



Miniature Indoor Kite

How could you make a small kite that can be flown indoors (really!)?

There is one based on a Japanese design, so it will give you an idea of how some of the early kites looked. There is also a template for you which you can print out.



Equipment

1. One sheet of printer or copier paper (A4 size).
2. Two sheets of tissue paper in two different colours. You can buy tissue paper from a stationer's or from a department store (in the gift wrap section).
3. A piece of dowel or wooden rod, about 5 - 8mm thick. (Dowel is the name for wood that is round, like a pencil.)
4. Some paints (acrylic or poster paint are best) or coloured pencils or rubber stamps and ink pads (to decorate the kite).
5. Some cotton thread.
6. A pencil and ruler.
7. A pair of scissors and some sticky tape.

Safety Stuff

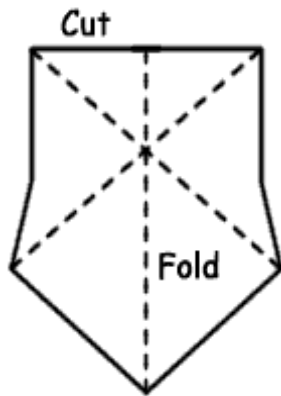
Before you begin, check with an adult, as you'll probably need their help at some point. Cover your work surface with newspaper or an old cloth and make sure you are wearing an apron or some old clothes. Also, gather together all the items you will need before you begin.

Working with items such as scissors can be dangerous, so be very careful when you use them, and make sure that you never leave them open or lying around where smaller children can reach them. You'll probably find most of the things you'll need simply by hunting around the house, but remember to check with an adult before you take anything. And don't forget to tidy up afterwards! When you've made your kite and are ready to fly it, you first need to pick an appropriate spot. Wide-open spaces are best for flying a kite. Make sure that you're well away from trees, buildings and (most important!) power cables.

Steps

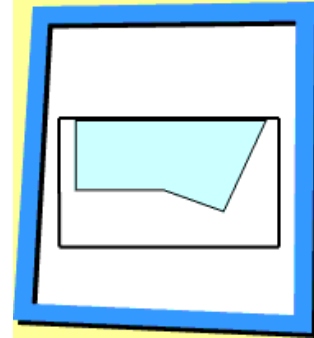
Step One

Use this template for the main part of the kite.



Don't worry if you don't have access to a printer - you can draw your own template instead. It's quite easy!

Fold the template in half from top to bottom, and then cut the kite shape out with a pair of scissors. Use this template to cut out the same shape from the tissue paper.



Step Two

Choose one of your pieces of tissue paper to use for the main part of your kite. Fold it in half and place it inside your paper template.

Using a pencil, carefully trace the outline of the template onto the tissue paper and then remove the template and cut the tissue paper around the lines you have just drawn.

Now you've got the tissue paper kite shape, what can you use to decorate it? You can use paints, or crayons or rubber stamps. Stamps would make it look more Japanese. What would work well on tissue paper?

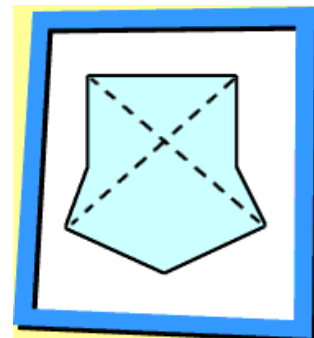
Let the kite dry completely.

Step Three

The next stage is to fold the tissue paper kite to strengthen it. The folds work a bit like the sticks in a larger kite: they stiffen it and help it catch the air.

So fold your kite from corner to corner, where the two dotted lines are on this picture. Start by folding it along one line and then flatten it out and fold it along the second one.

Why do you have to take care when handling tissue paper?



Step Four

Now we can make the tail for the kite. Cut a thin strip from the second piece of tissue paper. It needs to be about 23cm long and 5mm wide.

Scrunch up this strip of paper into a ball and then straighten it out again. This will make the tail twisty and crinkled.

Now stick this tail to the bottom tip of the kite. What's the best way to do this? You could use a tiny piece of sticky tape, or some glue. Make sure you stick the tail to the

back of the kite. (If you lay your kite on a table so that it makes a shallow dish shape, the back is the side that is facing up.)

Step Five

Once the tail is attached, turn the kite over and mark a tiny point on the front. It should be exactly 1.25cm from the top of the kite, and in the middle (that is, on the central fold line).

Cut a piece of cotton approximately 60cm long. Attach this with a piece of sticky tape to the point you have just marked on the front. Make sure the thread is stuck to the kite exactly on the mark.

Next, cut the piece of dowel or rod so that you have a piece 60 - 90cm long. Tape the loose end of the cotton (the end not stuck to the kite!) on one end of the rod. This will form the flying stick for your kite.

Step Six

Your miniature kite is now ready to be launched!

Where is the best place to fly it?

If there's a very gentle breeze, you may even be able to fly it on the stick.

