Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

Watch my **YouTube video**(s), posted under this PDF on my website, for the best walk-along about the process and tips for completing the earrings from my laser-cut earring kits. These written instructions are like notes for the videos, touching on important information including:

- Order of steps
- Reasoning behind the steps and the choices available
- Information on the materials and techniques

STEP ONE: Sanding

The laser-cut wood pieces that form the foundation of your kit will arrive without sharp edges. While I like the smooth, laser-darkened edges, you may prefer your earrings with lighter edges or with smoother grain on the front and back surfaces. I've included **400 grit sandpaper** in the kits so that you can alter those features to your preference before you paint. When you're done sanding, **use a damp cloth to remove the dust** from the surfaces before painting.

Painting CAUTION:

If you will be gluing earring posts, don't paint the back of the decorative post face until after you have glued the post. Waiting to paint will help ensure the strongest bond possible between the metal and wood. There is more information in the section on earring findings.

Also, if your kit has wood layers there will be a layer guide on the folded guide that comes in your kit**. Identify where the layers will be glued together**. The faces that will accept a glued layer will have laser-engraved cross-hatching. To avoid unintentionally getting paint on the laser-darkened edges, it is a good idea to paint before gluing layers, but **avoid painting cross-hatched areas, the backs of layers, and post face backs.**

STEP TWO: Protecting the Surface

While my samples are all painted, **painting isn't mandatory**. Your choice of how to finish the surface of the earrings depends on the aesthetic you prefer. Because basswood is not as physically hard as other woods, I recommend **protecting the surface** even if you leave it unpainted. Minimally, I'd recommend applying a **clear coat**. Clear coats can also be used over paint. Some I've used with good results on other projects include:

- Mod Podge (they have a wide variety of products and finishes)
- Krylon spray acrylic (needs to be done outside; comes in several finishes)

Other brands I trust with clear-coat products I haven't yet tried include DecoArt (Michaels), FolkArt (Michaels), Liquitex (Michaels and art stores), and Rust-oleum (hardware stores).

Acrylic Paint Markers:

I use acrylic paint markers, like Posca markers, when painting my samples. I like the control they provide and, since I like vibrant colors, the color palette available suits my style.

> You may have **alcohol-based ink markers**, like COPIC. While those will color your wood, they are transparent colors that will **work more like a stain** than a paint. If you go this route, I would definitely apply a clear coat to seal the top.

Posca and Montana are two of the better known names, often used by professional artists, with reliable pen mechanisms and paint dispersal, a range of tip sizes, and high quality opaque paint … with a corresponding price tag. Increasingly, there are other options, many of which are less expensive and have good value. While I haven't explored every acrylic paint pen, some that I've played with:

Acrylic Brush Markers
Fine-tipped generic acrylic brush markers. These work more like regular pens and markers compared to the reservoir-spring-tip mechanism paint markers like POSCA and Montana. These markers are **affordable** and work very well when new, but I haven't worked with them long enough to compare their longevity with more expensive, brand-name markers. These are available in my Etsy shop.

Chromatek
Similar in construction and function as the acrylic brush markers, but with a wide bullet point instead of a brush tip. If you have something like this already, feel free to use them, but I wouldn't purchase these specifically to use on our kits.

POSCA
Professional-grade acrylic paint markers that can be purchased in a variety of tip shapes and sizes. I use the 0.7mm bullet point, which can be purchased individually or in kits online (or in art stores). While more expensive than more generic versions, they have good brand **reliability**: opaque paints with vibrant pigments, and reliable pen mechanisms for long-term use and (while not advertized) are **refillable**.

For **metallic finishes**, I've been using high gloss **liquid chrome markers** that I found on Amazon. The brand I bought is Lets Resin, but it looks like there are many brands that are similar.

Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

Acrylic and Gouache Paint:

I work with a wide variety of artistic media, so I happen to have a cart full of acrylic and gouache paint in tubes and bottles. If you do, too, **use them**! Like with paint markers, there is a continuum of quality that you can see primarily in the vibrancy, opacity, and consistency of the pigment in its binder. That is to say, you should feel free to experiment with what you have, but cheaper paints may look more like washes of color, or may need more layers; alternatively, heavy body professional acrylic paints may need to be thinned to avoid overwheming the small wooden canvas that the kit provides.

The Sky Is the Limit:

While it is perfectly fine for you to copy the examples I show on my website and in my Etsy shop, I don't want anyone to feel constrained in decorating their kit. Besides your own creative inspiration, some decorating options you could consider include:

- Painting the base one color, then using rubber or wood stamps to **"print" a layer** in another color(s)
- Using a **paint gradient** instead of a single color, either
  - applied directly to the basswood, or
  - mixed on a flat surface and pressing the wood onto the color
    - you may want to consider using painter's tape placed on label-backing paper, then using a paper-punch to punch out small circles to protect the engraved areas where the rhinestones will be glued later
- Using Mod Podge to attach **decorative paper and/or fabric** then, when dry, using a craft knife and sandpaper to remove the excess.
  - While I haven't tried this method yet, spend some time considering
    - how the rhinestones will adhere to the surface treatment
    - if you need to avoid applying material to the engraved areas where the rhinestones or other layers will be glued, and how you might do that (¿like pre-stiffening any fabric and punching out holes where the rhinestones will go?)

Glue Layers

Once the paint and any clear coats are dry to the touch, **glue together any wood layers** that you have. Typically, I use a **PVA glue** (like Bearly Arts precision craft glue) or wood glue, because they tend to adhere the layers faster and create a stronger bond between wood layers. However, the B-7000 glue that comes with your kit also works. There is more information about the B-7000 glue in a later section.

Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

STEP THREE: Applying Rhinestones

The kits come in four basic types. **Beginner** kits only have 5mm rhinestones, **intermediate** kits either have two sizes of a limited number of rhinestones or more intricate layering, and **advanced/costume** kits have many rhinestones in multiple sizes.

Beginner	Beginner Layered	Intermediate Layered	Advanced/Costume
Rainbow Strand Rainbow Wreath Rhinestone Wreath Rainbow Teardrop	SpaceSatellite	Planetary Orbital Semi-orbital	Botonnee Cross Marquise Drops

I include spare rhinestones in every kit: a set for the left earring, a set for the right, and **an extra set** … just in case one or two go flying. Fortunately, you should also have plenty of glue left at the end, so have fun and be creative with those hopefully-not-lost extras!

Sorting Rhinestones:

While the beginner kits will only have 5mm rhinestones, you'll still want to sort the rhinestones so they're **all facing up and in the order you want to apply them**. With the intermediate and advanced kits, you'll also want to be sure you have a handle on which are the smallest and largest rhinstones before applying glue; the advanced kits can have three to five sizes in millimeter increments from 2mm to 6mm.

About B-7000 Glue:

B-7000 glue (similar to E6000) is a rubberized adhesive that's used to combine materials with different properties, such as (pourous) wood and (non-pourous) acrylic. The **glue sets in about 10 minutes and fully cures in 48 hours**. As you're working with it, you need to find the right balance of enough glue to attach to the materials, but not so much that it oozes when you put the rhinestone on the wood. One option you'll have in kit customization is a small **test project** where you can practice gluing the rhinestones before moving onto the kit project. You can also use your extra rhinestones and scrap cardboard or wood for this.

Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

Be aware that this glue has a **noticible chemical smell**. The smell should dissipate in about 10 minutes after application. The way I recommend using the glue for these kits -- incrementally using small amounts -- I haven't felt like I needed to take special precautions to avoid the smell, nor have I felt symptoms like lightheadedness. However, according to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) (http://www.apexbt.com/downloader/document/B7000/MSDS.pdf) a respirator may be helpful when using B-7000 glue if you are sensitive to chemical smells. Be aware of your comfort levels and take the appropriate precautions like working outdoors, in a room with good airflow, or with a respirator. If you're looking for a respirator, I recommend the half-face respirator from 3M that I use when soldering metal or using chemicals for etching metal. It works well and isn't too bulky. There are generic versions on Amazon that include the filters for less than $20 (as of August 2025).

Gluing Rhinestones:

The round, dark spaces on the wood base where you will glue your rhinestones are laser-engraved. This engraving creates thin wooden fins between laser-cut spaces that create a 3D space for the glue to soak in, increasing the surface area where the glue can adhere to the wood. What this means is, when you apply the glue, you need to apply enough to create a **small (~1mm) dome of glue** covering the entire engraved spot so there's both enough to soak in and enough remaining to fully contact the bottom of the rhinestone.

Only apply glue to **one or two spots at a time**. If you do more than that, it will all soak into the wood and the rhinestone won't adhere unless you add more glue. Cover the glue tube when not in use.

Use the short **wax crayon** to pick up the rhinestone and touch the rhinestone to the glue. If there's enough glue, the rhinestone will stay adhered when you remove the wax. If the rhinestone comes away with the wax, keep the rhinestone on the crayon and add a little more glue to the wood and try applying the rhinestone again. **Let the rhinestone glue set** for at least 10 minutes before moving on to attach the findings.

STEP FOUR: Attaching Findings

If your kit has **earring posts with pads**, you'll want to take care of that now.

Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

While post-and-pad findings require more time and patience to use than other earring findings, they are fun in the versatility they allow for designing a decorative face for the earring post. To use them:

- Use your 400-grit sandpaper to **sand the back of the pad**
- **Apply a dome of glue to the back-center of the post face.** The guide included in your kit will help you identify which piece this is -- it will be the piece that's smaller than the dangling bit, and it will have only one loop (versus two loops on opposite sides for connector components). Because I only engrave one side of each wood piece, the back will be plain; the front will be engraved for the rhinestone.
- Use pliers to grasp the post and press the pad firmly into the dome of glue. In this case, you do want the pad to abut the wood; the excess glue around the pad edges will help keep it adhered firmly.
- Once the glue is set, you can finish painting any unpainted backs that you left bare while gluing layers together. You'll want to finish all painting before attaching any jump rings.

Other Earring Findings:

Every kit will have some form of **earring findings**. When customizing your kit in my Etsy shop, you may have different options for finding type and metal/color:

French Wire with pinch bail   Kidney lever back   Hoop lever back   Post with glue pad

Jewelry Pliers:

To manipulate jewelry findings confidently, I use Xuron **jewelry pliers** because of their precise, strong tips. My favorites, in order, are:

Xuron 450 tweezer tips   Xuron 494 4-in-1 crimper   Xuron 485FN

My favorite: a micro flat-nose plier   very precise chain-nose tip   flat-nose, wider than the tweezer tips

Laser-cut Earring Kit:
Detailed Information

Depending on where you get them, including Amazon or your local hobby store (where I live in St. Paul, MN we have a store called Hub Hobby that carries them), Xuron jewelry pliers cost between $15 and $20. There also seem to be generic hardened steel versions that are more in the $6 - $10 range that are likely to be similar, but may vary in the quality of the hinge, spring-opening function, and metal quality.

While Xuron (not a sponsor of mine) are *my* favorite, any chain-nose pliers that you already have should do fine.

If you are new to the world of jewelry pliers, note that *jewelry* pliers have flat, smooth jaw surfaces and regular pliers have serrated jaw surfaces which can damage the soft metals that are used in jewelry-making. Chain-nose pliers have a tapered, rounded tip. Flat-nose pliers have a square tip. Besides the smooth jaws, jewelry pliers differ from long-nose pliers in their shorter, more powerful jaws. This allows you to get a strong grip with less force on soft metals, like copper, brass, and sterling, so you're less likely to damage the surfaces.
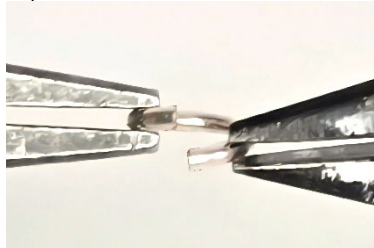
Jump Rings:

The rings that form jump rings and finding loops are deceptively complex. Their circular shape and metal composition allows them to function like a spring clamp. To keep them as strong as possible for as long as possible, we need to open and close them in a certain way.

Jump rings are made by coiling wire on a metal rod, then sawing the coil to create individual rings. This is why the ends of new jump rings are usually offset. **To open a jump ring**, we use our pliers to grasp the ring on either side of the opening and then twist one side forward and the other side backward to increase that opening. **To close, we reverse the motion while pushing inward** to fully close the gap. You're done when the gap is as invisible as you can make it.
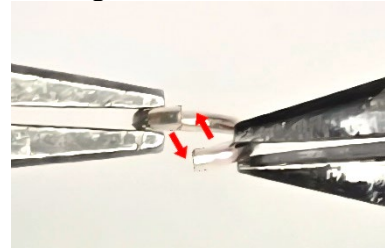
Opening:
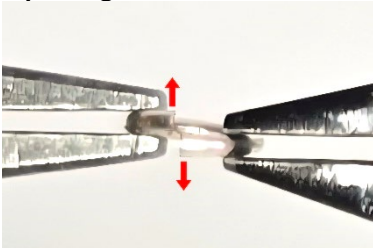
Open:

Closing:

The rings on the earring findings work the same way, but if you attach the jump ring to the finding while the jump ring is open, you shouldn't need to open the rings on the findings.

I hope you have fun making and wearing/gifting your earrings! If you still have questions, and you've looked at the relevant videos, please message me in my Etsy shop!