

I am

a mosaic star

(your name here)

Techniques, ideas and inspiration for the
new mosaic star.

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BASIC TOOLS and EQUIPMENT TO GET STARTED



- Hammer
- Tile nippers
- PVA
- Drawing paper and pencil
- Brushes
- Sticky tape

Things that would be useful

- Tile cutter

Things you can use to make a mosaic

- Ceramic tiles
- Glass – beads, tumbled glass you find on the beach
- Beads
- Buttons
- Stones and pebbles
- Crockery
- Smalti (solid brightly coloured glass)

Additional equipment required is listed with each project

IMAGINATION and IDEAS

Sometimes it is hard to get going because all creativity, inspiration and ideas seem to have abandoned you ... don't despair.

Start with something simple and ideas soon flow; some suggestions

Make a mosaic

- Mirror
- Placemat
- Set of coasters



Pick up something at the op-shop and give it a new mosaic life



- Bowl
- Jug
- Lamp base
- Chair or table
- A toaster or kettle
- And old guitar maybe!

If you can't come up with a design, set yourself a little project

- I will use these two colours
- I will use smashed (square, rectangular) tiles only
- I will use colours in the blue (red, or earthy) range
- I will do swirls (dots, squares)
- I will go for highly contrasting colours

Mosaic books, art books, design in everyday life, flowers, other people's dress sense, can all inspire a mosaic response.

TIP : children's colouring books are a great source for ideas

SAFETY

- Cover tiles with newspaper when smashing with a hammer
- When using the tile nipper – point the tile downwards and away from others
- Always be aware of others around you
- Use eye protection when cutting mirrors
- Always use eye protection and a mask when cutting timber – particularly MDF
- Keep small children away when nipping and cutting tiles
- Use a brush to sweep away small fragments of tiles.

TIP : a handy-vac is useful for clearing away shards of tiles from your workspace

TIP : clearing away tiles and mess from around your work occasionally will help you see your progress more clearly. Stand up and look at it from a distance, from time to time, to get a good perspective of it.

MIRROR

Materials additional to the basics:

- Piece of MDF or plywood cut to desired size – the larger the overall size of the mirror, the thicker the timber needs to be
- Mirror
- PVA
- Tiles
- Grout

Things to consider :

Creating a border

Cutting the mirror into different or irregular shapes



Stick the mirror to the MDF using PVA.

TIP If you are using plywood and tile glue, it is a good idea to give it an all-over coat of diluted PVA – plywood can warp otherwise.

Stick on tiles using PVA (or tile glue). Grout

To give it a good finish either grout or paint around the edge of the timber.

MOSAIC PAVER



Materials additional to the basics:

- Clear contact
- Muslin or paper
- Containers
- Plastic sheet
- Protective gloves
- Board for working on
- Tile adhesive suitable for exteriors
- Mortar mix or grout

Design :

- Decide what size you want to make your paver (standard sizes are 200 and 400 mm)
- Draw and cut up a square slightly smaller than the size paver you require (eg 190 or 390 mm)
- Draw outline of design.
- Stick design to the board with sticky tape to stop in moving
- Stick contact STICKY SIDE UP to board over drawing
- Put tiles onto contact – coloured side facing up
- Tiles are best kept to about 1 sq cm minimum – tiny tiles tend to fall out
- When you are happy with the design, cut a piece of paper to fit (ie 200, or 400 mm)
- Mix up diluted PVA (to about a consistency in between milk and cream)
- GENTLY apply the pva mix to each tile. Be gentle as the tiles can easily move.
- Place a piece of paper over the entire mosaic
- Allow to dry

TIP : quilting and textile books can be inspirational for your design

Making your paver :



- Lay a piece of plastic down
 - Trim off any excess paper from design so it is right up to the edge of the tiles.
 - Remove contact from the back of the design
 - Mix up exterior tile adhesive (should be the consistency of margarine)
 - Apply a layer of adhesive to your paver – about .5 cm deep
 - Score the surface with a pronged tool or a chopstick so the surface is uneven
 - Gently lay your mosaic onto the adhesive with the paper sitting on top
- Allow to dry for 24 hours
 - Remove paper by soaking with water and gently scrubbing off with a kitchen brush
 - Grout with exterior grout or mortar mix.
 - Build up mortar mix around the edge of the paver/tiles so that the tiles are safely embedded and not prone to being knocked out.
 - Leave to dry

The paver is very hardy and can be inserted into the garden or your paving areas – tough enough to drive over!

PUTTING ART ON THE WALL

- Fibreglass netting
- PVA
- Plastic
- Paper, sticky tape
- Tile glue – suitable for surface you are sticking to, and for outside use, if required
- Grout

Draw your design onto paper, cover design with clear plastic (this stops glue sticking to paper); place fibreglass netting onto plastic.



Stick tiles with PVA onto netting – coloured side up. When you are happy with the design, remove the netting with the tiles. You can either use the tile glue onto the back of the netting and stick it to the surface – or you can put the glue directly onto the surface.

Tap the netting and tiles into the glue – making sure each tile is stuck. Leave to set for 24 hours before grouting.

TIP : make sure the netting is the right size to start – it is difficult to cut excess netting away once the mosaic work is finished.

TIP : If you are making a mural for installation onto a wall – this is a good technique. Mosaics are heavy so best work in smaller sections that can be put together later.

TIP : if you are putting this work onto an exterior wall, you will need to purchase a tile glue suitable for this task. Interior glues are not suitable.

COLOURED GROUTS

Coloured grouts can add that something extra to your mosaic. You can buy a range of neutral colours, or make others by mixing acrylic paint into a white grout. The colour dries quite a lot lighter than it looks when wet.

CUTOUT SHAPES

This is a great project to play with designs, different mosaic materials, coloured grouts and your own self-image. You can be *anything* in mosaic!

Materials you will need:

- MDF (min 6mm – thicker if you are making anything other than a small piece)
- Jigsaw
- Ear plugs
- Tiles – beads – etc
- PVA
- Grout
- facemask

Making Your Mosaic

- Design your cutout and draw onto MDF – unless you are a very skilled jigsaw operator, best keep the outline fairly simple.
- Good idea to use a mask and cut outside
- Stick tiles etc directly onto cutout with PVA
- Grout
- Clean and admire



TIP : if you get PVA all over your fingers – wash it off rather than daub PVA all over the tiles as you are working – PVA on the tiles makes cleaning more difficult.

PANELS onto timber

Materials you will need:

- Fibreglass netting
- MDF or plywood – cut to size
- PVA
- Plastic
- Paper, sticky tape
- Tile glue – suitable for surface you are sticking to, and for outside use, if required
- Grout

Draw your design onto paper, cover design with clear plastic (this stops glue sticking to paper); place fibreglass netting onto plastic.

Stick tiles with PVA onto netting – coloured side up. When you are happy with the design, remove the netting with the tiles. You can either use the tile glue onto the back of the netting and stick it to the surface – or you can put the glue directly onto the surface.

Tap the netting and tiles into the glue – making sure each tile is stuck. Leave to set for 24 hours before grouting.

TIP : using the netting for this job is useful when working in a group or when you are inexperienced. It gives you more scope to change the work along the way if required.

PANELS onto timber – version II

- MDF or plywood cut to size
- Tile glue or pva
- Grout

Draw your design onto the panel. Glue tiles directly onto the panel. Grout and admire!

TIP : this technique is great when you feel confident. Probably best when working on your own project.

HANGING THE WORK



Small pieces : like the mirrors and cut-outs

- Insert two small screws into the back of the work – towards the top of the work to avoid it falling forward. Using fishing line or wire to hang work.

Larger pieces :

Mosaic is heavy. Use larger screws or D-rings (from the hardware store). Hang with fishing line or wire.

Encourage participants to use power tools - can bring them unexpected pleasure and a sense of triumph!

TIP : fishing line stretches and can break if a heavy weight is pulling against a sharp object – like the thread on a screw. Double the fishing line. Make sure your knots are secure by pulling very hard on them to test them before hanging the artwork over a priceless antique vase!

STOCKISTS

TILES

My favourite tile suppliers are

- Metric Tiles

Head Office

38-42 Westall Rd Springvale 3171

(03) 9547 7633

13 Tooyal St Frankston 3199

(03) 9781 3977

They carry a large stock of coloured tiles.

Others

- Mingarellis Tiles

90 Cochranes Rd Moorabbin 3189

(03) 9555 9766

- Moorabbin Tiles

30 Cochranes Rd Moorabbin 3189

(03) 9555 6999

There are lots of smaller tile shops that carry a good range. Prices vary from shop to shop, and also depending on the colour.

Places like Beaumont tiles tend to only stock tiles that sell quickly (ie neutral colours). They will order tiles for you, but you often have to purchase about a metre of each colour – too much for most people..

TIP Do not underestimate the op-shop and hard rubbish as resources for the mosaic artist!

TOOLS

Most tile shops, hardware stores carry tile nippers, grout, and tile glues. Tile cutters and replacement wheels can also be purchased here.

I prefer buying from tile shops as the staff often have useful knowledge about the right glue and grout for a particular project.

TIP materials are heavy, so watch your back when lifting. One of the benefits of shopping at small outlets is the staff are usually very co-operative in helping with loading and with advice.

TIMBER

Hardware shops.


PVA

Hardware – it is cheaper than buying it in art and craft shops; supermarkets

Created as a support document for projects conducted in community settings. The basis of these projects is derived from the projects with the women through SECASA and Connections Uniting Care – whose images appear throughout.

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