

Papier mache jewellery



Paper is such a versatile material. Mashing up paper bits in water (it may have a fancy French name but that is pretty much what papier mache is!) is fun at any age. By adding some glittery bits into the mix the result is a bit more glitzy – and great for making jewellery.

This project is very straightforward – but be warned, the papier mache takes a good two days to dry, so don't expect instant gratification.

Materials

- Scrap paper, card and other items, such as silver and gold foil
- Liquidiser or blender and bowl
- Matt or gloss varnish
- Sponge
- Rolling pin (optional)
- Round-ended scissors (either nail scissors or specialist craft scissors)
- Paintbrush
- Paper clips (standard size for the necklace, small for the bracelet (these need to be flat paperclips, not the ones with the protruding lip)
- Masking tape
- 20 x 2cm and 1 x 2.5cm metal washers (for necklace)
- 10 x 1.5cm and 1 x 2cm metal washers (for bracelet)
- All purpose glue

Instructions

Begin by making the papier mache:

1 Tear up scrap paper, card and other items you wish to be included, into postage stamp size pieces and mix together thoroughly.

2 Fill the liquidiser/blender $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ full with lukewarm water. Add the scrap materials and leave for a couple of minutes to allow them to soak. **Do not** overfill with materials or you will put too much of a strain on the mechanism and it will over-heat.

3 Blend on low to medium for 5 to 10 seconds to chop the paper, etc. Then blend on high for another 20 to 25 seconds to create a pulp mixture. Continue to blend until you are satisfied with the consistency of the pulp – it depends on whether you want a textured surface or a smooth one.

4 Place two newspapers side by side on to the kitchen table, then place two layers of kitchen roll on top of each of the newspapers. Pour out the pulp on top of one of the prepared surfaces and spread the mixture out with your hands until there is an even thickness. You may find it useful to use a rolling pin. Don't make it too thick or it will be difficult to cut later on.

5 Place a bowl close to the working area and with a sponge press onto the pulp to remove excess water. Ring out the sponge into the bowl. Continue to do this until the sponge is virtually dry.

6 Now flip the papier mache on to the other dry newspaper surface to work on the underside by using the sponge to remove the water.

You may have to repeat instructions 5 and 6 using fresh dry newspaper and kitchen roll, depending on how wet the pulp is.

7 When you are satisfied that enough fluid has been removed and the mixture holds together well, place the papier mache in a warm, dry environment and leave to dry. This may take up to 2 to 3 days, depending on the ambient temperature.

Whilst the papier mache is drying, make the jewellery fittings. The procedure is the same for both the bracelet and the necklace.

8 Link the paper clips so that they are running in the same direction. Link enough for the length of bracelet/necklace required. Don't make the necklace too long or it will not still correctly.

9 Stretch out the paperclips in a straight line. Gently lift the smaller inner loop of the clip and slide a washer (wrong-side up) in between the two parts of the clip. Ensure that the washer is positioned centrally, with the end loops of the paperclip

clearly visible on either side. Continue until all the washers have been placed.

10 Secure the fittings by glueing the paperclips to the washers, making sure that glue does not adhere to the links either side of the washer. Leave to dry overnight.

11 When the papier mache is dry, decide which surface you prefer and apply a coat of varnish to this surface. This binds the papier mache even further and makes it easier to cut. Leave to dry.

12 Draw round the 2cm washer (for the bracelet) and 2.5cm washer (for the necklace) with a pencil to create papier mache discs, matching the number of discs to the number of washers for each item of jewellery.

13 Cut out the discs very carefully with the rounded scissors. The discs are bigger than the washers so that the paper clip links are concealed. It may be necessary to trim the discs slightly to ensure that they sit properly on the mountings.

14 Once you have the correct number of discs, line them up, wrong side up (this is the side which hasn't been varnished). Taking one disc at a time, put a liberal amount of glue on the disc and carefully place the first washer fixing on top of the disc and hold firmly together. Make sure the washer is in the centre of the disc and that the right (rounded) side of the washer is uppermost. In other words, the wrong side of the disc and the wrong side of the washer are being glued together.

15 Continue until all discs and washers have been glued together. You may find it useful to secure the piece with masking tape which can later be removed.

16 When the glue is dry apply varnish to the underside and sides of papier mache disc.

17 When this is dry you may wish to apply a second coat of varnish to ensure the item is water-tight (it would be a shame for the jewellery to disintegrate at the first spot of rain!).

18 Secure a paperclip to both ends of the necklace. These will act as the fastening.

For the bracelet fastening, use the end of the paperclip at one end and hook through the loop of the paperclip at the other end. Make sure you then press the paperclip end flat so that it doesn't stab you in the wrist!