

Techniques

The templates in this book have been made from real papercuts at actual size. If you are a beginner, you could enlarge them slightly on a photocopier, or scan them and enlarge them using your printer settings or design software. However, as long as you have a sharp blade and a bit of practice under your belt, it is fine just to trace them and cut at the sizes shown here.

Practise cutting some basic shapes first on a plain piece of paper and see how much pressure you need to apply to get a clean cut. If your blade is new, then you should not need to press very hard. This can result in hand cramps, snapped blades and an inability to control the scalpel – no fun at all. Take regular breaks, preferably involving tea and cake!

Instructions for each project:

- 1** Photocopy or scan and print the template onto your chosen paper. Printers tend to copy easily onto weights of paper up to about 150gsm (approx. US 220lbs per ream). Alternatively, trace the image from the book onto paper for cutting.
- 2** Start cutting the most difficult section of a design first, or the parts that you do not feel confident cutting – this ensures that if you make a mistake you have not wasted much time.
- 3** Take your time, change your blade every 10–15 minutes and take regular breaks to give your hand and neck a rest. A sloped surface such as a tilted drawing board is an advantage.
- 4** Do not worry about rubbing out pencil marks on the back of the paper, as they will not be seen and erasing may damage the paper. You will be working on the reverse of the cut.
- 5** Resist the temptation to remove the excess paper as you go along. Keeping it in place helps to stabilise the design and you are also less likely to snag the design on your sleeve/jewellery/cat. When complete, cut away the excess paper rather than pushing the design out with your finger, as this will stop it from ripping and you can see if any parts need to be re-cut.



Owl Always Love You

Materials:

Tracing paper
Pencil
Ivory paper

Tools:

Scalpel (barrel handle
and spare blades)
Self-healing cutting mat
Container for
blade disposal

Tip: Use a fresh blade to cut the star 'strings' first, as they are probably the trickiest part of this design.

This design makes a lovely card for a night owl – or someone whose baby keeps them up at night!



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