



COOL TOOLS | BY HELEN I. DRIGGS

MANAGING EDITOR

## CLAMP IT DOWN

*Clamps, clips, and tweezers*

It's the flux volcano that really pushes me over the edge. You know — that white, bubbling, ever-expanding blob that totally obliterates any hope or delusion you may have had about precise pallion placement. I have close to unlimited patience for my craft, but when my careful prep goes haywire under the flame, I have the potential to become a not-so-nice person. And I hate it when really loud, bad words come flying out of my mouth. Thankfully, every metals instructor I have studied with has a personal arsenal of tricks for holding down all of those bubbling little bits and pieces. And, you can bet I have written every one of them down in my little hot-pink notebook — with sketches and diagrams, thank you very much. I am not obsessive-compulsive. Just thorough.



**MARCIA LEWIS** These handy little clips are easy to make from inexpensive piano or stovepipe wire or piano wire. Don't use your good cutters – the hard steel wire will wreck them – and be decisive when forming it, because the steel will fight back if you wiggle it too much!

**(Photo 1)** Cut about 4 inches of 18-16 gauge stovepipe wire or piano wire. Don't use your good cutters – the hard steel wire will wreck them – and be decisive when forming it, because the steel will fight back if you wiggle it too much!

**(Photo 2)** With n

**(Photo 3)** Make a

**(Photo 4)** Draw t

**(Photo 5)** Bend t

**(Photo 6)** Bend t block with a ball-pe

**(Photo 7)** Adjust allows them to hold during soldering.



## ALAN REVERE

When Revere presented this tip at a conference I attended last fall, there was an "ah-ha!" ripple through the audience. This is a simple, elegant solution for precision soldering that uses nothing more than utility tweezers and a slot cut into the bench pin:



**(Photo 1)** Cut a slot about 10 mm wide and 10 mm deep into the side of your bench pin. I am right-handed, so that's where I cut mine.

**(Photo 2)** Insert the part to be soldered into the jaws of the tweezers and slide them in the slot and down – just to the point where the pressure holds the jaws closed. Solder and go!

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soldering steps.

## READER ROUND-UP

Cool Tools is a regular feature of *Jewelry Artist*. If you have a tool you would like featured, a useful modification, or interesting bench trick, contact Helen Driggs, Managing Editor, Jewelry Artist, 300 Chesterfield Parkway, Suite 100, Malvern, PA 19355, or [HDriggs@hmrweave.com](mailto:HDriggs@hmrweave.com), subject line "Cool Tools." Please include your complete contact information with all submissions.

**AND ANOTHER THING** In the spirit of sharing, I invite those of you who may also have little notebooks full of information to send me some of it for future issues. Next month, this space will be devoted to your tips and tricks. We are proud of our new name and look, and will continue our tradition of passing information from maker to maker. So, send me your stuff!