

HANDMADE BOOKS

Make a hardbound journal in a small size of 6" x 4³/₄" (or a medium size of 11¹/₄" x 8³/₄"). Note the use of parentheses here and in all future references to the medium size.

Materials:

- 70 to 90 lb. drawing paper, cut or tear into twenty-four sheets of 8¹/₂" x 5¹/₂" (11" x 17")
- book board for covers, use heavy cardboard on the backside of a drawing pad or buy chipboard
- cover guide – cut one paper for the cover guide, at 5³/₄" x 10" (11¹/₄" x 19")
- 1/2 yard fabric, natural fiber, in a medium weight – heavier than a shirt, lighter than jeans
- strong thread, waxed linen
unwaxed dental floss or carpet thread can substitute
- sewing needle
- pencil
- scissors
- Sobo glue
- wax paper
- two (three) 2" binder clips or bull dog clips
- ruler
- bone folder (*optional)
- awl (*optional)

Part 1: Making the book block

1. Fold pages in half, so that each page measures 5¹/₂" x 4¹/₄" (11" x 8¹/₂").



A bone folder is a helpful tool for creasing folds (see above).

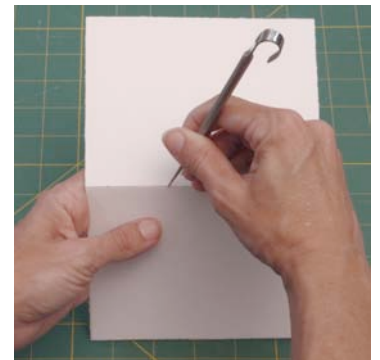
2. Nest together the pages in eight groups of three. Each group becomes a signature. Stack the signatures, one on top of another, to form a book block. Lightly mark the top corner of each signature, numbering them 1 through 8, to keep them properly aligned for sewing.



3. To attach the signatures to each other, you will need 4 (6) sewing holes. Stack your signatures into a pile and align the folded sides carefully. On the folds, mark a vertical line 1/2" in from each end of the page, and then mark 1 1/2" (2") from those lines.

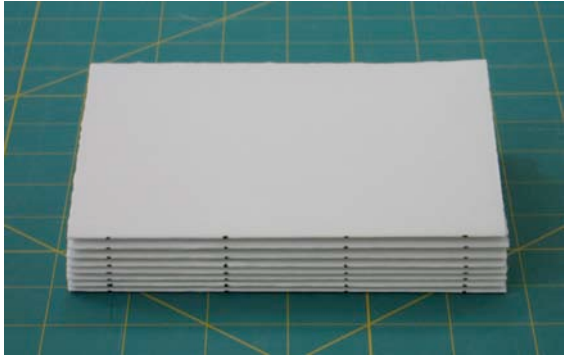


4. Using an awl (as pictured at right) or a sewing needle, punch holes through each signature at the markings. To do this, open up each signature, hold the three pages together as one, and poke through all layers.

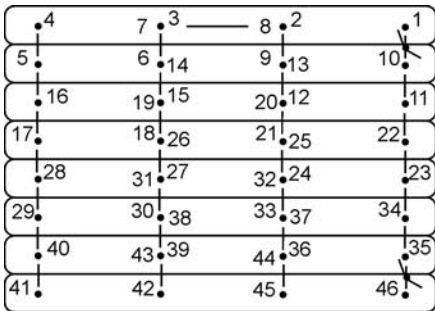


5. Next comes the sewing. Cut a piece of thread 2 yards long and pass it through a block of beeswax. Thread your needle for single thread sewing -- keep one thread tail short and the other long. Tie a knot in the long tail about 2" from the end.

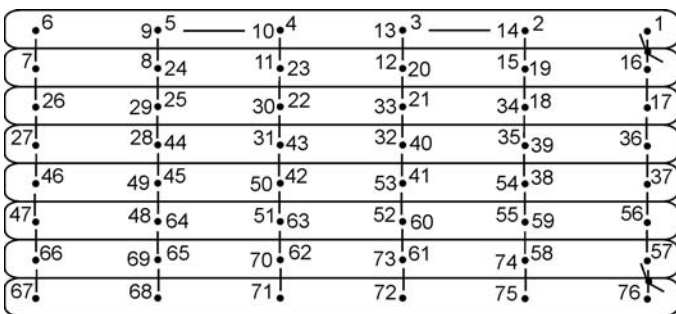
This is what you should have at this point (the medium size book should have six columns of holes):



When sewing, open up each signature and hold the three pages of the signature as one. Keep the thread taut; otherwise, gaps will form.



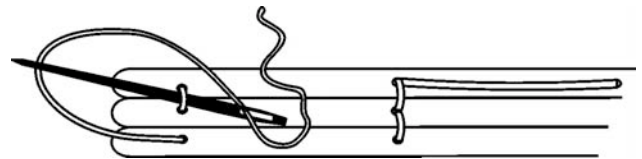
Sewing path for the small book and the medium book.



Starting from the outside, sew DOWN into the odd-numbered holes and UP out of the even-numbered holes. Some holes have two numbers listed beside them; these holes are used more than once in the thread path.

Once hole #10 (#16) is complete, secure the end by tying a knot with the string tail that is hanging at #1.

Once hole #16 (#26) is complete, secure the end with a kettle stitch – string the thread under the loop that was created between #4 (#6) and #5 (#7).

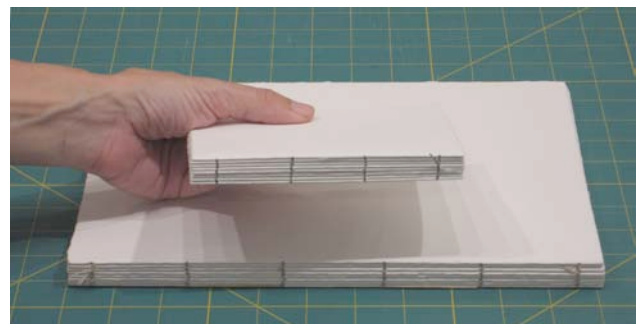


the kettle stitch

Once hole #22 (#36) is complete, secure the end with a kettle stitch – string the thread under the loop that was created between #10 (#16) and #11 (#17). Continue adding signatures in this manner. At any point you run short of thread, unthread your needle and join another piece with a tight knot placed close to the spine. Re-thread your needle and string the thread through some adjacent loops before returning to the sewing path.

Once the final hole is completed at #46 (#76), secure the end by threading the needle under adjacent loops and do your best to tie a tight knot snug against the paper.

When you are finished sewing, you should have something like this:

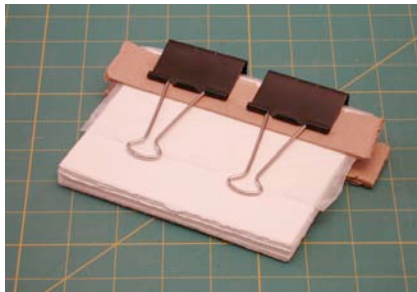


6. Prepare a torn sheet of wax paper large enough to wrap the spine area. Prepare a set of two scrap boards long enough to span the length of the spine. Set aside.

Apply a layer of glue to the spine using a brush.



Wrap the spine in wax paper, and clamp in place with large binder clips. Use the scrap boards underneath the clips to avoid impressions from the clips.



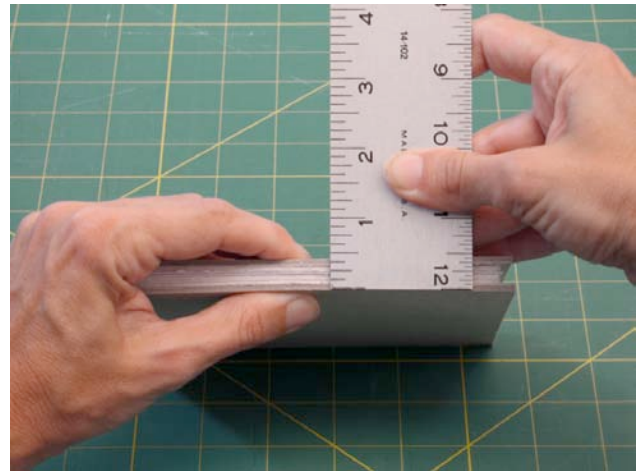
Allow the glue to dry before unclamping.

7. Measure and cut the book boards:

* cover boards are cut to a height of the book block height plus $\frac{1}{4}$ " and cut to a width of the book block width minus $\frac{1}{16}$ ". Cut two identical covers, one front, one back.

* board for the spine is cut to the same height as the covers and to a width that is calculated by using the following technique: sandwich the stack of signatures between the book covers. Squeeze the layers together

at an edge other than at the folds (where it is slightly thinner) and measure this width.

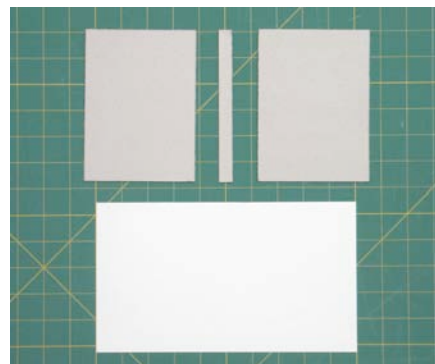


Cut the spine cover at this width.

Part 2: Making the book cover

** If the fabric you've chosen has a loose weave, an iron-on interfacing is recommended to avoid the problem of having glue seep through. If the fabric contains polyester, the glue will not stick. Don't worry about ironing the fabric, the wet glue will release wrinkles. **

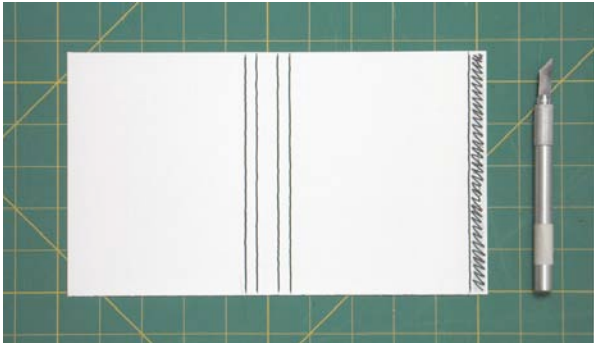
1. Lay out the already cut book boards for the front, back, and spine, and layout the cover guide.



The cover boards are to be glued on top of the cover guide with careful placement. A measured gap of space is necessary on each side of the spine. The width of the gap is calculated as:

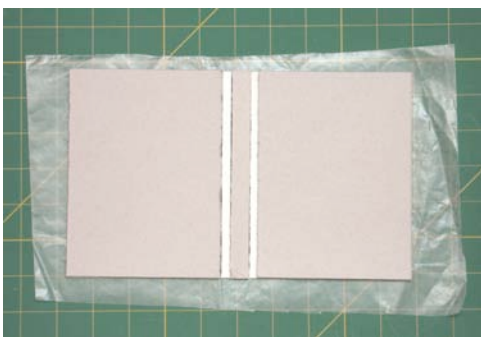
$$3/16" + \text{book board thickness (probably a scant } 1/8\text{")}$$

Mark the placement on your cover guide and trim away any excess width on the cover guide. For accuracy, mark lines by measurement, and not by tracing around the cover boards.



Cut the fabric cover to be 5/8" wider on all edges than the cover guide. Put aside.

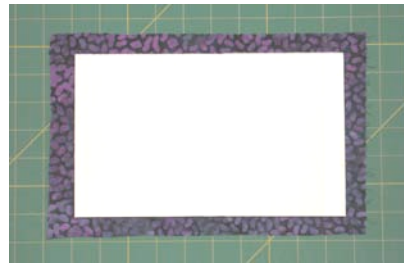
2. Use a brush to spread glue on the covers and turn them over onto the guide to adhere.



At this point, the project should look like this. Use of wax paper beneath the project helps keep the work area clean.

Also, a moist towel or sponge nearby is beneficial for keeping glue off your fingers.

3. With a brush, spread glue onto the cover boards. Turn over the project onto the BACKSIDE of the fabric, with the cover guide UP.



Pull the fabric taut underneath to stretch out any wrinkles.

4. Fold back the fabric at the corners and glue down.



Fold back the fabric on each of the four sides and glue down. Attach a clip at the corners if necessary. Allow cover to dry (usually 2 hours).

Part 3: Assembling the covers to the book block

1. Once the cover is dry, fold it around the book block to test for a proper size. Push the book block against the spine. The covers should extend 1/8" beyond the book block on the three sides (top, bottom, and leading front edge).



2. Place wax paper underneath the first page to protect adjacent pages. Using a brush, apply glue to the front of the first page.



3. Turn over the page onto the front cover, leaving a 1/8" margin on all three sides. This process is called "tipping in".

4. Keeping the first piece of wax paper in place, put another sheet between the book block and the last page. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for attaching the back cover. The book needs to be partially closed to accomplish this successfully. Leave the two pieces of wax paper in place. Avoid the temptation to open the book until it is dry.

5. Place your book in a book press or under a heavy weight – a stack of heavy textbooks works fine. Apply the pressure to everywhere but the spine. The spine should extend out beyond the press. Allow to dry for two days.