

Printing from Home

For ages 6 & up

Time to complete: 1 hr – 2hrs

There are many ways to make prints without needing a lot of tools or equipment. In this method, a drawing is done on a piece of styrofoam, and the pressure from the pencil compresses the foam. Ink is then rolled onto the foam plate but can't reach the recessed drawing, revealing a line drawing that can be printed over and over. The instructions that follow can be adapted for a young child with help from an adult, but can be refined for teens and adults for more precision.

Materials

Styrofoam take out container/meat tray/produce tray/plate (washed and dried)

Brayer (see [how](#) to make your own)

A pencil

Several sheets unlined paper

Water-based Block Printing ink (see [here](#) for how to make your own)

Utility knife

Ruler (recommended)

Wax paper or freezer paper

A piece of cardboard (roughly 10")

Masking tape

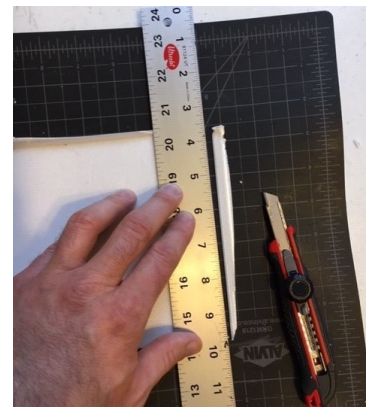
Newspaper or old magazine

Step 1: Creating the printing plate

Using the utility knife, carefully cut out the Styrofoam tray/container for the flat bottom portion. Use the ruler to create clean edges once the raised edges are gone.

Draw onto your plate with a pencil. Since each mark made on the Styrofoam is permanent, you may want to trace a drawing you have already worked out onto the plate. You can transfer a drawing or image as well! To do this, the drawing or image will need to be on regular paper (not photo paper). Have image side facing up on top of foam printing plate. (Taping the image to the plate will ensure a good

Step 1 in photos:



transfer). Trace image outline by firmly pressing pencil into paper.

Step 2: Inking the plate

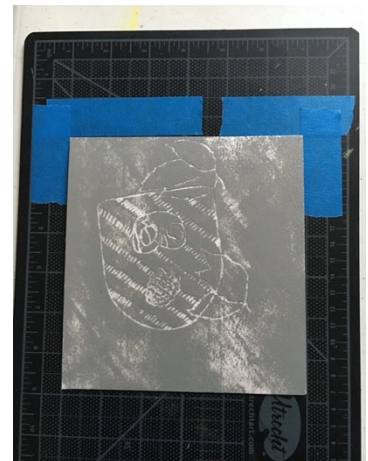
Layout a couple sheets of newspaper on a table. Tape the wax or freezer paper to the piece of cardboard. This is your inking surface. You will need to tape down all four corners or the wax or freezer paper so it won't get stuck to the brayer. Spread a small amount of ink onto the inking surface. Gently roll the brayer into the ink to cover the surface with the ink. The brayer should not slide around the ink but roll freely. The ink should be thin enough that the brayer creates a hissing sound (think "snake" 😊). This is called "charging" the brayer. Roll the ink charged brayer over the plate a few times in one direction and then a few times in another. The image will quickly become revealed, as all of your pencil marks will remain white. Repeat this process of charging the brayer and inking the plate a couple times. You will want the plate to be as evenly covered with ink as possible.

Step 3: Printing the image

Place a sheet of paper over the image and press down. Gently rub the back of the paper with your palm. Don't apply too much pressure or you will squish the plate. Carefully peel the paper away from the plate. You can repeat these steps again and again to make as many prints as you want!

Rinse plate with water and let dry. Wipe down brayer with wet paper towel.

Step 2 in photos:



(marking where to center the paper with tape)



(the print will be dry within 30 min, and then the paper can be flattened with heavy books)