



How To Make A Floating Lantern

This is a basic type of floating lantern using wood and paper with a tea light. You can slip the paper cover on or off to write your own inscriptions or just decorate it, and you can easily replace the cover if desired.

What you need:

- A piece of softwood, about 1/2 x 2" by at least 18" long. Try Home Depot - you can get an 8-foot piece for about a buck.
- For uprights, you can use a square strip of wood, quarter round or pieces of reed, bamboo or dowel. You'll need four pieces about 7 - 8 inches high.
- Wood glue.
- A small handsaw - a razor saw is good if you have one.
- A flat wood chisel.
- A mallet for the chisel. Don't use a steel hammer.
- Small nails or brads.
- Paper for the cover - Japanese paper is beautiful and easy to work with, but you can use any translucent paper that will not disintegrate if it gets a bit of water splashed on it.
- Glue stick for the paper cover.
- A piece or two of scrap paper for "pasting out" your cover.
- A tea light.
- A piece of double-sided tape for sticking the candle down.
- Optional - a small screw eye, a small stick, and fishing line to make a "leash" so you don't have to go get your lantern when it burns out.

What to do:

First, the frame:

1. Cut two pieces of the 1/2 x 2" wood, both the same length, about 9 to 10 inches long.
2. Stack the two pieces of wood on top of one another on your table or workbench.
3. Hold the top piece gently in the centre and rotate it so it's at a 90 degree angle to the bottom piece.
4. Where the edges of the top piece cross the bottom piece, mark with a pencil.
5. Look at the side of the pieces and figure out where the middle might be. Mark a pencil line along that

How To Make A Floating Lantern

continued

place on the centre part of each piece of wood.

6. Secure your wood in a clamp or vise so it stays put while you work on it.
7. Take the razor saw and saw carefully about halfway through the wood. Cut on the lines that indicated the edges of the top piece.
8. Take the chisel and place the blade on the line on the side of the wood. Using the mallet, strike carefully along the pencil line.
9. Make sure the sloping edge of the chisel faces the direction the waste will come out.
10. Press the edge of the chisel into your pencil line so it does not slip.
11. Tap the chisel with the mallet, removing small pieces of wood, until you remove the wood to halfway through the piece. When you fit the two pieces together, they should be one flat "x".
12. Using wood glue, glue the two pieces into an "x" shape. Allow to dry. You can reinforce with a couple of brads if desired.
13. Measure an inch or so from the end of each part of the "x" and mark it with a spot. Make sure your measurement is the same in each case. You want a square for your uprights.
14. Cut whatever you're using for uprights into four lengths, all the same. Make them each about 7 to 8 inches long.
15. If what you are using is round, drill a hole of the same size in each spot on the base so the upright can fit into it.
16. If what you are using is quarter round, make sure the end is cut straight so it will stand upright and square. Turn each piece so the angle is facing outward towards the ends of the "x". You will then have flat sides to support the paper.
17. If what you are using is square or rectangular in section, make sure the end is cut straight so it will stand upright and square. Align each piece so it is straight and you can slide your paper on easily.
18. Using wood glue, adhere each upright to the base. Let it dry. If the end of the upright is flat, also use a small nail or brad to nail it on from below.

Next, the paper:

1. Measure the height of the shortest upright if they are not all the same. This is measurement A.
2. Measure the width of the sides from outside edge to outside edge. They should be the same or very close, depending on how accurate you've been so far. If not, don't panic. The paper cover needs a little

Mad Gleam lantern-making information and tutorials are released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. You are free to use this for free cultural works, to alter, transform or build upon it, copy, transmit or distribute it as long as you attribute it to Alison Reid and release the resulting work under the same type of license.

How To Make A Floating Lantern

continued

wiggle room to slide on, and it can be left unincreased so it will fit smoothly around your uprights.

3. Add the lengths of the four sides. Add $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for an edge to glue. This is measurement B.
4. Cut a piece of paper measuring A high x B wide.
5. Put the cover paper face down on a piece of scrap paper. Using the glue stick, apply glue to about $\frac{1}{4}$ " one of the short edges. Apply the glue stick in short strokes towards the outer edge of the cover paper. It's ok to go off the edge - that's what the scrap paper is for.
6. Carefully lay the glued edge onto the other edge so $\frac{1}{4}$ inch is overlapping. Smooth it down. Let it dry for a minute or two.
7. You now have a big loop of paper. Decorate or inscribe it if you wish, or just enjoy the beauty of the unadorned paper.
8. Slide it onto the uprights and gently push it down as far as it will go. It should touch the base. This provides a little wind protection for the candle flame.

And finally:

Using a square of double-sided tape, stick the tea light cup onto the base.

Optional: use a small screw eye in the side of the base to attach a fishing line "leash". Wind the line around a stick to avoid pulling it with a bare hand - you can cut your hand quite severely if you pull hard on something that thin.

If you let them float free, these floating lanterns should be retrieved after use, to avoid litter (and wasting all that work).

If you have a boat or hip waders, or you don't mind getting wet, you can go pick them up after the event. Please take care of the environment and reuse your lanterns!

Mad Gleam lantern-making information and tutorials are released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. You are free to use this for free cultural works, to alter, transform or build upon it, copy, transmit or distribute it as long as you attribute it to Alison Reid and release the resulting work under the same type of license.