

THE ZEN OF PAPERMAKING

Making your own paper is an exciting and rewarding experience. The paper you make can be used for bookmaking, writing letters, collage, printmaking and just about anything else that you can think of.

Materials:

- deckle and mould
- sponge(s)
- blender
- tub or sink (must be larger than your mould)
- plastic sheets
- towels
- materials from which to make your own paper

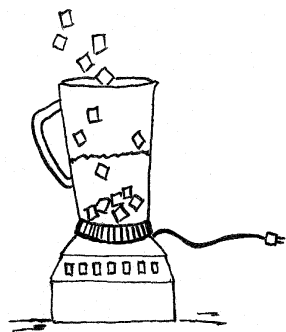
PREPARING YOUR WORK STATION

First, it is important to set up a clean and safe work environment. Cover your work table and floor with plastic sheets to minimize any possible water overflow. Lay out a towel on your work table and then place your tub on top. The towel will help soak up any spilled water. You may also want to lay some old towels on the floor to give you better traction and to catch any drips of water.

Set up a separate table for your blender, ensuring that the cords are a safe distance away from any water.

PREPARING THE PULP

Now you can start to make the pulp. Paper pulp can be made out of just about anything, however, the process is easier if the materials are cut into small pieces (about 1.5" or 4 cm square) and pre-soaked prior to blending. To start, it is best to use old scraps of paper that have been soaked for a minimum of 4 and up to 24 hours. Remember to avoid



using glossy paper as it will not break down and requires a special process to be recycled.

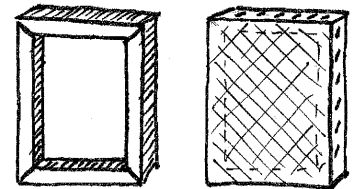
After the paper has been soaked fill the blender half way with water and then add a small amount of pulp to the blender. Be careful not to over-stuff the blender. It is best to start out with small amounts of paper until you know how much stress your blender can take. If your blender starts to slow down or the motor gives off a "burning" smell then you are working it too hard. Be careful and patient, especially when you are trying to turn old fabric into pulp!

As you process the pulp, dump it into a pail, tub or kitchen sink filled with water (about four inches deep). If you are using your sink, please use care when you are cleaning up. When it comes time to empty the sink make sure you use a mesh screen over the drain to avoid clogging your pipes with pulp.

MAKING YOUR OWN MOULD & DECKLE

To make your own mould and deckle out of wood you will need eight pieces of 1" x 2" wood, cut down according to the size

of paper you desire. For example, if you want to make an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper the inside measurements of your deckle and



deckle

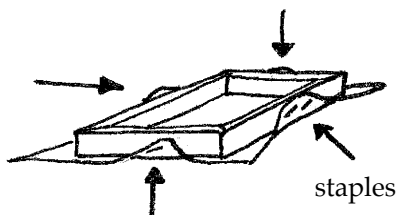
mould

mould should also be approximately 8.5" x 11". You will need two 8.5" pieces of wood and two 11" pieces of wood for each frame.

Join the pieces of wood at the corners with either a lap or mitre joint and a bit of wood glue to ensure a strong bond. When done, seal both wood frames with a water resistant finish or lacquer. Leave one frame uncovered for your deckle, and staple nylon screenprinting mesh tightly and smoothly across the other frame for your mould.

To stretch the screen use the same technique as you would to make a stretched canvas. Pull the material around the back on two sides opposite each other and staple. Then rotate your frame and do the same on the

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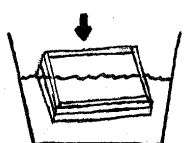
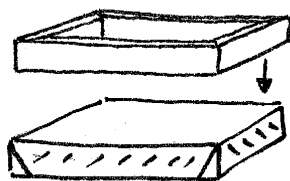


other two sides. Once you have a couple of staples in the middle of each side, continue to add staples along

the side of the frame moving out towards the corners as you go. Rotate the frame as you add new staples, always moving from one side to the opposite side until complete. Be sure to pull the material tight to ensure an even surface.

MAKING YOUR SHEET

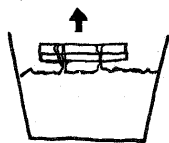
Next, take your mould and deckle with both hands and place the deckle against the screen side of the mould, and with both hands place it in the tub. Shake it gently from side to side and back and forth. In a straight, single motion carefully lift the mould out of the tub. The water will rush through the mould but the fiber will stay evenly coated on the mesh. Remember to keep the mould level, otherwise your paper will be of uneven thickness.



Step One



Step Two



Step Three

DRYING YOUR PAPER

The next step is to take your paper off the mould. First lay some newsprint paper out on a table, take your mould, remove the deckle and turn the mould over carefully placing the paper side down on the newsprint. Use newsprint paper and not printed newspaper as the ink may transfer onto your damp handmade paper. If you find flipping the mould too difficult, try laying the newsprint on top of the mould

first, then turn the mould over. Using a squeegee or sponge wipe the back inside of the mould from left to right while it lies face down on the newsprint. This will aid in squeezing out any excess water from the newly formed sheet. Use the sponge to mop up any pools of water from the back (inside) of the mould and then very carefully lift up the mould. Your paper will remain on the newsprint.

The next step is to iron the paper dry by putting a sheet of newsprint over the newly formed sheet of paper so it doesn't tear. Simply press down on the iron but don't slide it around or the newsprint will tear.

Another option is to use blotter paper instead of newsprint. Using the same process as above turn your mould over and place the newly formed sheet onto the blotter paper. Because blotter paper is highly absorbent you can use the same process as above or let the sheets air dry on the paper. Take care to move the sheet from one blotter to another once the blotter is too wet. Also, you can devise a press to help remove the water and flatten your paper. Afterwards leave your paper to air dry. Your blotter paper can be re-used when dry.

OPTIONS

Before placing the mould into the pulp mixture you can add different materials such as dried flowers, dye or shiny stars. This step is only limited by your imagination.

If you decide to use a procion dye (dry powder) to add colour to your paper be sure to follow the proper instructions. You will need extra supplies for this procedure such as a respirator, gloves and goggles. This process requires some care, and as soda ash (dye fixer) and procion dye are irritants if inhaled, it is recommended to wear a dust mask or respirator when working. In addition, please take extra precaution if you have children or pets – keep your work area out of their reach.

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CLEAN UP

When cleaning up be sure to collect as much pulp from the water bath as possible. This pulp can be stored by removing the excess water and then air drying or freezing it. Before dumping the water out cover your drain with some wire mesh to catch the extra pulp. Your mould screen can be used here, face down, to save the pulp and prevent clogging the drain. When this is done wipe up the excess water from your work station with sponges or towels. The towels can then be thrown into your dryer after the clean up is done.

Staff Tips:

- *If you are putting leaves, petals, herbs or other organic material into your pulp mixture make sure that they are completely dry. If they are not dry the natural oils found in the material will cause them to come away from the paper and sometimes stain. ~Kelaine*
- *100% cotton rag papers work best for linters. This includes papers such as matboard, scrap art papers and blotter papers. ~Rena*
- *Shredded paper and confetti are colourful additives for your pulp mixture. ~Rena*
- *Sprinkling PEARL-EX Iridescent Pigments on top of wet paper just after it has been removed from the screen can produce great luminous effects. ~Kelaine*
- *If you choose to use sizing, remember to add one tablespoon of sizing for every 6-8 sheets of paper pulled from the pulp bath. You can use gelatin, methyl cellulose, agar or sodium alginate for sizing. ~Rena*
- *To prevent lumping, ensure that hot water is used to dissolve stabilizers (gelatin sizings). If water is not draining from the paper screen it may be that there is too much sizing in the tub. ~Rena*
- *Sponging excess water from beneath the screen before inverting the screen will ensure that the pulp will not slide off the mold. ~Rena*
- *To make archival papers use only 100% Cotton rag linters, distilled water for the pulp bath, and purchase a pool test kit to check the pH balance of your pulp bath. ~Rena*

NOTES:

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NOTES:



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