

Technique of the Month

Making Paper

by Vicki Welsh

Making paper is the ultimate recycling project. It's also incredibly easy and fun.

Before we get into the instructions, I want to make one big point. **DO NOT POUR THE WASTE WATER FROM YOUR PAPER MAKING SESSION DOWN YOUR DRAIN** (unless you like unclogging drains). Dump waste water and pulp somewhere outside. It will not harm the environment. It's basically compost!



Step 1 - Prepare your paper

Tear your paper into small bits or run it through your paper shredder. I like to soak my paper for several hours to make it easier to pulp. I soak it longer especially when I am using mail and paper with glue or slick finishes. I do not use this soaking water for the paper process.



Put some of the soaked paper in the blender and about twice the volume of water. Do not fill the blender more than 2/3 full. Blend until the paper is pulped as much as you want. Paper takes a while to become pulp. You may have to blend it for a minute or two. Over time you will learn how long you need to blend to get the size of pulp you want.

In general, you want the pulp to look like mush.



Supplies

Paper – You can use almost anything: junk mail, used copy paper, colored paper, paper wrappers

Additives – Bits of threads, flower petals, dried flowers, glitter, dryer lint



Tools:

Blender – Preferably a separate one from your kitchen blender

Dish pan or other pan that is slightly larger than your mold

Mold – This is basically a frame covered in screen material. The mold can be shaped any way you want.

Deckle (optional) – This is basically another frame without the screen. The deckle creates the edge of the paper. Paper can be made with or without the deckle.

Felt – The paper is formed on felts. You can use felt but since I am a quilter I am using a layer of cotton sheeting over a piece of left over batting.

Sponge

Step 2 - Prepare your work area

Pour a couple of inches of water into your pan, get your mold and deckle ready, set up a felt (piece of fabric on top of a piece of batting).

Step 3 - Make paper

Pour the pulp into the pan. As you work with making paper you will learn how much pulp to add. The amount of pulp determines the thickness of the paper.



Put the deckle in the frame and dip it in the pan. It's best to slide the frame in from the side so that the pulp will be on the top of the mold.

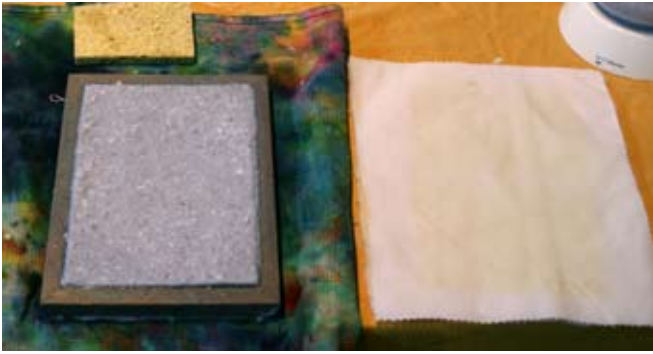


Slide the frame to the bottom of the pan and make sure it is flat on the bottom.

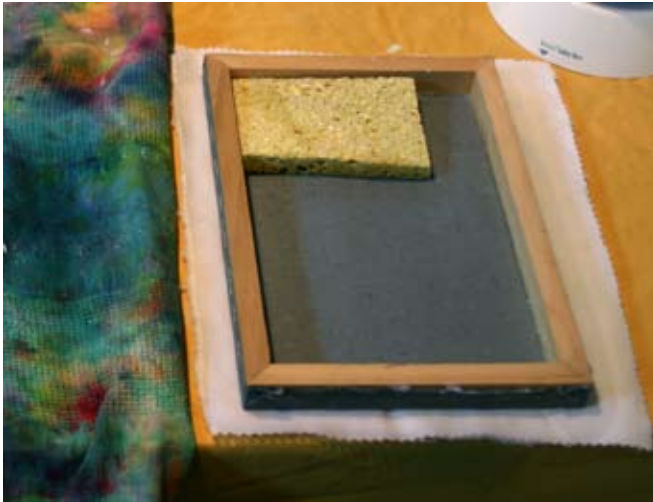


Lift the frame straight out of the water. The pulp will gather on top of the mold and the water will drain through the screen.





Let it drain for a bit or place it on a towel and remove the deckle.



Flip the mold over onto the felt and use your sponge to wick away excess water from the mold and paper. This is where I find the batting to be of help. With the pressure of the sponge, the excess water will be absorbed by the sponge and batting.



Lift the mold off the paper.



Now all you have to do is wait for the paper to completely dry and then peel it off the sheeting. While it's drying you can separate the batting from the sheeting. That will help it dry faster.

As I said earlier, the deckle is optional. Make the paper exactly the same. Your finished paper will have a more random edge.



Sometimes the paper doesn't turn out right. In that case you can just turn the mold upside down and dip it in the water. The pulp will release from the mold easily.



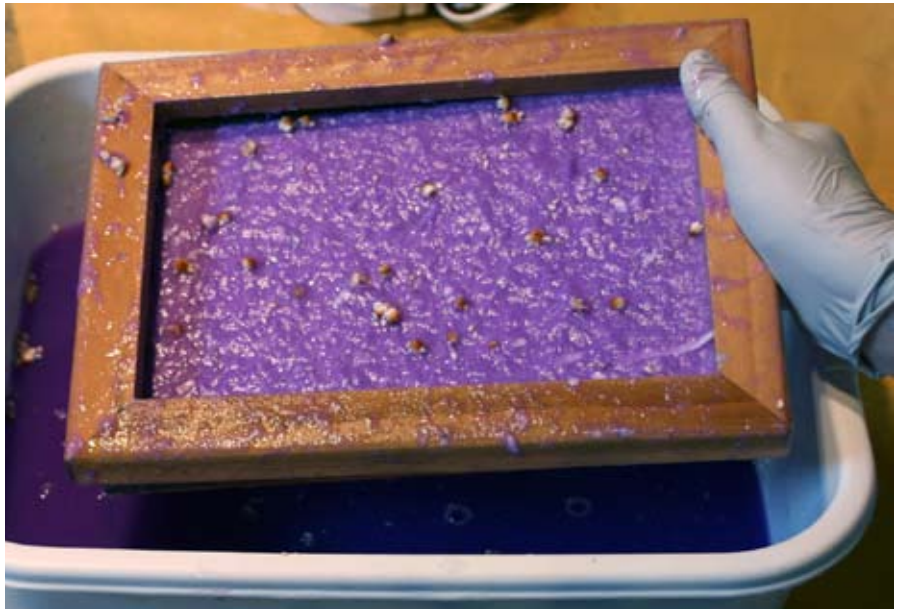
These first two pieces of paper were made with used copy paper. Any printed paper is going to give you a gray paper. The piece on the left was made with the deckle and the one on the right without.

You will also notice that these papers are not flat. Once my paper is dry I either place them under a stack of books to flatten them or I iron them with a dry iron using a press cloth.

Once you've made your first pieces of paper, it's time to start making fancy paper!



In this batch I added dried flower buds and some color. I had some Tsukineko inks nearby and poured some in my pan. They worked great. Just experiment with what you have on hand. We all have enough junk mail to make lots of batches of paper! I love adding chopped up threads and glitter to my papers.



If you need a paper that is larger than your mold you can layer multiple wet sheets on one felt like I did here.



Here are some of the sheets that I made.

The small green sheet in the center was made by putting a leaf on the felt before I added the wet paper. As it dried it formed to the veins in the leaf.



I made a couple of projects with my paper. For the Christmas cards I stamped some Christmas images on white paper and attached it to the card with double-sided tape. The paper quilt was made from Terri Stegmiller's book Creative Paper Quilts.



Instructions for making your own paper molds:

http://www.ehow.com/how_5155275_make-mold-deckle.html

http://www.ehow.com/how_2204346_deckle-frame.html

Paper Making Supplies:

<http://www.carriagehousepaper.com/>

<http://www.arnoldgrummer.com/>

<http://www.dickblick.com/categories/papermaking/>

http://www.misterart.com/store/browse/003/cat_id/5994/Craft-Supplies-Scrapbooking--Paper-Crafts--Paper-Making.htm