

Soldering

There are three basic methods for soldering. Each method has advantages. Whichever method you choose to work with, don't forget that strength is more important than looks. The most effective way to get both strength and good looks is to learn to solder as quickly as possible. Whether it's spot soldering lead together, or running a bead on foil, your goal should be to finish it with your first effort. The more times you go back over it to correct or adjust the solder, the more likely you will produce defects. Try to get it right the first time.

Dab method is using the hot iron to pick up solder than dropping it onto where you want to solder. This is used for soldering seams on lead came, zinc channel and for attaching wire. It's also a great way to fill in gaps. Dabbing is also used to spot solder foiled pieces together and to deposit solder on foil seams to be spread out with the trowel method.

Trowel method is using the iron to push molten solder along like a trowel is used to push plaster. The iron can be held vertical (straight up) or horizontal (sliding sideways). This is one of the easiest ways to learn to solder but is extremely difficult to control the amount of solder applied. It usually requires several passes to produce a finished bead. Whenever you have applied too much solder, you'll have to trowel it out of the way. You can vary how you trowel by using different positions on the soldering tip. That flat face is hotter than the edge or tip.

Draw method uses the iron to pull or "draw" the solder. The iron is slid flat along the seam on its while the solder is melted onto the opposite side of the tip. The hot iron draws the solder as it deposits it. This is more difficult to master than trowelling, but is often quicker. By properly coordinating the flow of solder with the draw of the iron, you can produce a finished bead with your first pass.