

A VISUAL GUIDE: HOW TO MAKE A JAPANESE STYLE ALBUM

This guide will walk you through the steps to creating a simple tied Japanese style album.

For the example I printed photos onto twenty pages of 8 1/2" x 14" Epson heavy weight matte paper to be used for my inside sheets.

This style of album can also be used to make a post and screw type album. (The post and screw style will be covered in a future tutorial)



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Paper for inside pages
- Tissue sheets (optional)
- Board for covers - Davey board, illustration board, chipboard, medium weight matboard
- Fabric or decorative paper for cover
- Paper for endsheets
- Ribbon or cord for tying
- PVA Glue or white craft glue such as Sobo (or other adhesive of your choice)
- Wheat Paste to mix with PVA (optional)
- Wax paper
- Waste paper for gluing on

TOOLS NEEDED:

- Ruler
- Craft Knife (I like the ones with the snap off blades)
- Scissors
- Bone Folder for pressing and scoring (Can be purchased at any craft/scrapbooking store—not necessary but handy)
- Brush for gluing
- Board & weights or book press
- Drill or hole punch
- Clamps to hold pages and covers together for punching

TIPS:

Sobo glue is a type of PVA and can be found at any craft store for approx. \$8 for a 16oz bottle. If you are going to do a lot of binding you may want to purchase PVA by the gallon from Talas. Matte board works ok but light to medium weight illustration board works better. Some office supply stores have this as well as craft/art stores. Illustration board is usually white on one side and greenish on the other.

When making books/cases I use a mixture of half Sobo/PVA and half wheat paste to glue both fabric and paper to the board. The reason is that mixing the wheat paste with the PVA extends the drying time of the glue so that you have enough time to position and smooth everything properly. If you use straight PVA you have to work fast as it dries quickly.

You can use any fabric for your covers. I prefer natural fabrics such as cotton or linen. If your fabric is fairly heavy there will be no need to back it but if it is thin I suggest that you back it with a thin paper so that your glue doesn't seep through to the front. You can use lightweight drawing paper or archival tissue for backing. Both can be found in many sizes at your local craft store. (See instructions for backing fabric on the last page of this tutorial.)

Step 1 - Prepare your inside pages:

If you are using preprinted pages put them in order and even up the stack of sheets then place them along the edge of a table with the spine edge overhanging an inch or so and some weight to hold them down. Using PVA glue, brush glue along the spine edge. Make sure to get a nice even coat and leave to dry. This step is not necessary but it helps to keep the sheets in place during the making of the album.



Note:

If you will be adding blank pages to attach photos to you will need to add spacers between the sheets.

There are two ways to make spacers in blank albums. One way is to cut your inside paper 1" longer and fold the extra over along the spine edge of the sheet. You can glue the folded piece to the back of the sheet or leave it loose.

The other is to cut your inside paper the width you want and then cut individual 1" strips and glue them to the back of each sheet along the spine edge.

Step 2 - Cut and prepare covers :

Measure the paper stack that you will be using for the inside. For the example I am using a paper stack that is 8 1/2" tall x 14" wide.

Cut four pieces of board. The finished covers will be 1/4" larger than the inside paper height and width dimensions.

Cut two pieces of board 1 1/4" x 8 3/4" and two pieces 8 3/4" tall by 12 3/4" wide.

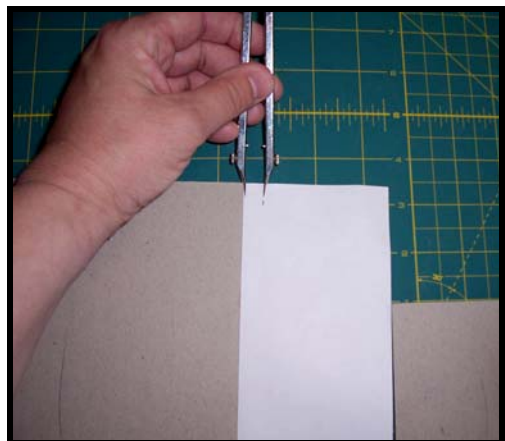
Cut a piece of bond paper approx. 2 1/2 wide " x 8 3/4" tall. The bond paper is used as a spacer between the spine and cover boards.

Glue the paper to the cover board 1" in from the edge.

Flip over and measure 1/4" from the board edge and make a mark at the top and bottom edge of the board on the paper.

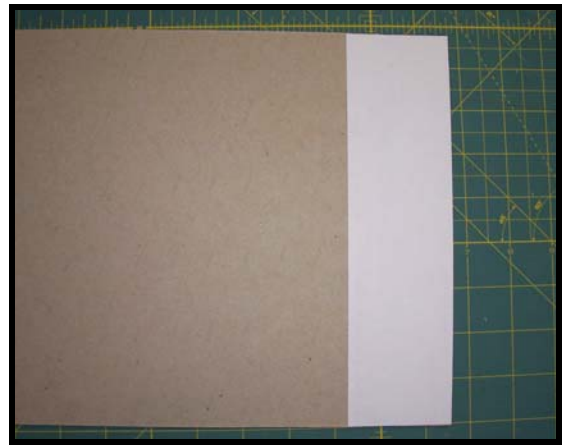
Glue the spine board to the paper using the marks as a guide. You will have a 1/4" space between the boards.

Note: I find a drafters measuring tool to be handy for these types of measurements but a ruler will do just fine.





Front showing 1/4" space between boards



Back showing spacer paper

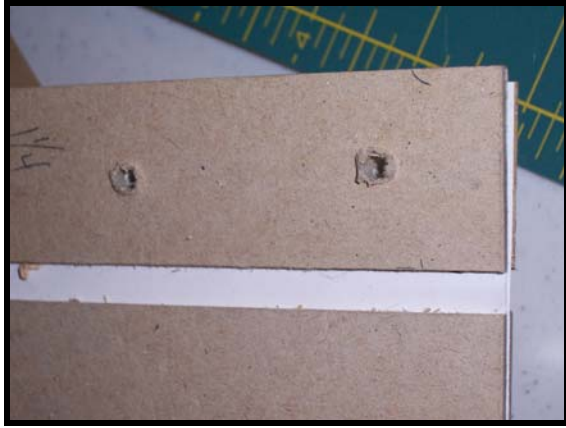


Prepare the covers for drilling the holes by squaring up the pages and covers and clamping together. There should be approx. 1/8" diff. All around between the inside pages and covers.

Measure along the spine strip for your holes and put tick marks where they will go. For this album I drew a line down the middle of the spine piece and placed holes one each 3/4" from the ends, one in the center and one centered between the 3/4" tick and the center tick on each side. Spacing and no. of holes is dependent upon the sewing pattern you decide to use.

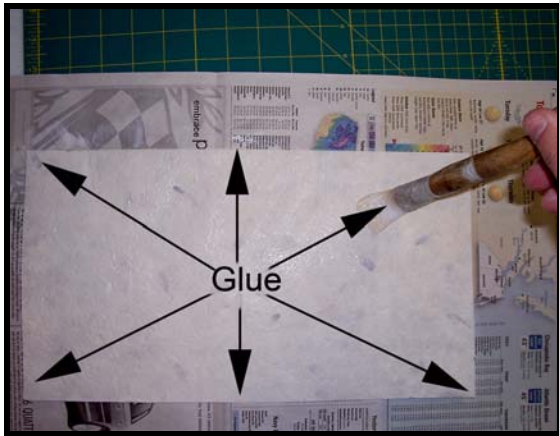


Rest clamped block onto a piece of waste board and drill holes. The size of your hole will depend on the material that you will be using to tie the album together. The material that you will tie with will be going through each hole twice so the holes have to be big enough to accommodate the double thickness of your tying material plus a bit of wiggle to account for the thickness of the cover material which will get pushed into the holes a bit.



Once you drill the holes you will see a lip of board created by the drill that you can trim off with a utility knife or sand off to make the holes smooth at the edges.

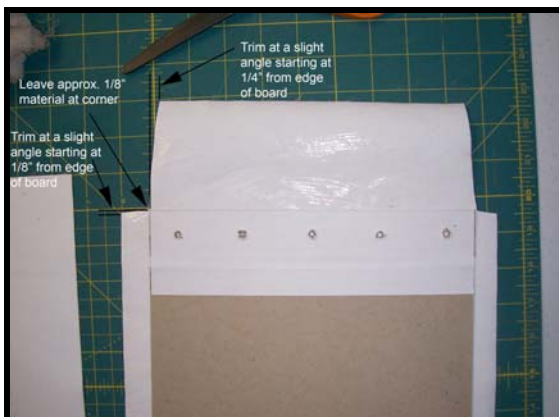
Step 3 - Prepare covers:



Next, measure the overall length and width of the boards and cut your cover material with 3/4" extra on each side all around except of the spine where we want to add an additional 3" for the turn over. For this project I used fabric that I prepared in advance. (Instructions for preparing fabric are at the end of this document) My boards measured 14" x 8 3/4" so I cut my paper 10 1/4" x 18". Lay paper wrong side up on some waste paper and, working quickly, apply glue. Make sure to brush from the center outward to avoid getting glue on the front of your material.

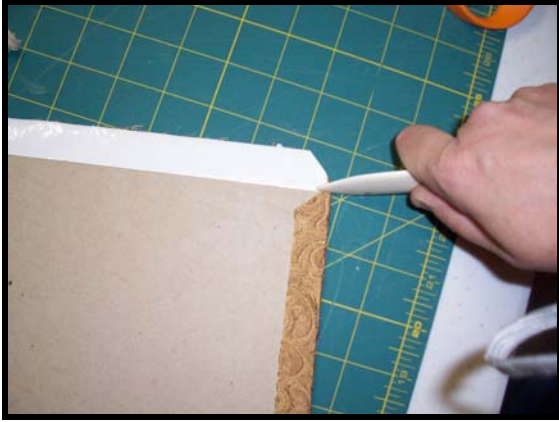


Once the cover material has a good coating of glue, carefully remove the waste paper from underneath and center your cover board onto the prepared cover material. Make sure to leave 3/4" at the top, bottom and front and the 3" at the spine. The reason for the 3" at the spine is to allow the cover material to fold over across the hinge on the inside. This allows extra strength at the hinge.



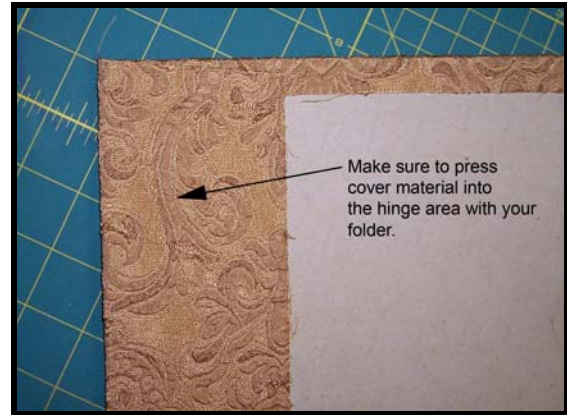
Next, using scissors and working fairly quickly, trim the corners at the front on an angle leaving approx. 1/8" to 1/4" material between board edges and cut. If your material is on the heavier side you'll want to trim the 1/4".

For the spine edge you'll need trim as indicated in the photo at right.



Once all the cuts are made fold over the top and bottom first. Make sure to crimp the corners with your folder before turning in the front and back.

Fold over the front and spine areas. Make sure to press the cover material into the hinge area on both the front and inside of each board.



Gently press the cover material on the front of the boards to smooth out.

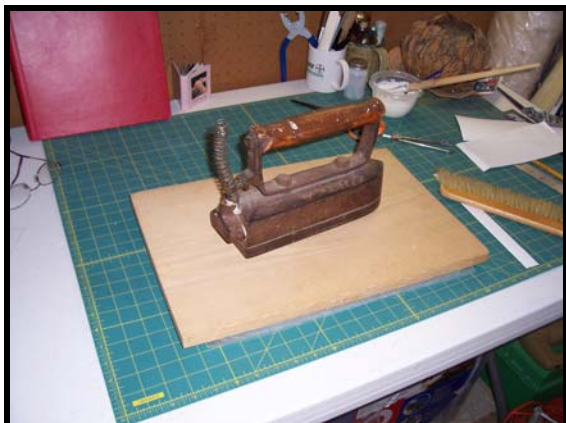
Measure the inside area and cut a piece of endsheet paper to size about 1/4" smaller than area to be covered. My area was 8 3/4" x 12" so I cut my paper 8 1/3" x 11 3/4". (Basically you'll want the endsheet paper to be approx. 1/8" - 1/4" smaller than the outside dimensions of the covers)

Note:

Be aware that some papers will expand when wet so be careful not to stretch when gluing.



Step 4 - Finishing:



Once both boards are finished place them on top of each other with wax paper underneath between and on top and put them under some moderate weight overnight.

While the covers are drying you can glue a strip of cover material to the spine edge of your paper stack to give your album a more finished appearance. Make sure not to cover your holes when gluing on any material.

Once the book has been dried overnight you will need to open up the holes that have been covered by the cover material. You can usually find the holes by pressing with your fingers until you feel the indentations. Take a craft knife and cut a small slit at each hole. Then, depending on the size of your holes, you can use a chopstick or some other implement to open them up. Once your holes are open you can sandwich the covers together with your inside papers. And tie together using your selected material and pattern. For the demo I used a simple criss-cross pattern starting at the bottom and working my way up then back down. (See links section for a book recommendation with sewing patterns.)

Some finished album pictures:



Two ways to prepare fabric for covering a book

Method 1-Pasting fabric to paper:

Cut your fabric approx. 2" bigger all around than the finished size you will need then iron it. You'll need a large sheet of drawing paper or tissue paper. Make sure your paper is no thicker than regular printer paper. Cut your paper a little bigger than the fabric piece you cut. Tape the paper to your work surface and brush on a layer of straight wheat paste (recipe below). Lay your fabric over the pasted paper and gently smooth it down making sure to get out all the bubbles. Try not to press too hard. I use a clean 2-3" wide paint brush to smooth the fabric down. Leave until dry. Then trim to size.

Method 2-ironing fabric to paper:

Cut your fabric to the size you'll need to cover your book with. Cut a piece of lightweight iron on adhesive such as Heat N Bond Lite or Wonder Under (available from any fabric store). Iron onto fabric according to directions. Strip off the backup paper. Iron on the drawing/tissue paper.

Wheat paste recipe:

2 cups water
1/2 cup unbleached flour

Put water in a sauce pan
Stir flour into water with a whisk if you have one
Let sit for a few mins.
Put pan on med/hi heat
Stir constantly until the mixture starts to boil
Let boil for 5 mins still stirring constantly
Take off of heat and transfer the paste to a plastic container
Let cool in a pan of cool water stirring occasionally
If the paste thickens too much during the cooling you can add a little water.
You want the consistency to be like heavy cream or thick gravy.
Will keep for about 2 days without refrigeration a few more with.
The paste/Sobo mix will keep about a week or so without refrigeration.

Supply Links:

Book Cloth/PVA: <http://talasonline.com/>

Check out the book Japanese Bookbinding by Kojiro Ikegami : Shows diff. Style of tying as well as how to make Japanese style boxes

Check out <http://www.tjbookarts.com/tutorials.html> for some other useful tutorials.

This document is copyrighted 2006 by Jacqueline Poutasse (jacqueline.poutasse@verizon.net)
Please feel free to use and share these instructions but please don't sell, publish or post them on any website without express permission from the author. Please feel free to email me any kudos, praise, chocolate, your favorite biscuit recipe at the above email address. And, of course, email me if you have any questions about the techniques described in this document.