

Make Your Own Paper



Getting the Equipment Ready...

You need:

- A large wet area (a work space that won't be harmed by moisture)
- A large tub or bucket (you could even use an esky)
- A blender
- Scrap paper
- Dish towels (felt, blotting paper or newspaper are good substitutes)
- Wire mesh screen (see below for alternatives)

Some alternatives for frames...

Paper-making frames may be purchased through art stores, however, there are many cheap alternatives which can be made from household items:

Disposable Aluminium Baking-Pan Frame

- Cut a hole in the bottom of a large aluminium baking pan, 2cm smaller than the pan's outer dimensions.
- Cut a piece of wire flyscreen (from a hardware shop) large enough to cover the hole, when placed at the bottom of the screen.

Embroidery Hoop Frame

- Stretch a piece of nylon stocking across the embroidery hoop.

Wire Clothes Hanger

- Bend a wire clothes hanger to make a circle/square shape.
- Stretch a nylon stocking over the wire shape, and tightly secure.

Wooden Frame

- Buy/build a wooden frame (old picture frames work well)
- Tightly staple/tack wire flyscreen to the frame



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Step-by-Step Instructions

SOAK

Soak small pieces (2cm x 2cm) of paper in a large tub overnight.

BLEND

- Fill a blender half-full with warm water, then add one handful of soaked paper.
- Blend the paper at medium speed until no large pieces of paper are visible. It should look like a thick soup or slurry.
- Pour the blended paper into a large tub, with additional warm water, and mix thoroughly. At this stage food dye, confetti or glitter may be added to the mix.

SCOOP

- Slide the frame into the mix, allowing some pulp to settle on the frame. Holding the frame underwater, gently move it back and forth to get an even layer of fibres on the screen.

Keeping the frame flat, lift it out of the water and allow it to drip over the tub.

COUCH

- Place clean dishtowels, felt, couch paper or newspaper on a flat surface and flip the screen paper-side-down on the cloth.
- Lift the screen gently, leaving behind the paper.

PRESS

- Cover the paper with another cloth or piece of felt, and squeeze out moisture using a rolling pin. Place the sheets out of the way to dry.
- Let the paper dry overnight.

FINISH

- When the paper is nearly dry; use an iron at a medium-dry setting to finish the drying process.
- When the paper is completely dry, pull the underlying cloth gently from both ends: stretching it to loosen the paper from the cloth.
- Gently peel off the paper.

LEFTOVERS!

- When you're finished making paper, collect the leftover pulp in a strainer and throw it out, or freeze it in a plastic bag for future use.
- Alternatively, add the paper pulp to gardens as a mulch.
- Don't pour the pulp down the drain. Use your paper to draw on, fold, or send to a friend!

