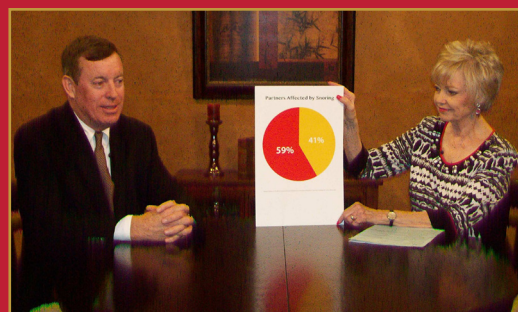


# Creative Living with Sheryl Borden

7600 Series - Miscellaneous



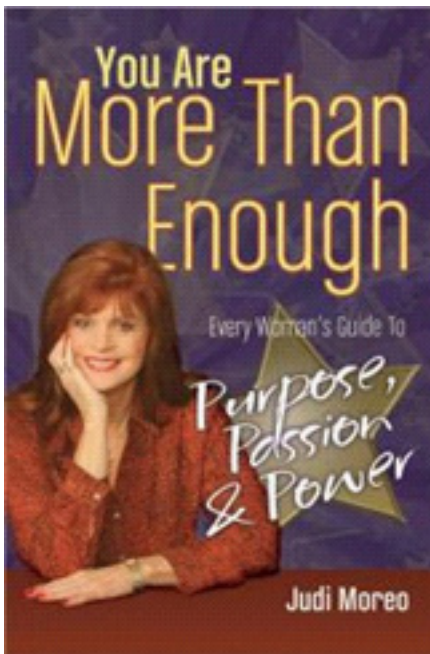
*Sheryl Borden*  
*Producer/Host*



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## *You Are More Than Enough*

For more than 20 years, Judi Moreo has traveled around the world, speaking each day to audiences from 50 to 3000 people. She asked the participants if anyone ever felt that they were meant to be more than they were or achieve more than they had accomplished so far. More than 75% of the audience raised their hands.

In this high pressure, high stressed, fast paced world, most of us set our dreams aside just to get by. In this powerful book, Judi shares the ideas and techniques she used which clarified her path and made easier her journey to becoming the person she knew she could be.

The life you've always dreamed of is within your reach. This is a heart warming, myth shattering personal development course filled with practical techniques and illustrated by real life situations.

## *Achievement Journal*

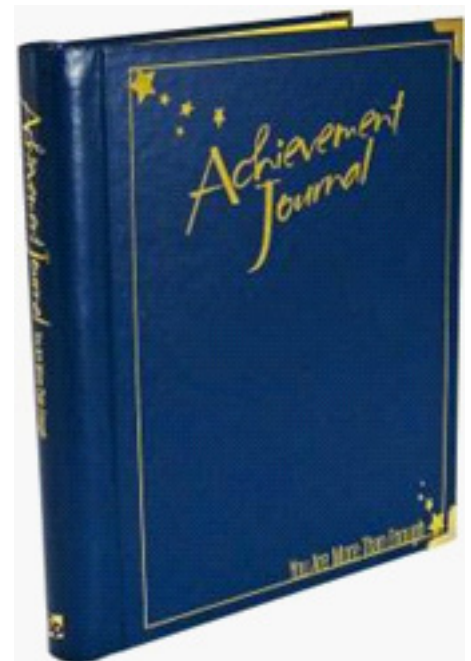
If you have ever felt as though you were created for "something more", but just didn't know where to start, this is the journal for you.

It's actually much more than a journal! It is a step-by-step process of achieving your goals and making your wants, hopes, and desires come true. It gives you ways to make your life work as well as a proven technique for setting and achieving goals in the eight major areas of your life:

- Career
- Relationships
- Financial
- Health
- Spiritual
- Education
- Community Involvement
- Recreation

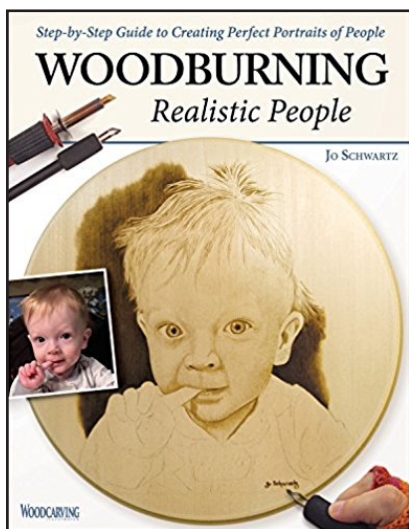
In addition to a place for daily writing, there is a measurement tool for you to stay aware of how you are doing in each of those areas of your life.

And you might know, Judi has included 2 pages of peel and stick gold stars in order for you to easily reward yourself. These and other books by Judi are available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and on Judi's website.



**COURTESY: Judi Moreo**  
 Turning Point International  
[www.judimoreo.com](http://www.judimoreo.com)





For complete instructions, refer to Jo's book (pictured left).

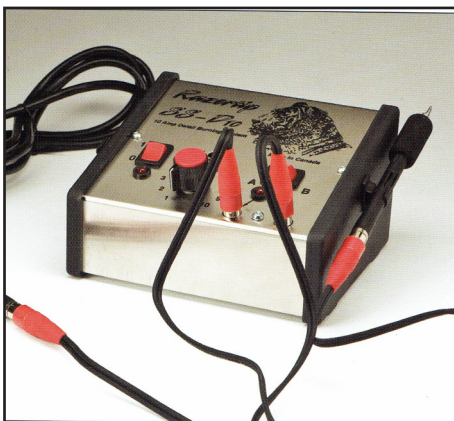
Woodburning is a great form of art for many reasons. One of them is that it doesn't take much equipment to get started. You need a woodburning unit and a few basic

drafting tools that you probably have lying around the house, plus some wood.

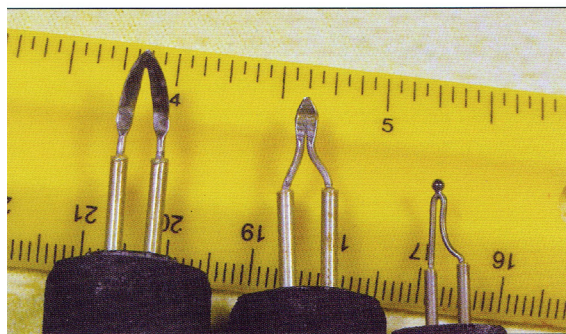
### The Woodburning Unit:

First and foremost, you're going to need a woodburning unit. The burner model isn't critical, as long as it has adjustable heat and you are reasonably comfortable controlling it, it will probably work. (Right: This is the model I use.

It's a Razertip SS-D10.)



### Nibs and Pens:



I use three Razertip pens daily: the Heavy Duty Medium Spear Shader,

the Small Spear Shader, and the 1.5 mm Ball tip.

(NOTE: The "nib" is the metal point that heats and touches the wood. The pen is the shaft that you hold.)

### Cleaning the Nibs:

Because you are burning wood, carbon will build up on the nibs. Using a dirty or grimy tip will not only affect

# Woodburning Tips

the smoothness of the stroke, but it can scratch the surface of the wood. To clean a nib, put a dab of aluminum oxide on a leather strop (the rough side of scrap leather.) Let the nib cool, and then stroke it through the aluminum oxide and across the strop until it is bright and shiny. Wipe the tip on a clean cloth and you're ready to burn again.

### Making Sample Boards:

Sample boards, which are also known as layer guides and value, or heat guides, give you a chance to practice and get comfortable with your woodburning machine while you make useful tools. The boards will show the effect of each of your machine's heat settings on the different types of wood you will use for projects, as well as the effect of adding more layers of burning at a particular heat setting.

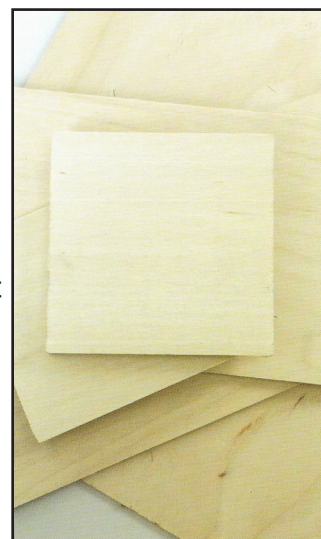
Taking the time to make sample boards now will speed up your decisions later. You'll be able to refer back to the setting for the value of darkness that you want to achieve in certain areas of your portraits. When in doubt always use a lower/cooler temperature and rely on layering to achieve the depth of darkness required. You'll need 3 samples of your burning material, a pencil, a ruler, and your burning unit. (Refer to Jo's book for making the 3 samples.)

### Materials:

Many surfaces, or mediums, can be used for burning portraits. I love working on basswood because it is so soft and white, and the grain is so subtle, all of which combines to allow for great contrast in shading. I also use linden, birch, maple, and Italian poplar plywood. I dislike pine, however, because it is too knotty.

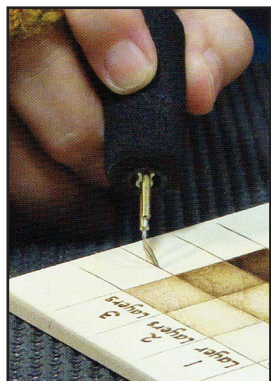
### Wood Prep:

I always pre-sand my wood until it is completely smooth. Rule of thumb: the surface should be "baby bottom smooth" before you begin burning.



## General Techniques:

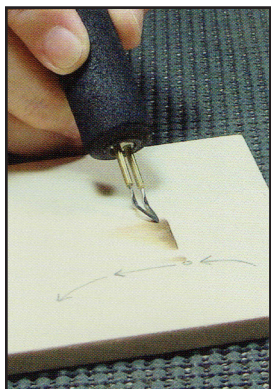
There are a few general techniques that you will use repeatedly in burning portraits. I'll describe them in detail here. Spend some time practicing each so you are familiar with them.



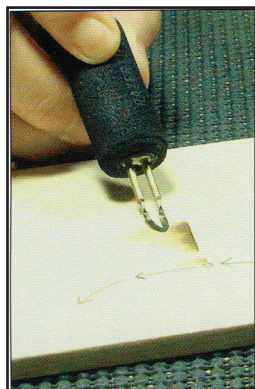
Angle 1



Angle 2



Angle 3



Angle 4

## ANGLES:

I typically hold my pen at four angles while burning. Use all of the angles with a very light touch so as not to leave depressions. The wood is going to shy away from high heat, but keeping a soft pressure will help smooth the surface.

**Angle 1:** Completely upright (90°). Because the metal of the nib is thin, it will slice into the wood. I use it for outside borders or other areas where a slice is not a problem or is desired. You can produce very fine hair if you use Angle 1 with the lightest touch possible over an already-burnished area.

**Angle 2:** Slight angle (60°). I use Angle 2 as I begin the delicate edges of skin. Using a lower heat setting, you can set the pen down at Angle 2 to make a nice clean edge, and then roll into Angles 3 and 4 as you slide and lift the pen off to the right.

**Angle 3:** More of a tilt (30°). There isn't that much difference between Angles 2 and 3; they just fit neatly between upright and flat!

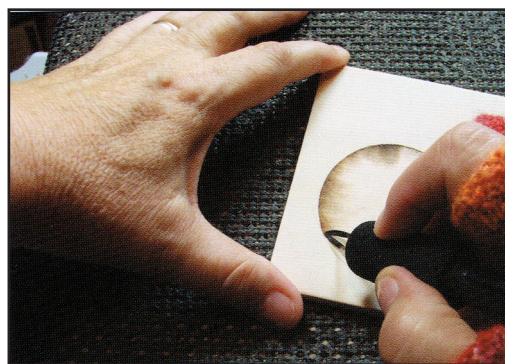
**Angle 4:** Flat. I use Angle 4 for smoothing and blending.

As you can see, there isn't a great deal of difference in the angles due to the small size and shape of the burning nib. However, those small differences matter when it comes to the temperature you're burning and how much shading or value is needed. At Angles 1 and 2, there is not a lot of metal on the wood. As you lean, it directs more heat onto and into the wood. That is also why it's important to use the lower heat settings so you don't burn faster than you want to in delicate areas.

## TURN THE WOOD, NOT YOUR HAND:

When I burn, I hold the pen in one hand and use the other to move the wood. My burning hand and wrist are mostly stationary, while the other is almost constantly turning the wood to position it under the pen. This helps keep my hand, and thus the pen and nib, at the proper angle so I can repeat the touch down—glide—lift stroke over and over to create a truly smooth shading effect on the wood.

Practice burning a circle to teach your non-dominant hand to turn the wood so the dominant hand can continue making the smooth shading stroke. I typically burn clockwise around, but you should be able to burn just as well in the other direction, too.



**COURTESY: Jo Schwartz**  
Burning Tree Art  
[www.joschwartz.net](http://www.joschwartz.net)



# How to Build a Birdhouse



There are over 900 kinds of birds in the U.S. and each of them has an instinctive birdnest-building blueprint - architectural plan - for the kind of bird nest they are programmed to build, and where to build it. Most bird species insist on building their own kind of nest but some birds are willing to accept a bird house.

**Why is it important to have bird houses?** Bird houses are also known as nest boxes because they provide a safe place for birds to build their nest and raise their young. In the winter, birds will also huddle together for warmth within a bird house. More than 50 different species of birds nest in bird houses. In suburban areas where there is less vegetation or natural environments, bird houses are essential in providing the birds with a safe place to raise their young. When birds migrate, bird houses also provide them with a place to rest. It is important in general to help preserve the bird population because birds eat seeds and spread the seeds in different areas, which in turn promotes plant growth. Birds also partake in eating pesky insects.

Besides keeping down the number of insects, having a birdhouse will enable some scarce species to repopulate an area (such as blue birds and wood ducks.) You may also want to have a bird nest to encourage song birds to adopt your yard and add sound and color during courtship.

If you are considering building a bird house, first consider the **type of species** you are building it for, how big you want it to be, and where you plan on putting it. The material it is made out of is also important—wood prevents the house from becoming too hot when the sun hits it. Simply searching for bird houses online will provide you with the resources you need to start building your bird house.

Bird houses are easy to build. Kits are available and

there are some important details to keep in mind. Plans are also available that enable people to build their own.

- a. Any bird house design will be attractive usually to only 1 or 2 kinds of birds.
- b. Wood is by far the best material for building a bird house. Do not use aromatic wood like Juniper or Cedar. Aged wood is best (gray in color.) Painting is optional. Avoid reflective paint which can create glare that is uncomfortable for birds making their approach. Do not paint the inside of the box, and do not use bright colors. Birds prefer to build a nest in an inconspicuous place.
- c. Ventilation is necessary at the eaves under the roof.
- d. Two or three drain holes should be in the bottom.
- e. The birdhouse needs to be opened and cleaned out at the end of the season. If the birdhouse was successfully used, replace it precisely where it was.
- f. The entrance or hole size is critical for attracting most birds like Wrens and Bluebirds. The overall size of the birdhouse is critical as well. English House Sparrows are very liberal in their needs and may take over nearly any size bird house that is unused.
- g. Wood Ducks will use a bird house but those boxes must be large and placed 6 feet high on a pole or fastened to a tree.
- h. Purple Martins, excellent mosquito-eaters, nest colonially in a partitioned “apartment” or in a cluster of dried



hanging gourds.

i. Orioles, hummingbirds and vultures do not use nest boxes - they build their own.

j. Birdhouses should be anchored so that they do not oscillate or rotate in the wind, and finally, cats need to be kept away from any birdhouse!!

### **Additional tips:**

Woodpeckers and flickers: If these birds begin hammering on the eaves of your house, hang up an oversized birdhouse with a 2" diameter hole. They will very often begin attacking the bird house and leave the eaves alone.



American Kestrel (very small hawk): Sometimes will nest in a Purple Martin colonial nest box. However, they will snatch up an occasional Purple Martin to feed their young! The best solution is to just wait it out! When young are fledged, clean out their nest.

Eggs are usually laid 1 or 2 at a time until the typical clutch size is reached, then the adult begins to incubate the eggs all at once so that the youngsters hatch at nearly the same time. Owls would be an exception because they start incubating with the very first egg they lay.

- Two, 4 or 6 eggs are a typical clutch. Some birds lay several.
- If the season is long, sometimes the adults will double, even triple clutch, in a summer.
- Most songbird eggs hatch within 12 to 15 days.
- Thirteen days later they fledge.
- Two to 4 weeks later they leave the parents.

**Be sure water is always available!**

Keep feeders filled with seed for the adults. Add crushed kibbled dog food to the seed to provide protein. Crumbled egg yolk works well also.

Baby birds are given insects by the adults.

At the end of the season, take down the birdhouse and clean it. Be careful as sometimes wasps will begin building their nest inside an abandoned bird house. Store the birdhouse and put it back in place in the Spring, prior to the return of migrating birds (February or March.)

For more information and plans for building a birdhouse, go to: <https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/#plans>

**COURTESY: Ray Pawley**  
Retired Zoologist

## **Wrapped Bouquets**

### **Tips**

- Choose 2 premium flowers and 1 filler for a go-to recipe.
- Use green or white tissue paper to match any color combo of flowers, or use brown butcher paper for a country/rustic look.
- Add in one exotic flower as a focal point such as protea or an orchid, for an unusual design
- Use a ribbon that matches the color of one of the flowers or twine/raffia for a country/rustic look.

**COURTESY: Carly Cylinder**  
Flour LA & Flour LA Jr.  
[www.flourla.com](http://www.flourla.com)





# Best Bagless Vacuum Cleaner



Unlike traditional vacuum cleaners, Sirena doesn't require bags to collect dust and dirt. A large 3.5L basin filled with water is where all dust and dirt gets trapped. Water never clogs the way most bags, or filters in bagless vacuums, do. Sirena cleans 100% of the time — at 100% efficiency.

When the air is pulled inside, it is forced to pass through the water where the contaminants (e.g. dust, pet hair, dust mite droppings, etc.) are trapped in a swirling bath of water. A rapidly spinning separator prevents the water from entering the motor. The air is then forced through a washable HEPA filter which retains anything that didn't get trapped in the water (usually less than 0.01% of all particles). Finally, the clean, water-washed air is exhausted back into the room.

Vacuuming with Sirena is a breeze. Begin by filling the basin with regular tap water. Make sure the water level is above the "MIN" line and below the "MAX" line. You can also add optional fragrances (from our Fragrance Pack) or a cap of our Ocean Breeze Deodorizer directly into the water before cleaning.



Adding fragrances or deodorizer doesn't affect the cleaning efficiency. You can also switch the scents half-way through. Simply inject a few drops directly into the intake, there is no need to turn the machine off or to open the basin! Our Fragrance Pack includes four natural fragrances: Pine/Tropical/Apple/Eucalyptus.

Sirena's water basin is designed to protect the motor from being damaged by large debris entering the machine. A special baffle is located right behind the intake port to help keep large debris away from the separator and to intensify the "rain storm" inside the basin.

Sirena's large 3.5L basin allows you to clean the entire house without needing to replace the water. When you have finished cleaning, detach the basin and pour the dirty water (it will be very dirty the first time you use Sirena) down the toilet or outside.



We want your Sirena to last a very long time! It is designed with safety and longevity in mind. The motor is bypass-cooled, so it will never overheat. Sirena also features an interlock system which prevents it from turning on if the water basin is not attached.

## Make Your Indoor Environment Healthier



Health and safety of our children is a top priority for every parent. Kids love playing on carpets making it extremely important that the carpets are thoroughly cleaned. Sirena is designed to deep-clean all types of carpets. Here is how Sirena does it:

1. Sirena features a powerful 1200W Italian-made motor providing enough suction power to reach the lowest layers of carpets.
2. Our Power Nozzle features 3 user-adjustable height levels for best possible airflow and the ease of motion on different carpeting surfaces.
3. Unlike with bags or filters, water will always maintain maximum cleaning efficiency.



The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) warns that indoor air can be up to 20 times more polluted than the air outdoors. Dust mites, mold and airborne particulates can cause breathing difficulties and aggravate allergic reactions. Sirena improves the indoor air quality and eliminates allergens.

1. Water is an impenetrable barrier for most airborne particles including dust, pollen, and dust mite droppings.
2. Some contaminants are non-water-soluble (e.g. sawdust, drywall dust, etc.). Those will be captured by our washable True HEPA filter.
3. Adding a few drops of eucalyptus oil into the water will quickly relieve nasal congestion.
4. You can run Sirena in the Quiet mode overnight or during the day to continuously purify the air in the room.



Any pet owner will agree that pet hair can be a nuisance. Not only will it stick to nearly every surface in your home, it makes cleaning a nightmare. Pet hair can also cause or exacerbate allergies. Traditional vacuums lose cleaning efficiency very quickly as pet hair clogs the air holes. Sirena's water-based filtration is the ultimate answer to pet hair problems:

1. Sirena comes with a tool for every surface in your home, including soft furniture and hard-to-reach spots.
2. All Sirena tools (including the Power Nozzle) are designed for maximum airflow making it easy to pick up pet hair from carpets and floors.
3. The large 3.5L water basin capacity makes it possible to clean multiple rooms or the entire house without needing to change the water.
4. Discarding the dirty water is very easy. You can forget about dealing with clogged vacuum bags!

**COURTESY: Toufic Khayrallah  
Sirena, Inc.**

[www.sirenavacuum.com](http://www.sirenavacuum.com)



## What Can You Grow in a Smart Pot?

The short answer: anything with roots. But start with something good to eat! You can grow almost anything in a Smart Pot! Vegetables, herbs, flowers, and more. You don't need a green thumb to have a thriving container garden. All you need are the right tools. Your #1 tool is the Smart Pot.

### Better Than Traditional Plastic Containers

Smart Pots utilize a patented fabric design to produce a healthier plant. Before Smart Pots became a household name, professional tree growers were using them for over 25 years and found their trees grew better in these fabric containers.

Almost all plants grow better in the Smart Pot fabric containers because Smart Pots support healthy root growth. And strong roots means a stronger plant. Compared to plastic containers, Smart Pots stay cooler on hot days because it allows air to flow through the sides of the fabric. Roots can't grow and are stressed when plastic containers get hot.

Smart Pots also root prunes. When a root tip reaches the side of the fabric container, it stops in place, and initiates lateral, or side branching. As this process repeats, the entire area of the container is filled with fibrous root growth, allowing more surface area for mineral and water absorption. A recent study at Texas A&M University showed double the root mass compared to a traditional plastic container. In a plastic container, roots circle around the side and rarely initiate fibrous growth.

The biggest headache of gardening is digging up and placing the garden, and turning your compressed, backyard clay soil into something that will grow a plant. And it has to drain well. With the Smart Pot, you can be set up in a performance garden in minutes.

The healthier root structure that develops allows the plant to grow faster than it would in the ground. And a stronger plant is more resistant to insects, illness, weather fluctuation and is easier to care for overall.

Smart Pots are BPA-free. So you can be 100% organic without worrying about dangerous chemicals leeching into your soil. The same can't be said for other fabric containers and raised beds built with railroad ties or other treated lumber.

Those chemicals get into your soil and will be absorbed by the roots of plants. This is an issue because non-treated wood will rot, whereas treated wood can contain hundreds of chemicals. With Smart Pots, our focus is on growing edibles – don't grow your edibles in treated wood such as railroad ties.

The Smart Pot design has been perfected through 30 years of real-life usage. What you're getting is optimal fabric thickness and texture for maximum airflow and product longevity.

For most urban residents, growing in a container is the only viable solution. Container gardening means plants can be strategically placed on patios, walkways, steps, or balconies. They can be moved to avoid a hailstorm, or even travel with you in a trailer.



**COURTESY: Curt Jaynes**  
GardenSource Nursery & Landscaping



# How to Make Your Own Homemade Soap

Making your own soap at home is easy, frugal, creative and fulfilling. There's something really marvelous about taking a bar of your own homemade soap into the bath or shower with you.

Whether you are looking for a more natural alternative to commercial soap, or are just a crafty person looking for a new creative adventure, making soap is fun and more than a little addictive!

There are several different methods to making your own soap, and once you understand the basics of how to make soap, you can get started right away.

## Why Make My Own Soap?

One of the pioneers of today's natural handmade soap-making community, Ann Bramson, in her book "Soap," says, "Where the hard pastel-colored bars sold at the drugstore are anonymous and indifferent, homemade soap has character. It charms, smells good, feels good, is comforting in ways which manufactured soap can never be." She is so right! If you've never tried a bar of real "natural" handmade soap, you're in for a real treat. If you have tried one, and know just how wonderful it is, you'll be surprised that making your own fantastic soaps is not as difficult as you think.

## Making Soap is a Basic Chemical Reaction

Soap is the result of a basic chemical reaction between fats or oils and lye. That's it. The difference between Grandma's harsh, greasy, "lye soap," and your luxurious handmade soap, is the choice of ingredients and the accuracy of the measurements. Think of it this way: With just some flour and water, you can make primitive bread. Not very exciting or tasty, but still bread. But when your recipe is made with your favorite whole-grain flour, fresh eggs, sea salt, yeast, and honey, simple bread becomes a remarkable homemade delight.

It's the same with soap. By carefully choosing a combination of quality oils, adding your favorite fragrance or essential oils, and swirling in a lively colorant, your soap suddenly takes on that charming "character" that commercially manufactured soap can't even begin to compete with.



## Four Methods of Making Soap

There are four basic methods for making soap at home:

**Melt and Pour** - melt pre-made blocks of soap and add your own fragrance

**Cold Process** - the most common - making soap from scratch with oils and lye

**Hot Process** - a variation of cold process where the soap is actually cooked in a crock pot or oven

**Rebatching** - grinding up bars of soap, adding milk or water, and re-blending them

Each method has pros and cons and variations. The two most popular methods of soap making are Melt and Pour and Cold Process Soap Making.

## Melt and Pour Soap Making - Jump Starting the Process

Making soap with a "melt and pour" base is sort of like making a cake with a cake mix. What you lose in control of your ingredients and customization of your recipe, you make up for in safety, ease, and convenience.

With melt and pour soap making, you buy pre-made blocks of uncolored, unscented soap "base" from a craft store or soap supplier. You melt the soap base in the microwave or a double boiler. When the soap is fully melted, you add your fragrance, color and/or additives. Put it in a mold, and voila, you're done. The soap is ready to use as soon as it hardens.



To get started making melt and pour soap you only need:

- A counter top or other clean workspace with a microwave or double boiler
- A heat resistant bowl for the microwave
- A couple of spoons or whisks
- Some melt and pour soap base
- A set of measuring spoons
- Fragrance, color, or additives, as desired
- Something to mold the soap in

That's it. From your first try, you can have wonderful results.

### Pros of Melt and Pour Soap

- ✓ An easy and inexpensive way to start making soap
- ✓ No need to deal with dangerous lye mixture
- ✓ You don't need a lot of ingredients to start
- ✓ Your soap is ready to use as soon as it hardens

### Cons of Melt and Pour Soap

- ✓ No control over your ingredients
- ✓ Melt and Pour are not quite as "natural" as other methods. (Many manufacturers add chemicals to increase lather or to better allow the soap to melt.)
- ✓ Your soap is only as good as the base you purchase

### Cold Process Soap - Starting From Scratch

If making melt and pour soap is akin to using a cake mix, "cold process" is making your cake from scratch. You control everything that goes into the pot, and you can make it as "natural" as you want. However, your setup is a little more complicated, and you'll need to learn a few techniques of the craft first.

To make cold process soap, you heat the oils in your soap pot until they're approximately 100 degrees. Slowly add the lye-water mixture and blend the soap until it thickens to "trace." After the mixture reaches trace, you add your fragrance, color, and additives and pour it into the mold. The raw soap will take about 24 hours to harden, and about four weeks to cure before it's ready to use.

To get started making cold process soap, you'll need:

- A flat, uncluttered workspace with a heat source and access to water
- Some animal fats or vegetable oils

- A pitcher of lye-water
- A soap pot and some other easily found tools and equipment
- Fragrance or essential oil, as desired
- Natural or synthetic colorant, as desired
- A mold to pour the raw soap into
- A cool, dry place to let the soap cure

### Pros of Cold Process Soap Making

- ✓ Your soap is truly made from scratch
- ✓ You control all of the ingredients in the soap
- ✓ You can tailor your recipe into unlimited variations

### Cons of Cold Process Soap Making

- ✓ You need to learn how to safely work with lye
- ✓ You'll need more ingredients and tools to start
- ✓ It takes longer to make and there is more cleanup involved
- ✓ You need to wait several weeks before your soap is ready to use

Whichever method you choose, you can make great soap. Work patiently, and follow the instructions closely to start with. Once you're familiar with the basic steps, you'll be able to let your creative inspirations flow and make all sorts of wonderful soap creations.



**COURTESY: David Fisher**  
author and soapmaker  
[www.makemoresoap.com](http://www.makemoresoap.com)





flowerduet.com □ info@flowerduet.com □ 310-792-4968

## Jeweled Tone Flowers in Jewelry Box or Treasure Chest

**Design Principles:** We'll be creating a jewelry box ore treasure chest full of flowers that will represent diamonds, rubies, emeralds, gold and more!

**First:** Paint the boxes so they look like real jewelry boxes and/or treasure chests.

**Next:** Line the box with heavy duty foil or cellophane and add floral foam. Place the foam inside to fit. If using foil, it will be easier to wrap the foil around the foam and then place in the box.

**Decide on your design:** Will you do a color-block where all the flowers are in little compartments – like flowers are together in blocks of color? OR – Will you spread the flowers around making a jumble of color in your box?

**Add flowers:** Be sure to cut each flower just before you place them in the box. You don't want the stem to seal up too soon.



Jewel Toned Flower Ideas: Deep purple lisianthus, gladiolus blooms, purple Vanda orchids, dark red, yellow or purple freesia.

### Flowers & Greenery used in this floral design:

#### Button Mums



Green button mums can represent emeralds where yellow mums like these pictured above can look like gold coins or large pieces of gold.

#### Statice



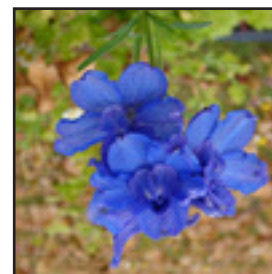
Purple statice can be amethyst. Statice is a great option for jewelry boxes because it's small.

#### Hypericum Berries



Hypericum berries come in such a variety of colors now. Green hypericum = emeralds  
Red hypericum = rubies  
White hypericum = diamonds

#### Delphinium Blooms



Because delphinium blooms can be cut and kept on little stems of the main stem, they are perfect as large sapphires!

**COURTESY: Casey Schwartz**  
Flower Duet  
[www.flowerduet.com](http://www.flowerduet.com)

# 10 Tips For Beginning Painters



learn are the hardest to let go of! Research and ask for recommendations as to his or her teaching ability and style. Not all good artists are good teachers and not all good teachers are good artists. Find someone who is both. After the workshop, spend plenty of time practicing and reinforcing what you took away from the experience. Ask for honest feedback in a month or so if the teacher has extended that invitation to do so. Don't be shy but don't be a pest, either. Thank them by giving them a good review on their website!

#### 4. **Avoid becoming enamored by a style.**

This is a hard one. We look at popular art, what's selling, what's hot, what's on trend. We are inundated by the visual feast we see on social media, Pinterest and on-line shows and auction websites. Just remember, if you

build your business on a style, in a few years or even sooner perhaps, it will look dated and obsolete, not to mention looking like someone else's work. There's nothing wrong with incorporating some current themes or color trends but don't base your work on what everyone else appears to be doing. Paint what speaks to you personally and paint it from your heart. The right audience will find you right where you are!

5. **Keep your work private for awhile.** If you're just beginning, allow yourself the time you need before putting it out there for the instant gratification temptation. I know it's hard! We want applause, we want admiration. The problem is, the feedback is not necessarily genuine. It's our friends and family after all. Of course they will love it. Instead, find two or three artists whose work you admire and ask them to mentor you or give you some feedback. Many will be flattered you asked. Offer to pay them for their time, some will accept, others may decline payment. It's important to have experience on your side and by finding professionals to help, you can make all the difference in the world. And if you go this route, do so with a completely open mind. Be ready for change. I've taught a few workshops and taken even more, and I'm always amazed at some people who will totally disregard what is being taught, determined to keep on doing what they've always done. Growth means taking chances.

1. **Be prepared to do the work** necessary to become good at your craft and to develop your personal vision and expression. When I returned to fine art painting over 5 years ago, I was told by many professional artists that **300 paintings** is the minimum amount of work I will need to make before claiming my work as my personal voice. I rolled up my sleeves, spent the money I needed to buy the supplies and committed to doing the work. I spent two years busting out ungodly amounts of trials and errors, the bulk of which never got shown to anyone other than my fellow students. It takes a lot of really bad work to get to the good. It's part of the job and the process. Buy a big trash bin and fill it up.

2. **Look at lots of really good art** done by accomplished people who you admire. Not one, not two, but many. Keep a notebook on them, include images and note what it is you are drawn to. Example, I love one person's sense of design, another's use of color and light and another's work for the expressive brush-work. I keep samples of printed pages or magazine tear sheets posted near my easel as inspiration, not to imitate but to remind myself of what I find inspiring.

3. **Take at least one workshop** a year from someone whose work you admire and is experienced. I just saw a brand new oil painter who is now offering beginning classes for an outrageous price. Be smart with your money and time. Also, make sure the person you're learning from has the technical/alchemy knowledge needed. Funny how the first things we



6. **Be kind to yourself.** Cherish the learning experience, enjoy the process. Instead of looking for everything you dislike in your work, make notes of what you do like. Keep a notebook right at your easel. Spend an hour examining your work and asking yourself what you like and what you don't. Congratulate yourself on trying. Even though my studio is very barebones, partially finished, unheated basement ambiance, I like to bring some creature comforts to the stage such as scented candles, some fresh flowers, good music and of course, chocolate, (consumed with clean hands only).

7. **Fill the well.** No one can paint constantly. We need visual and intellectual stimulation. Go new places, take lots of pictures, sketch, experience life. Creativity comes from many places such as movies, books, shopping, lunching with friends, (my favorite). Go inside fancy hotels or restaurants, experience theatre and concerts. Walk in the woods, visit the elderly, spend time with the "littles" who are always full of fresh ideas! I occasionally teach kindergarteners art class and always leave feeling inspired, (and a little tired).



8. **Work from direct observation**, indoors and outside in natural light. This will build your skills like nothing else! Photos are good for reference but lack the ability to depict true light and color. Photographs also distort and flatten the subject. Get outdoors and paint!

9. **Spend the money for good equipment.** Buy good brushes, wash them well, dry them, then hang them up. Treat them as your best friends, because they are. Buy good canvases at an art supply store, not the craft store. There is a noticeable difference. I use cut masonite for practicing my work. We buy it at Home Depot, cut it up into smaller sizes and I gesso two or three coats before painting. I like these for plein air studies.

10. **Buy the very best paint** you can afford, sticking to the basics of a warm and cool of each primary plus a white and a few earthy darks. I made the mistake of buying pretty hues I loved in the beginning which impeded my color mixing abilities. Stick to the basics and learn how to mix your colors. Then, when you know how to mix any color you can imagine, add in a few extras for convenience or accents. On days when you don't feel particularly inspired, make color charts. This always gets my creative juices flowing, and these charts will become invaluable to you, trust me!

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## BRONZED COLUMNS

Paint columns or any accessory to coordinate with oil rubbed bronze cabinet hardware and plumbing fixtures which are predominately being used in new construction today. Shiny gold or brass light fixtures and picture frames can also be given a face lift with this technique.

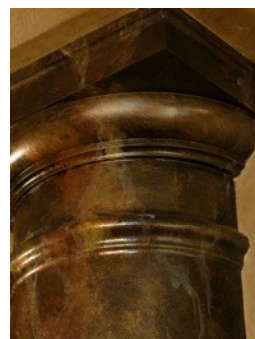
### STEPS

1. Prep-work: Mask and tape off adjoining walls and floors.
2. Spray on a coat of rust colored primer.
3. Spray on a mixture of black and brown latex paint.

4. Begin at the top. Use a brush and damp terry towel to faux gold and copper water-based glazes over black and brown to create heavier and lighter areas where the black

can still be seen through the lighter areas.

5. Spray glossy or satin clear coat.(optional)



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# Miscellaneous Guests

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