Home-made Christmas Decorations

If you've been inspired by the series of short and beautifully simple 'how to' videos brought to you from Recycle Now, here are the outline instructions and some top tips to help guide you through the process of making your own attractive, chic and unique Christmas decorations.

There are lots of attractive recycled papers and materials available from arts, crafts and stationery shops. Alternatively you can save any nice patterned papers, catalogues or magazines you come across. The good news is when they start to look a little tired, or you decide you want new colours / patterns, the old ones can simply be recycled and you can quickly and easily make replacements.

Here are our top tips:

- To make your decorations really stand out, you may want to opt for card or paper that is patterned / coloured on both sides, or glue coloured papers back-to-back for a two-tone effect
- If you're worried about how successful you'll be, don't! They really are very straightforward, however you could have a go on an old scrap of paper first – this can then be recycled when you're happy to move on to your chosen paper or card.
- If you are careful, you will be able to store the decorations for future use; why not reuse one of the boxes from your online Christmas shopping - already equipped with packing material - to place your decorations in when the festivities are over, ready to unpack and reuse again next year
- This is a great way to get the kids involved with Christmas preparations and keep them busy when they break up from school for the Christmas holidays – add glitter, foil and even used sweet wrappers into the mix and watch them get creative!
- If you're a perfectionist, and want really crisp edges along the folds, take one end of a ruler and holding it like a pen, run it along each fold as you go – this will give you a nice, clean edge.

You will need:

- Paper and thin card plus optional crafting items such as glitter, buttons & sequins;
- Scissors; Ruler; Glue/Glue stick; Stapler; Sticky tape; Pencil;
- Compass to draw circles (or use plates, bowls and cups to draw around)
- Pencils, pens, straws or even garden twigs to form structure of Christmas tree;
- Cotton reel / bottle top(s) and plasticine to form base of Christmas tree;
- Needle and cotton.

Instructions:

Paper Christmas Tree - Difficulty ** (moderate)
Draw 5 circles of various sizes – 16cm, 13cm, 10cm, 7cm and 4cm – and cut out
Fold each of these circles in half - FOUR TIMES
Snip a tiny amount from the top point (just enough to allow a pencil to go though)
Unfold and then refold in concertina style
Place a pencil in a cotton reel to form the structure
Stack the folded paper circles on the pencil (largest to smallest) to form the tree

TIP: Wrap a small amount of sticky tape around the pencil (approx half way) – it helps prevent the layers slipping down the pencil too far.

Paper Rosette - Difficulty * (easy)
Cut a strip of paper – 3cm wide x 29cm long
Concertina fold
Staple the ends together then push and turn so the rosette lies flat
Cut small circle(s) from thin card – 2 or 3 cm in diameter
Add glue to one side of circle; stick to centre of rosette; leave 20 minutes to dry

TIP: Stick a 'centre' circle on either side of rosette so it looks good from both sides!

Envelope Gift Bags - Difficulty * (easy)
Seal an envelope and decorate it
Cut along one side edge of envelope
Make a 1cm fold along both long edges of envelope and the other side edge
Place hand inside envelope and refold
Use sticky tape to secure base

Hanging Paper Decoration - Difficulty * (easy)
Cut 8 strips of paper – 2cm wide x 20cm long (these sizes can be varied to make different sizes of decorations)
Stack them neatly on top of each other; staple in the centre
Place small amount of glue on the end and fold into centre
Repeat for each strip, then turn it around and repeat for the other side

Paper Stars - Difficulty ** (moderate)
Cut a strip of paper – 1cm wide x 20cm long (variable)
Loop the paper strip to make a loose knot and flatten
Fold and tuck in the 'short tail' of paper until you have a pentagon shape
Continue wrapping the remaining paper around 'the pentagon', securely tucking the end of the paper inside
Squeeze/pinch the points to make pentagon into a star