

# Handmade Paper With Some “Tools”

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆ - Somewhat easy. Adult supervision is required while cutting paper and using a blender.

Time: 50 minutes (+ 3-5 hours for soaking and drying)



## Materials

- Scrap paper in multiple colors, avoid glossy paper like magazines. Be sure that it's staple and tape-free
- Scissors or shredder (optional)
- Container to soak the paper scraps
- Warm water
- Paper mold (see step 3)
- Blender
- Cornstarch (optional)
- Shallow tray large enough to accommodate the paper mold
- Fabric towels
- Sponge
- Hair dryer (optional)
- Iron (optional)
- Natural dyes (optional)
- Flower petals (optional)

## Steps

1. Tear or cut the scrap paper<sup>1</sup> into small pieces. If you have a paper shredder this is a great time to use it.



2. Place the shredded paper in your container and pour warm water on it, covering all the pieces completely. Let it soak for 30 minutes to 1 hour - thicker paper will need more time to soak thoroughly.



3. Assemble your “mold”. You can make it from an old frame like a picture frame or embroidery hoop and a piece of window screening. The inside of the frame should be the size and shape of the paper you want to make. Stretch the screening across the frame and staple or tack it as tightly as possible. If

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<sup>1</sup> On average, three sheets of scrap paper make a sheet of handmade paper.



you have a second frame you can use it as a deckle<sup>2</sup>.



4. To prepare a basic pulp, place the soaked paper in a blender and pour enough water to cover the paper. Put on the lid and blend the ingredients for 15 to 40 seconds on a slow speed, until the pulp looks smooth and well blended. If any pieces or flakes of paper are still visible, blend it a bit longer.



Depending on the paper you use and the amount of ink on it, the pulp will not be as white as a regular paper. You can add some color with shredded colored paper or, instead of using water as the liquid, use [natural dyes](#).

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<sup>2</sup> The mold and deckle are essential tools for handmade papermaking. The mold is a frame covered with a firm mesh, and the deckle is the frame that sits on top of the mold. The paper is formed on the mold, and the deckle is laid on top of the mold to form edges of the paper sheet.



5. Fill your shallow container with a couple of inches of water. Then add the paper pulp to the water and mix it up. The thicker the mixture, the thicker your paper will be.



6. (Optional) If you are going to write on your handmade paper, mix 2 tablespoons of cornstarch with the liquid pulp. This will prevent paper from absorbing ink from a pen.

7. Immerse your frame with the screen up and the deckle on top into the pulp mixture. Once the frame is fully submerged, shake it from side to side, keeping it in the liquid to distribute the pulp evenly.





8. Slowly lift the frame up above the mix, holding it as level as you can. It should be evenly covered with a layer of the pulp mixture. You may need to try it a couple of times before you get a nice, even coverage.

Hold the frame above the tray letting excess water to drain off. Tilt it slightly from side to side to help water drain.



9. Carefully remove the deckle to reveal your paper sheet.



10. Flip the frame upside down and place it on a dry towel. Your paper sheet should be between the towel and the screen.



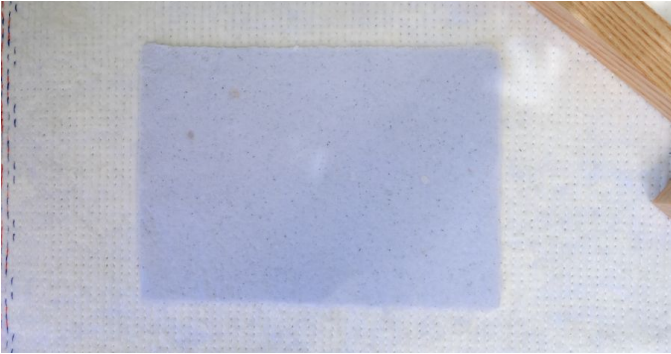
11. Starting from the middle and working out to the edges, gently press down on the back of the screen with a sponge to squeeze out excess water.



12. Slowly lift up the frame and gently peel the paper from the screen.



Place your handmade paper on a towel.



13. Lay it out to dry on a flat surface. After 1-2 hours, gently turn it over and let it dry for another 1-2 hours. Depending on the thickness of your paper, it can take 2-4 hours to fully dry.



Alternatively, you can speed up the drying process by using a hair dryer.

If the paper curls or warps as it dries, place something heavy on it to flatten or simply iron it.

You can make as many sheets as you like or until you use all the liquid pulp in your tray. When you're finished, dump any remaining pulp outside on your compost pile or in your garden.

NOTE: Do not pour the pulp into the sink or toilet because it can block the drain.

### Create petal paper!

Gently press colorful flower petals<sup>3</sup> onto the surface of the wet paper or stir it in the pulp mixture.



Let it dry with other sheets of handmade paper.

<sup>3</sup> For best results, stick to flat petals or very small flowers, so they won't pop out of the finished paper surface.





**San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles**

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