

Get Crafty



Bedazzling Is Back

Covering clothes, hats, shoes, bags and more with rhinestones was a serious trend decades ago, and like all things old, it's now new again.

Nowadays, more advanced adhesives allow crafters to affix rhinestones to all kinds of surfaces, including plastic phone cases, hair accessories, even medical devices. Flat-backed crystals are available in a huge variety of shapes, sizes and colors. It's an affordable hobby and most craft stores carry the basics to get you started.

GLUE

Use a glue that's appropriate for your surface. Some adhesives must be used in well-ventilated areas or with personal protective gear, so take note. Also look at what color the glue dries; most people will want their adhesive to dry clear but go on white or another color that's easy to see as it dries. Glues have a cure time before they are completely dry, so check that, especially if you're on a tight deadline for your bling.

CRYSTALS

Flat-backed crystals work best for bedazzling projects. They're available in a huge variety of sizes, colors and shapes. In general, for larger areas, use larger stones.



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Smaller rhinestones lend themselves to detailed work and subtlety, while there is absolutely nothing subtle about a large, showy rhinestone.

When you purchase stones for your project, buy more than you need to ensure the stones are the same color across your project with no variations due to when and how they were made. Glass

rhinestones may hold up better than plastic or resin stones, and generally, the more facets a stone has the more sparkle it will give off.

OTHER TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

To save your sanity, drop a few dollars on a gem picker to help you pick up and set rhinestones. Consider investing in a tray with compartments to

help you sort and keep track of your gems.

As far as technique, read the directions on your adhesive of choice to get an idea where to start. You may want to sketch out a pattern on your object with a chalk pencil or other removable guide. Make sure your item is clean and dry.

Apply the adhesive according to package directions,

either to the back of the gem or directly to the item, depending on how you're comfortable working.

If it's your first time, consider making a trial project on a scrap of material similar to what you'll be working with. Play with how to apply the adhesive and affix the rhinestones. Consider using paint, marker or glitter to cover any mistakes you may make.

Finding a Class Near You

Learning a craft can be more fun when you do it with a group of people. The good news is lots of places offer arts and crafts classes that fit all budgets and skill levels.

Get started with your new hobby at one of these places.

LIBRARIES

Today's libraries are more than just books. Many branches offer free or low-cost classes for all age groups. At the New York Public Library, one branch offers free, two-hour painting classes for painters of all skill levels. The library provides all materials, including refreshments, on a first-come, first-served basis.

CRAFT STORES

Craft stores, both the local kind and the big-box kind, offer classes in the hopes that people will learn a new hobby, then visit the shelves to buy what they need to continue it at home. The classes can be in anything the store carries the materials for, including pottery painting, jewelry making, paper crafts and more.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Your city's parks and recreation program may offer a



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bounty of classes for kids and adults alike, including unique opportunities for seniors and people with disabilities. In Atlanta, for instance, the Chastain Arts Center offers a variety of arts instruction, including ceramics, drawing, painting, printmaking, glass fusion, jewelry making and more. Fees vary per class.

COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Some college campuses offer outreach or continuing education classes in a variety of mediums. The Appleton Museum of Art at the College of Central Florida offers classes that include painting, mixed-media art and print making. Fees depend on the class. Some classes may even

be free for alumni. Check with your local school's continuing education or adult learning program for more information.

ONLINE

From watching videos on YouTube to more structured programs through sites such as Skillshare, Craftsy, Creativebug,

Udemy, MasterClass and Domestika, you can pick up an online hobby in your own time — and pause and rewind if you get stuck.

Some courses will require a subscription or other fee and, of course, you'll have to get your own supplies. Learn to sew, knit, crochet, paint, sculpt and more for just a click.

Making Textured Decor

Large-scale, monochromatic textured canvases are on-trend, but with the right supplies and a little know-how, you won't have to break the budget to make the perfect piece for your space.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Framed canvases or paintings (hit the thrift store and score both canvas and frame for less than a new canvas)
- Joint compound and acrylic paint in the colors of your choice
- Primer or white paint
- Acrylic paints
- Putty knives or painting knives
- Spray matte clear sealer (note: this may darken the colors you use)
- Painters tape

MAKE YOUR OWN ART

Start off by either taking your canvas out of the frame or by taping it off to protect it, for now. Next, prime the canvas to hide the previous design. A

spray primer is quick and easy, but white spray paint works, too. Follow package directions for cure time and make sure you spray in a well-ventilated space.

Put the joint compound in a bowl and, if you're using color, add acrylic paint in and mix well until you get your desired hue. Using your knives, start layering on the compound. Remember the point is to give texture. You can make it random or rows of varying color. It's all up to you. Joint compound dries slowly, but if it starts to stiffen up, add a little water and mix well.

Allow the compound to cure according to package directions. For

areas that are a little too textured, smooth it out with sandpaper. Then go in with a second layer, if you like, or even a third or fourth. Just allow the compound to cure between each one. You can use steel wool, a wire brush, a wet brush or other types of friction to smooth and blend. Get creative.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Once your canvas is to your liking, cover it with several coats of matte clear enamel sealer. When it's dry, remove the painter's tape from the frame. If you need to paint or stain the frame, cover your artwork with paper and painter's tape to keep it safe.

Joining a Craft Fair

If you've got the hang of your craft, consider selling your wares at local craft fairs.

Some craft fairs are juried, which means a judge or panel of judges will evaluate each vendor's work to decide whether they can be a part of the show. For others, vendors just need to pay for their booth space and they're good to go.

CHOOSE A FAIR

Attend several local craft fairs before you pick one to get started selling. Look at popular booths at each sale and note how the booths look, what crafts they're selling (or not selling), pricing, organization, how they greet customers, how they take payments and how they display their more expensive or fragile items.

Pick a craft fair that matches your budget for booth space and will have customers that are looking for your product. Consider asking vendors what their experience has been like at fairs in the area.

CHOOSE WHAT AND HOW TO SELL

Once you've picked a fair, consider what you're going to offer for sale. Your booth should feature items at different price points, with prices including the price of the booth, the cost of any permits you may need, the cost of materials and the cost of travel to and from the fair, including



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the time it takes you to load and unload. Make sure to clearly mark your items with the price.

In addition to taking cash (make sure to bring extra money to make change), figure out how to take credit cards and other digital payments. Have a Venmo, CashApp, PayPal or other account set up that will allow you to accept multiple forms

of payment — and figure in any fees associated with that into your pricing structure.

DESIGN YOUR BOOTH

Set up your booth in a way that attracts potential buyers. Present your wares as neat and organized, using signs or tablecloths to hide clutter and under-table storage. Add vertical space to your booth with shelves. Practice setting up

your booth at home and recruit friends and family to help.

Have a place to put out business cards. Customers who may not want to buy that day will have a way to reach back out when they're ready. Also consider offering a giveaway where people fill out their contact information. This will give you a solid customer base to start email marketing when

you're ready.

TREAT CUSTOMERS WELL

Greet your customers in a friendly way and make them feel welcome. Consider working on new crafts while you sell to get more people interested in what you're doing. Ask friends and family to help you keep an eye on things while you work and keep you company.

Decorating Sweet Treats

Churning out delicious and beautiful cakes that are almost too pretty to eat is a fun way to be creative and get a sweet treat, too.

Here's a list of must-have baking tools to have around if you're considering learning more about frosting, frills and fondant.

BAKING

The key to a beautiful cake starts with the cake itself. Find heavy, well-made pans that are all the same size. Ensure layers turn out flat by tapping each filled pan on the counter so that the batter spreads evenly. Once your cakes are baked and cooled, remove any loose crumbs, and apply a thin crumb coat to keep your finished frosting smooth.

HARDWARE

Other than a good, sturdy set of pans, Slice, a brand of safety tools and knives, recommends:

- A fondant cutter
- A cake scraper
- A fondant roller
- Decorating brushes and crimpers

- Carving tools
- A palette knife
- A turntable stand
- An icing comb
- A cake lifter
- A silicone piping bag

CHOOSING PIPING TIPS

These can seem a little



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intimidating, but don't be afraid. Wilton, who makes an entire line of cake decorating supplies, says round tips are the easiest to get started with. Round tips are used to pipe letters and lines, including outlining cookies, and are good for swirls.

Star tips will produce perfect rows of stars for borders and can be used to pipe shells, swirls and rosettes. Drop flower tips are similar to a star tip, but they're specially made to create a flower shape. Leaf tips and petal tips are used to make, as the names suggest,

leaves and petals. Grass tips can pipe grass or fur. The basketweave tip has both a flat and a serrated side for added texture, and the Bismarck tip is most commonly used to fill pastries and cupcakes.

Most cake decorating tips are made of metal, Wilton

says, which gives decorations a sharper, more defined shape. Metal tips can be fragile, however. Plastic tips are more durable and are a good option for beginners. Larger piping tips can do double duty, piping out dough, potatoes and more.

What Is Tufting?

Tufting has gone viral. It's a weaving method to create textiles such as clothing and carpets that uses a tool to punch yarn through a fabric backing.

Machine tufting dates back to the 1930s as rugs and carpets grew in popularity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, with people searching for any shred of positivity, tufting, with its bright colors and soft textures, went viral on social media.

USING A TUFTING GUN OR PUNCH NEEDLE

If you want to use a machine, invest in an electric tufting gun. Tuftingshop.com recommends a gun with a simple design and a versatile pile height range that can be set to loop or not. Guns run from less than \$100 to several hundred dollars.

For a much smaller monetary investment (but considerably more time), look to the punch needle for tufting. While tufting guns can create either a loop or cut pile, punch needles can only make a loop pile finish.



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WHAT ELSE DO I NEED?

You'll also need a frame and cloth. Cloth is available by the yard, and for the best results, you should use a cloth designed for use with tufting machines. A frame holds the cloth tight while you work.

You can buy a premade one or make one yourself.

Tufting guns shoot out yarn and they work with most types of natural fiber yarns. Choose a yarn that works with your gun and is durable enough to stand up to the end

application of your tufting project.

Once your piece is finished, glue the back with an adhesive, then finish it with a backing cloth. The type of adhesive you'll need depends on the end application; rugs

and mats will need a flexible, strong and long-lasting adhesive designed for the purpose. Clothing wants a highly flexible adhesive while wall pieces can be pretty stiff.

The last part of creating your tufted masterpiece is

shaping and finishing by cutting tufts with scissors or shearing the rug into shapes with clippers. Use a pair of scissors or clippers that fit easily in the hand so you don't slip and accidentally damage your project.

Protecting Your Handiwork

Most of us think of copyright in terms of written works, such as this article or a book. But copyright law protects any work of original expression fixed in a physical medium. That includes crafts.

REGISTRATION

Copyright applications must be filed with the U.S. Copyright Office. Most crafts will fall under the visual arts category, but read each one carefully to make sure. You'll need to supply your name and contact information, the name of the work, when it was created and when it was released to the public. A specimen of your craft will need to be sent in, along with the requisite filing fee.

Bear in mind that you cannot copyright an idea. An example of a pure idea is a recipe for a cake. While it cannot be copyrighted, a webpage listing the recipe with photographs, illustrations and punny cake jokes can be protected. Someone else could not steal the expression outright, but they could create their own version of your cake recipe.

The same goes for crafts. You can't copyright the idea of a crocheted doll, but you can copyright your pattern for crocheted dolls and sell it. A pattern includes diagrams,



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step-by-step instructions and images of your finished work. You'll need to search the U.S. Copyright Office to make sure no one else has copyrighted a similar pattern before you begin.

INFRINGEMENT

Just like your copyright

protects you against other people copying it, so too must you be careful not to infringe on other people's and companies' copyrights. For instance, if you decide to copyright your crocheted dolls and you crochet Sonic the Hedgehog, that's infringing on a copyright. You would need

permission from SEGA, the owner of the copyright, and they would probably want, at the very least, a cut of the proceeds.

If someone infringes on your copyright, let's say your crochet doll pattern, you should consult an attorney. In instances of willful

infringement for profit, the U.S. Copyright Office says the U.S. Attorney may initiate a criminal investigation.

Otherwise, the CASE Act allows for certain infringement cases to be tried in small claims court, where the owner can receive damages up to \$15,000 per claim.