

# How to...

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information

## Rubber Stamp

### Introduction

Rubber stamping is a very popular and versatile craft which can be enjoyed by everyone. It is a quick and effective way of producing repeat patterns on a variety of materials and can be used for a wide range of projects such as card making, scrapbooking, gift wrapping and more. This leaflet will tell you everything you need to know to get started and help you discover the secrets of successful stamping!



### Equipment needed

#### Basic materials

#### Rubber stamps

Select a rubber stamp with a design suitable for your project. Stamps generally come in two styles, outline and surface area. Outline stamps when inked and stamped on paper will give the effect of an image to colour in. Surface area stamps have a broad area on the rubber so you can apply ink with a pad, brush marker or marvy pen directly on the rubber before stamping the image. Both styles of stamp are useful, depending on your project. Message stamps such as 'Happy birthday', 'Best wishes' and 'Congratulations' are always useful and versatile.

Clear stamps and acrylic blocks are easy to use as the clear block makes it easy to see exactly where you are stamping.



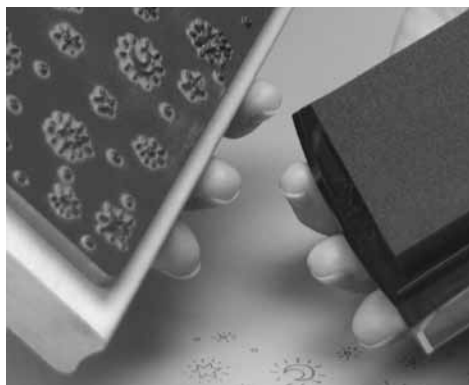
## **Ink pad**

There are a number of different types of ink pads available for use with rubber stamps, all have different uses and work better on certain surfaces.

Dye based pads come in a range of vibrant, transparent colours and they dry very quickly. This makes them ideal for many papers and cards. They are not suitable for embossing.

Pigment based pads come in the widest colour range and cover the full spectrum including fluorescents, metallics and multi coloured pads. Pigment inks dry slowly and are excellent for many papers – however as they dry slowly, they are best avoided when using shiny surfaces. They are ideal for embossing.

Embossing pads are specifically designed for use with embossing powders. They are designed to dry very slowly and are normally a very pale, transparent colour which cannot be seen after embossing. This ink is also available in pen form for embossed calligraphy effects.



Fabric pads contain ink which is permanent on fabric once you have fixed it. To achieve this, allow the image to dry for 24 hours, heat an iron to the highest temperature that your chosen fabric will allow and iron the fabric on the reverse for a couple of minutes. Experiment to achieve the best results.

You can also use felt tip pens to colour directly onto the stamp – make sure you don't use permanent markers as they will ruin your stamp. Use several colours to get variegated results.

## **Paper or card**

You can stamp on virtually any kind of paper or card. The texture of the surface you stamp on to will give you a different finish. It is a good idea to practice by stamping the image onto pieces of scrap paper first.

## **Optional extras**

### **Embossing powder**

When heated, will give a 'raised' look to your stamped image. They are available in various colours and some contain glitter.

### **Heat tool**

Used for embossing.

### **Colouring mediums**

Such as felt tip pens, marvy plume, marvy blush pens, watercolours, acrylics, oil paint or glass paint can be used to add colour to your stamped image.

### **Stamp cleaner**

To preserve the life of your stamp.

## Preparation

Ink your stamp by pressing the ink pad onto the entire image area of your stamp. Place the inked rubber stamp firmly onto your paper or card, taking care to keep it flat. Apply even pressure to the entire stamp and avoid rocking. Always practice on a piece of scrap paper first.

## Techniques

### Embossing

For successful embossing you need just five elements – a rubber stamp, a surface to decorate, an ink pad, embossing powder and a heat source.

You can use any rubber stamp for embossing but remember some detail may be lost in the process so for best results use an image with lots of bold elements. Embossing works well on paper and card - you can also emboss onto fabric, wood and glass with a little practice!

Your ink pad must be one of those recommended for embossing otherwise your image will dry before the embossing powder has a chance to stick to it! Embossing powders are heat activated powders and are available in an enormous array of finishes. From stunning metallics to fancy finishes, you will be able to select the right colour and effect for your image. For a subtle background effect, try using a clear embossing powder or even matching your powder colour to the background colour.

To prepare for embossing – ink your stamp with your ink pad and apply this to your surface. Working quickly before the ink dries, cover the entire image with an even coat of embossing powder. Tip the excess powder onto a clean sheet of paper and return to the container. You will notice how little powder you actually use! You are now ready to move on to the final stage – heating!

You need a heat tool for embossing. This is much hotter than a hairdryer and supplies a controllable jet of heat that you can direct on to your image. Ensure that the entire image comes into contact with the heat evenly until the powder melts. You will quickly become used to the amount of time this takes and you can see the transformation happen before your eyes. Once the image is embossed you can add more colour or simply leave it as it is.

### Colouring the stamped image

The colouring medium you use will depend on the look you want to achieve. Felt tip and marvy pens or markers will give a bold look to the image whereas coloured pencils or watercolours will give a soft, romantic look. Always make sure that the medium is compatible to the surface of paper or card.

Any type of colouring medium can be used to colour in an embossed image. If you are using a dye based ink pad you will need to colour your image with a coloured pencil as dye based pads are water soluble and can be smudged if other colouring mediums are used.

## Hints & tips

- If you are worried about the ink drying too quickly breathe onto the stamp to refresh it.
- Always store your ink pads face down, this way the ink always stays at the top of the pad ready for use.
- Do not try using a hairdryer to emboss - it will blow the powder away without melting it!
- Why not mix your own colours by blending embossing powders - or try experimenting with two or more colours on one image?
- Glitter and hologram effect powders work best on dark backgrounds.
- Use a brush marker to colour parts of your stamp in different colours to create a 'rainbow' effect.
- Add dimension by stamping several identical images, cut them out then layer them using sticky fixers.

## Project ideas

- Cards for all occasions
  - Wedding invitations
  - Wedding stationery
  - Party invitations
  - Gift wrapping
  - Menus
  - Table runners
  - Table napkins
  - Placemats
- and much more



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