

# DIY Monoprinting

Monoprinting is fun, playful and great for arty experimentation. There are many different ways of monoprinting. I am going to show you two techniques to get started. With monoprinting each print is unique but you can easily make a whole gallery of prints in a short space of time. How long or short a time you spend making the prints is largely up to you but it also depends on the paint or printing ink you work with. I recommend using oil based paint; the cheap stuff is fine for experimenting with. You can use acrylic paint instead but it may dry faster than you want. See my notes at the end on acrylic retarder.

## You will need

- Paint or printing ink
- Paper
- Newspaper
- Tape (ideally parcel tape and masking tape but regular sticky tape is ok)
- a small sponge decorating roller
- a baking tray
- baking sheet
- a carrier bag
- An image or two e.g. magazines, newspaper, computer printouts, drawings

## Part 1 - Printing a Fern, Leaf or Feather

Printing a fern,  
leaf or just about anything  
you can roll paint onto



1. In this section I will show you how to create a simple but effective mono print using an everyday object

2 . Squeeze a small amount of paint/ink onto the top of your tray. Dip the roller into the paint/ink and roll back and forth working the paint/printing ink until you have a smooth velvety surface



3. Choose something to ink. Flat objects like leaves and feathers work well



4. Put your object/fern onto some newspaper or scrap paper. Apply paint/ink using a roller and your prepared paint/ink. Make sure there is good coverage on the side you want to print



5. Arrange object/ferns on clean paper surface. Inky side down. Place some scrap paper or baking sheet on top of you good paper.



6. Take a wooden spoon and hold it in the bowl of the spoon with two or three fingers.

Rub firmly across the baking sheet with circular motions. For a good print make sure you are rubbing every inch of the object underneath.

If you prefer you can roll firmly across the surface with a clean decorating roller.



7. When you have finished remove baking sheet or scrap paper



8. Take off ferns/object and reveal your print. You can save your ferns/object and use it again for another print. It will probably work again for another print without re-inking. The print will come out lighter. You should be able to re ink it and print with it a few times before it deteriorates. Re-arrange your ferns each time and choose a favourite.

## Part 2 - Making a Protective Mount



1.



2.



3. Use some recycled card or a cereal packet to make a protective mount.

Begin by cutting your card to at least the size of your paper. Slightly bigger than your paper is probably better.



4. Use a ruler to draw a boarder all around the card. The width of the ruler makes a good size for your boarder

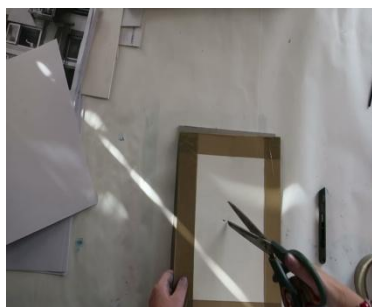


5. If you haven't done so already cut your mount to size



6.

- Apply parcel tape around the edges.
- Tape up as far as the lines you have drawn with the ruler
- Apply tape on both sides



7. You can cut out the centre now.



8.

Use a craft knife if you have one. If you don't have a craft knife use a pair of scissors. Make sure you have a cutting mat or a thick piece of card underneath and pierce the cardboard in the middle. This makes it easier to cut out



9. Attach your cut out mount to a piece of thick card the same size. Do this by taping in along one side front and back.

This creates a hinged mount for you to put your paper in when you are creating your prints

Its keeps the edges clean and gives a more professional looking edge to your artwork

## Part 3 - Carrier Bag Trace Monoprint



1. Begin by cutting out some squares of plastic from your plastic carrier bag. You can cut two or four sheets from one bag depending on the size of your paper

2. Prepare your ink on the tray as you did with the Fern printing.

Roll a thin layer of ink across the inside of the carrier bag material

3. Keep rolling the paint until you have a thin but dense layer across the plastic.

If you want to work with more than one colour you will need a separate piece of plastic bag for each colour.



4. Put your clean paper inside your protective mount. The parcel tape edges create an easy wipe clean surface.

5. Place your inked carrier bag gently on top of the mount. Inky side down. Try not to press down. Any pressure will transfer paint/ink to your paper.

If you are doing several colours ideally begin with the lightest colour first.

6. Place your reference on top. This can be a drawing, a picture from a magazine or a printout on copier paper. This is one of my photographs printed on copier paper.

Attach your reference with tape creating a hinge so you can move it without losing your place



7. Use a sharp pencil or biro to trace over your image. This will create a line drawing on the paper below

If you press with your fingers you can create areas of tone.

Experiment with other tools like cotton buds, bamboo skewers or a fork.



8 You can check your picture as you go along.

If your doing more than one colour apply swap your plastic sheet for a different one



9. When you have finished remove the inked plastic sheet. Take off your gloves and remove your paper with clean hands.

You can make as many prints of you want to using the same plastic sheets and reference material. Each picture will be different.



NOTE : Acrylic Retarder

A DIY acrylic retarder can be made using 5 parts water to one part glycerine. Don't add neat glycerine to you paint. Always mix with water first Put the ingredients in a bottle or jam jar with a well fitting lid and shake well before use. You can buy glycerine in the baking section of large supermarkets or in the chemist.

Add a drop or two of the mixture to the acrylic paint you're going to use for printing making. Approximately a quarter of a teaspoon to every tablespoon. Always blend it really well. Many experts will tell you to always buy readymade retarder or mediums for your acrylic but I have had no trouble using the glycerine mix which seems to work fine for experiments at home.