

Fabric-paper Circle Flowers Fast and Fun!

Did you know that you can make simple, beautiful flowers with paper towels, some acrylic paint, interfacing, interesting threads and a thumbtack? Well, you can!

You'll need:

- Paper towels (Scott Rags in a Box are my favorites)
- Acrylic Paint
- Something in which to mix washes of paint - I use a plastic ice cube tray
- Foam brushes - 1 or 2
- Water to rinse brushes
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Nonstick craft mat or plastic
- Fusible interfacing for single-sided flowers
- Stitch Witchery fusible web to create double-sided flowers
- Pretty machine embroidery threads
- Sewing Machine
- Open-toe Appliqué presser foot
- Thumbtack and painter's tape **or** Circular Embroidery Attachment for your sewing machine
- Parchment Paper
- Iron
- Buttons and beads
- Hand sewing thread and needle
- Scissors (regular and pinking shears)

Begin with good paper towels. My favorites are from the home improvement store called **Scott Rags in a Box**. There are 200 in the box for about \$12.00. That's a lot of arty goodness right there! You can also use most good brands of paper towels found in your grocery store. Although

I prefer the plain white towels, the printed ones add a little something extra, too. Use what you have access to and see what happens.

The process is simple.

1. Protect your surface - plastic is a good idea.
2. Select a few of your favorite acrylic paint colors. Craft paint is just fine to use. Don't forget to use some metallic paints, too.
3. Dilute your acrylic paint with water - mostly water with a few drops of paint. Mix well.
4. Dampen your paper towel by spraying with water until quite damp.
5. Dab diluted paint onto the dampened towel. Let the colors run together. You can squeeze the towel to encourage the colors to blend. If the color isn't as strong as you'd like, add more paint to the mixture.
6. When selecting your colors, it's a good idea to use those close to each other on the color wheel. If you get too far away from a color (example: red is opposite green on the color wheel) the colors can easily become muddy. Those close to each other blend much better.
7. When your towels are all beautiful and painty, lay flat to dry. It will take several hours for them to dry completely.
8. After towels are totally dry, protect your ironing surface with parchment paper and use an iron that you've dedicated to your art. Place the dry, painted towel on the protected surface, and press to smooth out the towel and set the paint.
9. If you wish to have different colors on each side of your flowers, select 2 painted towels. Cut a piece of Stitch Witchery fusible web that is the same size as your towels. Make a sandwich like this:
 - Parchment paper
 - Painted towel
 - Fusible web
 - Painted towel
 - Parchment paper
10. Use your hot (art-dedicated) iron and fuse all the layers. Let the sandwich cool and you have fabric-paper all ready to stitch into flowers.

11. You can also create fabric-paper by ironing light to medium weight fusible interfacing to one side of your painted towel. The interfacing turns your paper towels into fabric-paper and allows you to successfully stitch circles for your flowers.
12. Thread your machine with a beautiful thread. Try variegated or machine embroidery thread.
13. Use an open-toe appliqué presser foot for decorative stitching.
14. To prepare your machine for stitching, either tape a thumb tack to the left of your sewing machine needle with the tack pointed up or attach the circular embroidery attachment to the bed of your machine. **NOTE:** The distance from the sewing machine needle to the tack is the radius of the circle you will sew. That means, the diameter of your circle will be twice that distance.
15. Stitch circles. Be creative. Try different stitches to see what you like. Many of the utility/construction stitches are really nice when sewn in a circle. But, don't limit yourself. Try lots of different stitches.
16. Vary the sizes of your circles. When using the thumbtack method, you'll have to un-tape and move the tack for different diameters. If you have a circular embroidery attachment for your machine, simply slide the pin along the guide to vary the circle size.
17. Be sure to leave at least 1/2" between circles.
18. When your towel is filled with circles, it's time to cut them out. You can use regular scissors or pinking shears or scalloping shears. (Note: I tried the decorative edged scissors used in paper arts and didn't find them to be very successful, but try if you have any of them.)
19. Layer circles as desired to create your blooming beauties. Secure with a hand tack stitch or a dab of glue. Add a button, stacked buttons, beads or brads for the flower centers. Embellish to your heart's content! You might even add some hand stitches.
20. Or, you can cut one of the circle flowers into a spiral and coil it up to add dimension.
21. Now, add your flowers to your art journal pages or the front of a journal, to greeting cards, or add a pin back and you have a fun lapel pin. You are only limited by your imagination.

Now, play! Let's get creative!!

- ☀ Create lollipop flowers by layering various sized circles. Hand or machine tack together and then add buttons or beads for the center.
- ☀ Cut a circle into a spiral. Coil it up. Stitch to hold the spiral and add some buttons or beads to the center.
- ☀ Take a small circle and cut it apart. Layer it up and voila you have a bud or a filler flower.

So what can you do with all these beauties?

- ☀ Decorate a tote bag with a garden of your flowers.
- ☀ Or, what about adding them to a hat?
- ☀ Add a pin back and you have an embellishment for a lapel or pin it on a greeting card that you've created to give someone - a card and gift all in one.
- ☀ Grow your flower garden on an art journal page or on the cover of your journal.

What else can you think of?