

CHEAT SHEET

How to Make Handmade Paper from Recycled Materials

STEP 1: CUT UP PAPER

Cut or rip up paper into 1" squares. Soak your paper for a few hours or overnight. Drawing, printmaking, and watercolor papers are best because they are made from stronger fibers. Your fiber/scrap choice and its characteristics dictate the quality of the final sheet. Newspaper and magazine paper make weak and brittle paper.

STEP 2: BLEND IT & MAKE A VAT OF PULP

Fill up a kitchen blender with water. Throw in a good handful of the cut up scrap papers. Blend until it's a pulp.

Fill your tub or vat with the pulp, about 1/3 to 1/2 way. Add more water to the vat. The more pulp to water, the thicker your paper will be.

STEP 3: PULL SOME SHEETS

- Stir your vat of pulp.
- Hold the mould screen side up, and place the deckle evenly on top.
- Holding them together at a 45 degree angle, dip the mould and deckle to the bottom of the vat and scoop up, holding the mould and deckle horizontally.
- As you lift it out of the slurry, give it a quick shake back and forth, and left to right to align the fibers and make a more uniform sheet. Stop shaking before the sheet is fully drained.
- Let the water drain to a drip.

STEP 4: COUCHING

AKA transferring the wet sheet from the mould to a flat, absorbant surface. Set up your dampened felt or absorbant materials with a board underneath.

- Remove the deckle from the mould.
- Place a long edge of the mould on the felt.
- In one smooth motion, place the mold face down, press down, and lift from that initial edge. Think of this like a close the door, open the door, motion.

STEP 5: PRESSING

Option 1: Hand Pressing

- Place pellow or paper towel on top of your freshly couched sheet. With a sponge, press gently at first, then press firmly with as much pressure as possible. Have a rolling pin or old paint roller? Use that to press your paper more.

Option 2: Board Pressing

- Place another felt on top of your freshly couched sheet. Continue to couch another sheet, layer another felt, and repeat. Layer one final felt and another wood board when you've made a stack. Take the post outside to a concrete or stone surface. Stand on it!

STEP 6: DRYING (1-2 DAYS)

Option 1: Surface Drying

- Find a flat, non-porous surface. Smooth wood boards, plexiglass, windows, and formica surfaces work well.
- Take your wet sheet and gently press onto the flat surface. Make sure the edges are pressed down well.
- Let the paper dry. Peel it off.

Option 2: Exchange Drying

- Get blotters, towels, or other absorbent, dry, flat material.
- Layer the material and then your wet paper on top.
- Repeat. Create a stack.
- When you're done, place a wood board or a book on top. Weigh it down with more books or something heavy.
- Check it once every day and exchange the damp material with dry material until your handmade paper is dry.

Option 3: No Restraint Drying

- Take your wet sheet and throw it on a shelf, table, counter...and let it dry. The paper will be very bumpy.

Option 4: Dry on Pellow or Cloth

- Peel and hang up the cloth or pellow (with the wet paper still stuck to it), and hang on a clothesline with the top edge of the pellow. Peel when dry. Your paper will be slightly wavy.

Material List

Scrap Papers*

Plastic storage tub or vat

Kitchen blender

Wood boards OR sponge & rolling pin

cloth, towels, blankets or other absorbent material

mould & deckle

optional: clothesline & pins, drying material or surface

CHEAT SHEET

Make a Mould and Deckle for Handmade Paper – Cheap, Quick & Dirty

STEP 1: CUT THE SCREENING

Cut down the hardware cloth and window screening, using your wire cutters and junky scissors. You'll want to make them both the same size, and just slightly larger than the picture frame size.

STEP 2: STAPLE

Find the flattest side of one picture frame. Layer the hardware cloth and window screening on the frame. The window screening should be on top.

Staple the sandwiched layers to the frame. Make sure the screen layers are flat and taut before you start using the staple gun.

First place a staple at the center of each edge. From there, keep going around from side to side, working your way outward from each center staple.

STEP 3: TRIM, DUCT TAPE

Trim off the excess edges, or any violent-looking wires.

Now, time for everyone's favorite fix-it solution — duct tape! Cover all four edges, making sure not to go past the interior edge of the frame.

STEP 4: MAKE THE DECKLE

Last but not least — make the deckle! Take the second picture frame (that you haven't touched yet) and apply foam weatherstrip tape. It's adhesive, and you'll want to apply on the flatter backside of the frame, all around the edges. This creates quite a tight seal, and prevents pulp from leaking out between the mould & deckle when you're forming sheets.

OPTIONAL

Also, if your frames need it, you can seal the wood with waterproofing polyurethane. Do this before you begin these steps, making sure to let the polyurethane dry.

Material List

2 picture frames – same size, with everything removed

Hardware Cloth – wire mesh used for fencing

Window screening

Foam Weatherstrip Tape

Staple gun & staples

Duct Tape

Wire cutters, scissors

Optional: polyurethane & paintbrush