

Paper Beads

MATERIALS / TOOLS NEEDED:

- Paper OR thin cardboard
 - *scrap paper, printer paper, cardstock, decorative paper, wrapping paper, or recycled food boxes*
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Scissors OR craft knife and board
- Glue stick
 - *can use super glue IF using food boxes or other paper product of comparable thickness*
- Toothpicks (one per bead)
 - *can substitute sturdy pieces of wire, small skewers, or other of similar shape and size*
- Something to hold toothpicks upright
 - *florist or other foam block, clay, small cardboard box or egg carton, or anything else that works!*
- Varnish and paint brush, optional
 - *can substitute diluted liquid craft glue, nail polish, or any paint that is water resistant once dry*



NOTE: There are many different shapes of beads that can be made with paper as well as lots of different paper material options. The instructions given here will create the oblong beads pictured above (long white with black markings, created from scrap printer paper) but the steps are the same for all the beads. The only thing that will change for different bead styles is the starting shape and size of the paper.

STEPS:

*****Steps 1-3 can be replaced by using the template for 1" isosceles triangles (see page 3). If using the template, print at actual size and simply continue the black lines to the edges of the paper where they do not print. Then, begin the project with Step 4.***

1. On the top short edge of a sheet of paper (8½" x 11"), make a mark at every inch. (This should be on the "back" of the paper, or whichever side will be rolled to the inside of the bead.)
2. On the bottom short edge of the paper, make a mark at ½". Then, mark every inch from there just as on the top. The two sets of marks should then be offset by ½" along opposite edges.
3. Using a pencil and straightedge, connect the marks to form a series of 16 long, skinny isosceles triangles (with 8 coming from each side of the paper).
4. Cut apart the triangles, setting aside the two narrower right triangles created by the edge pieces. These can either be discarded or used separately to make smaller cone-shaped or teardrop beads.

5. On the 1" side of the triangle, apply glue to approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the paper. (Again, this should be applied to whichever side of the paper will become the inside of the bead.)
6. Set a toothpick right under the line of glue and fold the paper down onto itself, molding over the round of the toothpick inside the fold. This will form the inner channel of the bead. Slide the toothpick back and forth inside the paper as the glue dries to keep the paper from sticking to the toothpick.
7. Once the first glue line is dry, crease the paper firmly against the toothpick where it is folded over. This will help in getting the bead to roll up tightly. If the paper is a little thicker, it is also a good idea to roll a bit of the paper tightly around the toothpick before adding more glue to "train" the paper to take the correct shape.
8. Apply glue to more of the paper triangle. When starting out, it may be easier to begin with $\frac{1}{2}$ "-1" of glue at a time to work on the rolling technique. Once practiced, a few inches of glue may be applied at a time.
9. Begin to roll the paper tightly around the toothpick, adhering each section with the glue. Pay attention to the alignment of the triangle; this shape bead (oblong) should stay centered the whole way (most of the shapes stay centered except the cone and teardrop beads). Also note from each side how tightly the paper is being rolled. If the layers start to loosen a bit and separate, they will have to be unrolled and redone more tightly.
10. Continue adding more glue and roll the paper all the way to the tip of the triangle.
11. Slide the bead along the toothpick again to ensure it is not sticking. Set the toothpick into its holder and allow the bead to dry.
12. Repeat steps 5-11 with the remaining paper triangles, or more/less to create as many beads as desired.
13. For added durability, the beads can be varnished. While still on their toothpicks, paint each bead evenly with 1-2 coats of any number of varnish options and leave to dry. Take care not to get too drippy, as the varnish can also seal the beads to their toothpicks.

Make something out of the completed beads! Experiment with different papers and varnishes as well as different shapes and sizes of paper. Again, it is the same process to create beads that are teardrop-shaped, conical, spherical, tubular, and more! See the Related Resources below for more ideas.

THIS PROJECT AND TEMPLATES:

<https://guides.sspl.org/CraftingAtHome/PaperBeads>

RELATED RESOURCES:

<https://guides.sspl.org/CraftingAtHome>

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/how-to-make-paper-beads-4045300>

https://www.bigbeadlittlebead.com/guides_and_information/guide_to_making_paper_beads.php

