

Paper making (my way)

Here's what I used...



Materials & Tools:

- **Large waterproof container** for paper scraps to soak - fill with sufficient water to cover your paper scraps. I used a large **plastic storage box** with lid - the lid was useful to keep falling leaves etc. from going into the paper because I stored the container on an external terrace. You will need a second container which can be smaller as it only needs to contain the pulp. **See instructions below* *It is important that the large container will be sufficiently big to hold the wired frame in a horizontal position. [Check out the video clip in my blog if this is not clear to you](https://www.janyshyde.com/handmade-paper-sequel/)*** <https://www.janyshyde.com/handmade-paper-sequel/>
- Lots of **ripped up paper scraps** – and here lies one of my biggest doubts regarding the outcome of the finished paper.
- Which paper is best to use? I'll only know that afterwards when I see the results. For the moment I've used up old A4 sheets of printing throwouts, carton innards of loo rolls, various types of medium weight **non-glossy paper**. *I will post results in my blog after using light coloured paper at some future date.*

- A **frame with fine mesh wire netting**. The wired area is just larger than an **A4** sheet of paper. I made my frame from a canvas covered artist's frame which I cut down to size after removing the canvas and then added wire netting. You can find the netting in hardware stores or online. However, it must be said that it is possible to buy ready-prepared frames.
- A sponge - I can now say that a **rectangular sponge is better** than a round or oval one. It makes it easier to get into the frame corners to soak up the excess moisture before you begin drying your paper. Don't despair if you are unable to find a rectangular sponge - you can cut an oval or round one to shape if needs be.
- Large plastic **'scoop' colander** to scoop up scraps into blender. After having experimented - I can now say that this scoop is **not essential**, though it does save you from getting wet up to the elbows as you pass the wet scraps to your blender.
- A **smaller container** to collect the blended paper pulp
- **Large scraps of old sheeting or towelling** which I cut down to a size slightly smaller than A3 sheets of paper. This fabric serves as a base to turn out each new sheet of wet paper pulp for drying.
- Let's not forget the **blender** in all this – though some swear by **hand mashed paper**, I'm the first to admit that I'll be happy to go with technology on this one.
- When I have mastered this new skill, I might be adding dried flowers or other decorative bits to the paper as it dries. Too early to let my imagination run wild at this stage!



Frame with wire mesh



Torn paper scraps



Sample use of paper, here as covers for small notebooks

Instructions:

- Choose a working area where you will do no damage if you spill water!
- Tear up paper into scraps and leave to soak for a couple of days in large waterproof container
- Use a blender or otherwise mash paper by hand in small quantities at a time
- Collect paper pulp in a separate container*
- When you have mashed/blended all the paper scraps from the first large container, you can return all the paper pulp in there. Top up with water to about halfway up if you need to.
- Take the frame in both hands and holding it in a horizontal position, slip it under the layer of pulp floating in the container, making sure all the wire surface is covered with pulp before you raise the frame, allowing the excess water to flow into the container.
- Very delicately, use the sponge to press off excess water - lifting the sponge off the pulp slowly so as not to raise the pulp off the wire. See my blog to check what NOT to do! <https://www.janyshyde.com/making-paper/>
- Lay your towelling or old sheeting (or similar) scraps onto a flat surface, and turn the frame with paper pulp over to rest on the towel. Lightly tap the wooden frame until the pulp falls onto the fabric - without breaking apart. **This is one of the more delicate stages of this process.** The secret seems to be to squeeze out as much moisture as possible with the sponge beforehand so that the 'paper' comes off the frame evenly.
- Some people at this stage hang up the fabric to dry with the paper pulp attached. Personally I found that the pulp tended to slip down on itself, creating a lumpy finish, and so I preferred to dry the paper flat.
- Once the paper was completely dry, I used a steam iron to flatten it out a bit, and then weighed it down under heavy books for a couple of days before using it. So much depends on where your inspiration takes you once you have this beautiful paper to use for your projects.

So here's Janys at Boho Shack wishing you fun experimenting!