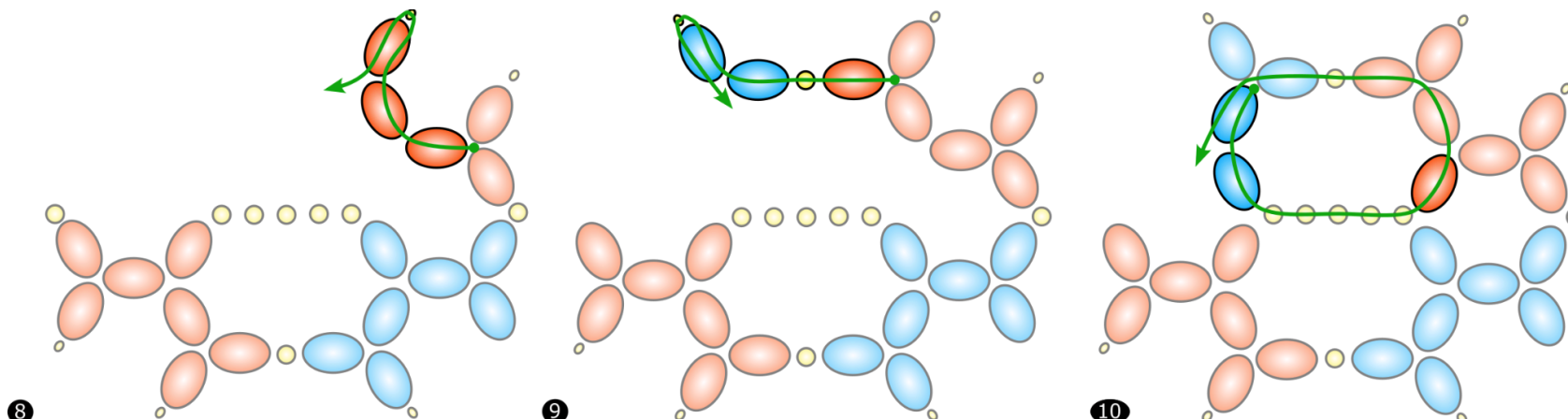
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7

7. Flip your piece so it's as above. Weave through the back leg of the end B doggy and Z. Pick up 2A S and back through the last A just added (*back leg A and tail*).



8

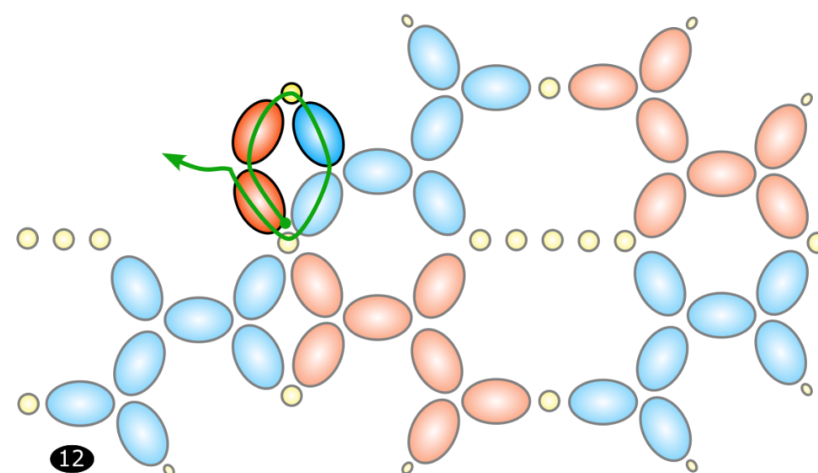
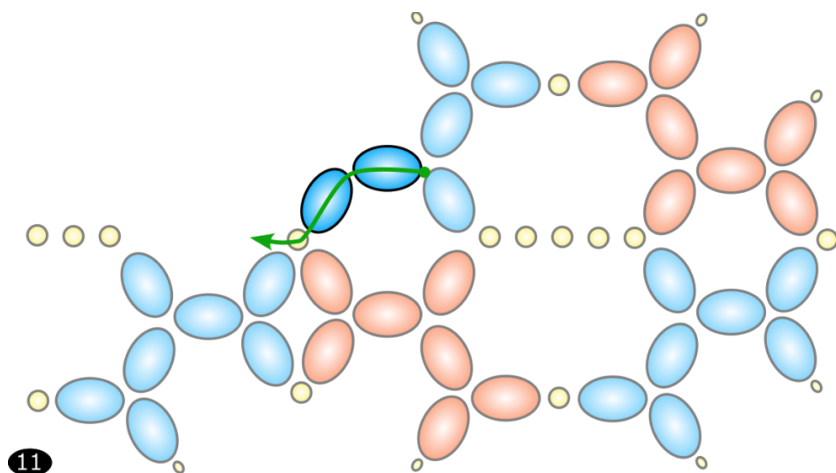
8. Pick up 3A S then back through the last A just added (*body, neck, ear A*)

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9. Pick up A Z 2B S back through the last A just added (*nose A, join, nose & ear B*)

10

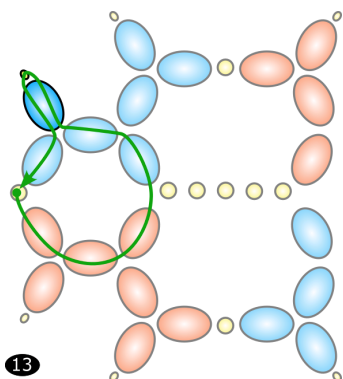
10. Pick up 2B, back through the group of 5Z (join). Pick up A (*front leg*), through 2A Z B (*neck & nose A, join, nose & neck B*)



11. Pick up 2B (*body & back leg B*). Weave through Z (*join*)

12. Pick up 2A Z B (*back leg & tail A, join, tail B*). Weave through B Z A (*back leg B, join, back leg A*)

Continue repeating from 8 - 12 until you've created the required number of doggy units. On the final set, stop at 11 and go to step 13 to complete the rear of your last doggie.



13. On the last unit, instead of step 12, go through 3A (*back leg, body, front leg A*), through 2B (*front leg, body B*) pick up B S, back through B (*tail B*). Weave through B (*back leg*) through Z

Weave through to add any required findings, secure thread and cut.