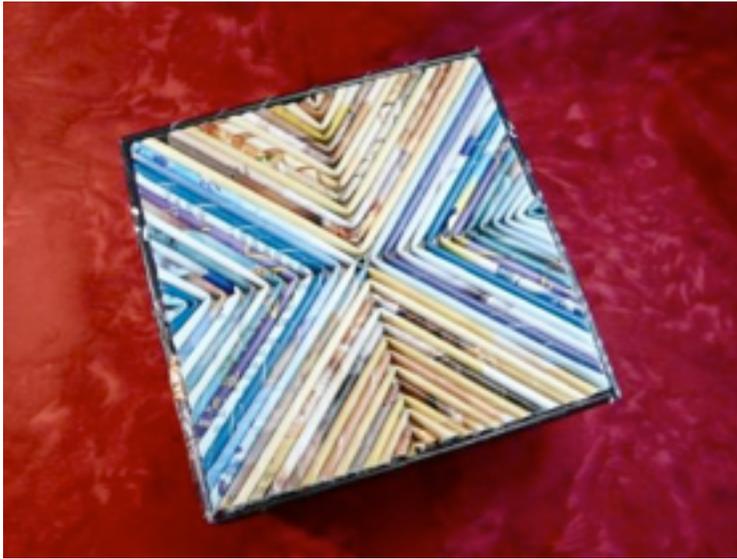


Magazine Reed Box



I'm getting fairly obsessed with magazine reeds these days. They're such a great way to make crafty use of those old magazines you have lying around. Once you've glued the reeds to a surface and sealed them, you have a project that's extremely sturdy, colorful, and beautifully recycled.

What you'll need:

- Magazine pages
- Two bamboo skewers (the narrowest ones you can find)
- Glue stick (see note below)
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Aleene's Tacky Glue
- Moist towel
- Sharp, strong scissors
- Small box
- Mod Podge and brush

A note on glues: For this project, you'll want a glue stick that sticks strongly and isn't too wet. I'm a big fan of [Aleene's Tacky Glue Sticks](#). Similarly, I love good, old [Aleene's Tacky Glue](#) for the gluing phase of this project—it sets up quickly, so the magazine reeds won't slide around on your project.

Incidentally, you'll end up with a lot of glue on your fingers during this project! Keep a moist towel nearby for clean-ups.



Tear out magazine pages. Fold them in half lengthwise.

Part 1: Make a Magazine Reed

First, tear out a pile of magazine pages. You don't have to worry about the torn edges being too clean—they'll be hidden when you roll up the reeds. If you have a particular color scheme in mind for your project, then make sure the pages you tear out contain large amounts of these colors. You can use ad pages, article pages—all that matters is the predominant colors.

Fold each page in half lengthwise, as shown. If you have a torn edge, just line it up with the straight edge as best you can.



Cut the page in half. Position a bamboo skewer as shown.

Cut the page in half along your foldline. Take the first half, and place it face down. By this I mean that the side of the page you want to have showing on the finished reed should be facing down. In the page pictured here, I want the blue side to show in the finished reed.

Place a bamboo skewer on the bottom right corner of the paper, as shown. It should be a little more than a 45-degree angle to the corner, as shown. No need to break out the protractor, though—this isn't an exact science!



Begin rolling the paper around the skewer.

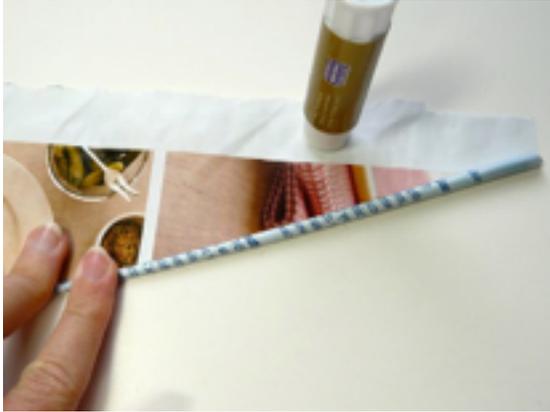
Beginning at this corner, roll the paper snugly around the skewer. I like to begin rolling from the cut edge of the paper, not the torn edge.



Pull the end of the skewer out of the reed a little at a time as you roll.

As you roll, you'll want to pay attention to the left-hand end of the skewer. The magazine paper will roll up around it and quickly cover it. Don't let this happen! Take a moment every so often as you're rolling to pull the end of the skewer out of the reed a little so you can still see the end as you continue rolling. (Hold your roll-in-progress down with your right hand and pull the skewer out with your left.)

The reason you're doing this is so that you can still grab and remove the skewer once you've finished the reed.



When you reach this point, begin gluing the top edge of the paper.

Once you've rolled the paper to this point, spread some glue from the glue stick along the top edge of the paper, about halfway across from the right-hand corner. Then continue rolling the reed over this glue.



When you reach this point, apply glue to the top and left edges of the paper.

When you've rolled to this point, apply glue to the rest of that top edge of the paper and also to the left-hand edge. Finish rolling up the reed, making sure that the last tip of paper is securely glued down. Pull the skewer out of the reed and it's done. If you have trouble pulling that skewer out, you can take a second skewer and poke it through the center of the reed to help push it out.

Make a pile of reeds to get ready for the next part of the project. This box required about 50. Once you've rolled a few reeds, you'll find a rhythm and each one will only take a few seconds to make.

A Couple of Reed-Making Tips:

The reason we apply so much glue to the edges of the paper is so that you can cut your finished reeds into various lengths. If you only glue the end of the paper down, then when you cut the reed, it springs open and is difficult to reroll.



Watch out for white margins on your magazine pages. If rolled incorrectly, they can cover up all the colors in your reeds.

If your magazine page has a wide, white margin along the long edge, be careful! Make sure that this is the edge of the paper **where you begin rolling**,

as shown here. This will hide that white margin in the center of the reed so the colors can show.

If you roll this reed from the other side, that white margin will cover up all the colors, as in the plain, white reed you see above. Not that this has happened to me a hundred times or anything.



For this design, mark some guidelines on the lid of the box.

Part 2: Cover a Box

I'm using a ready-made chipboard box here, but you can cover any box you have on hand—raid your

recycle bin for something you can repurpose. Little bits of the box may show through your reeds here and there, so you may want to paint your box before adding the reeds.

For this design, I used a ruler to draw guidelines on the lid of the box. You can place your reeds in any configuration you like, and the possibilities are endless.



Apply glue to the box, and press the reeds into the glue.

Choose four reeds to begin the design. Fold each one in half—I fold them against the tip of my thumbnail to give them a nice, sharp crease.

Apply a generous line of tacky glue over your pencil line. Place these reeds into the glue, carefully pressing them together and adjusting their position. Let them sit for about five minutes while the glue sets.



You can fill gaps with tiny sections of reed.

The reeds should sit as close together as possible. If your design has any spaces, such as in the center of my four reeds here, you can tuck in a small slice of a reed to fill the space. I clipped this piece with scissors.



Continue gluing reeds, pressing them together as you work.

Work in sections from this point. Apply a generous amount of glue to the box, and then place the folded reeds into the glue, adjusting their position

with your fingers. Press the reeds together as your work. If glue oozes out between them, just wipe it away with your fingers.



Work a section at a time. Allow the glue to dry for an hour before proceeding to the next step.

When you've covered a section, leave it to dry for an hour before proceeding to the next step.

This is a good time to mention that you can also cut the reeds to size before you glue them in place. In fact, when I'm working with straight reeds, I always pre-cut them with scissors. However, for this design, I find it easier to glue first and trim later.



Trim the ends of the reeds flush with the edge of the box.

Once the glue is dry, use a pair of sharp, long-bladed scissors to trim away the ends of the reeds so they're flush with the edge of the box. I like using scissors to cut the reeds rather than a utility knife—the knife tends to damage the reeds.

Repeat this process to cover the remaining sections of the box with reeds.



Cover the cut edges of the reeds by gluing another reed over them.

If you like, you can finish the cut edges of the reeds by gluing contrasting reeds over them, as shown. You'll need to hold these reeds in place for a few minutes while the glue sets. I like to then use a bit of low-tack painter's tape to hold the corners down until the glue is fully dry—this keeps them from warping.

Apply two coats of [Mod Podge](#) over the finished box, allowing it to dry between coats.



You can cover
so many objects
with magazine
reeds!

Imagine these reeds covering an orange juice can to make a pencil holder. Or you could cover an old lunchbox. Or a straight-sided lamp. Or a shelf. You could even glue them in a mosaic-style pattern to create a piece of wall art.