

Making a mandala — step-by-step instructions by Jen Boothroyd

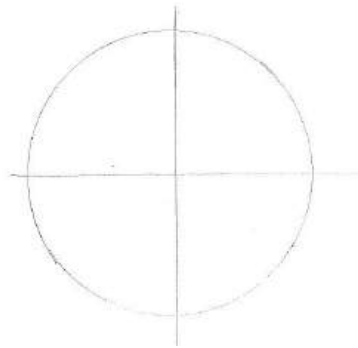
Step 1. Gather your supplies.

Mandalas can be made with any art supplies on hand. I enjoy using Sharpie markers for their precision tips and bright colors, but have also used paints, crayons, and colored pencils in the past. Give consideration to your color scheme; Do you want to use one color to create a monochromatic masterpiece, or a rainbow of lively colors? Are you in the mood for cool, soothing shades of blue and green, or fiery reds and oranges?



Step 2 (optional) Guide lines.

If you are the sort of person who would like a guide to keep your evolving masterpiece even and balanced, consider drawing in a criss-cross to create a center, and maybe a circle (trace around a can) centered on the intersection as a visual guide. Draw these lines very lightly with a pencil, so they can be erased after.



Step 3. Choose a center shape.

Your center shape can be anything; a round dot, a geometric shape such as a triangle, diamond, or an octagon, or a symbol like a star or a petaled flower. Draw in the center at the criss-cross if you are using a guide.



Step 4. Build on the center shape.

Draw a shape or symbol around your center, being consistent in size, shape, and color. Choose whatever you wish, whatever you think would look pleasing to the eye.



Step 5. Continue to build outward.

In the same way, continue to draw and develop your mandala outwards, completing one layer or ring at a time, and then building upon that. Be relaxed and contemplative about it. If you do something that doesn't look or seem right, you can make it into something else, or just go with it. You might decide you like it. The repetitive nature of this project allows your brain to think about other concerns while your hands are busy. This is where the meditative qualities come in. Process your thoughts through your artwork. Give consideration to balancing color and proportions; the even-ness of the design is a big part of what makes it so relaxing.



Step 6. When you're done, you're done.

Pause regularly after completing a ring to contemplate your mandala. Does it need a little something more? When you feel like it has reached the limits of your interest or patience, it's probably finished. If you are loving it, keep going, or set it aside to continue in the future. Admire the finished product, and respect what your mind contemplated to get to it. Even difficult thoughts can result in a thing of beauty.

