

## Allyson Weir

Allyson Weir is a long-time knitter and crocheter, having taught knitting at the YWCA longer ago than she will admit. Several years ago, after retiring from work as a school counselor, she taught herself how to knit and crochet with thin wire using the old steel needles and hooks from her mother and grandmother. Many wire jewelers use the term "knitting" for twisting wire on a spindle, but Allyson uses actual knitting needles and the same stitches as with yarn. Her crocheted wire often has a very regular pattern while knitting has more random loops.

The necklace in the photo above will be featured in the April 2010 "Pearls" issue of BeadStyle Magazine.

Allyson uses fine silver, 14 karat gold-filled, and niobium metals in her jewelry.

"Fine" silver is 99.9% pure silver, as compared to sterling, which is 92.5% pure silver. Fine silver is stronger and tarnishes less than sterling, and has the advantage of no additional metals to which some people are allergic. "Gold-filled" wire has up to 100 times more gold than "gold-plated", and is actually a tube of gold with a nickel-free core. Niobium is a pure, hypo-allergenic metal colored through anodizing. Niobium jewelry is placed in a water bath and different voltages passing through the metal create different colors. Allyson often incorporates freshwater pearls, semi-precious gemstones, dichroic glass, and natural seaglass into her work.



Apart from its beauty, the jewelry is comfortable to wear. The wire is lightweight, strong, and conforms to the body. Some pieces are nearly as flexible as fabric. Each piece should be kept separate, ideally in its own box to prevent crushing, and a ziploc plastic bag keeps the silver from tarnishing. Periodic gentle washing in warm water and dish soap keeps the jewelry shining. Silver polishing cloths are ineffective because they cannot reach all sides of the wires and can squash the design. Jewelry composed of fine silver, sterling silver, and most gemstones can be polished with jewelry "dipping" solutions. Please email any questions you have about care.

Every piece of jewelry Allyson creates is one-of-a-kind. Previously she worked in textile

crafts and learned the fun in the creation process and the boredom in redoing similar items. She sells her work primarily through galleries, but will sometimes talk with a customer about a special request.

