

4. Take the completed plate and press it down onto your ink/paint pad, ensuring that the foam shapes have an even covering of ink. Note it is only the foam shapes that need to be covered in ink. Some people may need some help to apply enough pressure.

Variation: depending on the size of the pad, you might find it easier to turn the pad upside down and press it onto your foam shapes, rather than the other way round.



5. Choose a piece of paper/card that will show up the colour of ink well. It may be that plain white is best for those taking part. Turn over your inked plate and press it down on your selected paper/card, making sure to press down evenly all over. Some people may need help to apply enough pressure.



6. Carefully lift the plate to reveal the printed image. If you would like to repeat the same plate in the same colour, just re-apply the ink. If you wish to change colour, wipe the foam shapes with either kitchen roll or a baby wipe. If using a baby wipe, it's advisable to dry the foam afterwards with kitchen roll.



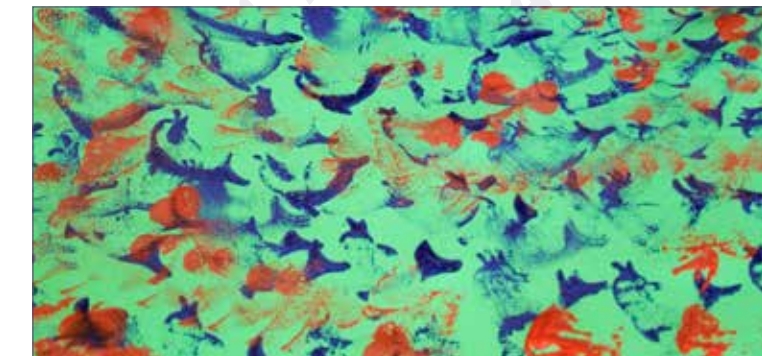
7. Plates can be reprinted numerous times, so if there is a plate design that a participant is happy with and would like to use again, write their name on their plate and keep it for next time.

8. Share the completed prints with other participants and residents, and with family and friends, by displaying them in your activity room or foyer. You can also photograph the workshop

and display the photographs alongside the prints.

Variations: once you get the hang of the technique you could try printing on other materials. Try creating greetings cards, gift tags, pictures, wrapping paper, paper bunting and so on.

Progression: you could also progress to textile printing. With fabric ink you can use the same method for printing cushion covers, canvas bags etc. Printmaking is a very versatile medium, and you can use different materials from potatoes to lino for different results. You could progress to monoprints using glass or cardboard and inks. Monoprints are like printed paintings, and this technique was used by Picasso, Degas and Rembrandt as well as by many leading artists today.



© Christine Hilditch

This activity enables participants to make prints of shapes and patterns they have created themselves. It can be done in groups or as a one-to-one activity.

Ingredients

- Thick cardboard (brown boxes are ideal) or old cork coasters
- Sticky-backed play-foam sheets in any colour and/or pre-cut foam shapes
- Scissors
- Non-toxic giant ink/paint pads
- Variety of paper or card to print onto
- Glue stick if required
- The room needs to be bright with easy access to tables and chairs
- To keep everyone clean: wipeable table cover or newspapers, baby wipes, kitchen roll, disposable aprons, gloves

Shops to try

Hobbycraft, Rymans, The Works, Poundland. Baker Ross online is usually a good place for everything crafty.



Method

Before any art session, it is always best to have a finished example for participants to see as an end goal.

Make sure that all participants are as involved as they are able to be in the process, from choosing the colour of the paint to creating the shapes that will eventually form the printed pictures.

1. Cut the cardboard into either squares or rectangles of various sizes making sure there are no sharp corners, or alternatively use old cork coasters which won't need to be cut. The cardboard/coasters are going to become our printing 'plates'. Make sure the 'plates' are of a size that is easy to hold and that fits your chosen paper/card.



Variation: depending on the needs of the participants you may be best to cut the cardboard beforehand, perhaps using a craft knife if it is very stiff.

2. Using the play-foam sheets, cut random shapes that will fit onto the cardboard squares or old coasters.

Variation: you could use pre-cut foam shapes, but remember that these may not be self-adhesive so would need to be glued to the 'plates' and left to dry before printing.



3. Stick the foam shapes to the chosen plates (cardboard/coaster) ensuring there is only one layer of foam shapes. If using coasters, stick the shapes to the laminated side of the cork coaster. The finished picture will be a reverse image of the foam shapes, so it's a good idea to avoid things that won't work when they're reversed (for example letters of the alphabet). Keep the shapes simple and don't use too many on each printing 'plate'.

