



Learn2 Make Basic Origami



Behold, a folded creation!

Origami (pronounced or-i-GA-me) is the Japanese art of paper folding. Learn it and you'll be able to make all kinds of paper decorations - figures of birds that you can display on a shelf, hang on a mobile, or tuck into a birthday card, for example, as a small gift.

To start you off a long and satisfying learning journey, this tutorial takes you through two relatively easy projects that will result in one decorative item and one useful item. As an added benefit, you may gain some inner peace-- origami requires you to slow down and concentrate, and bestows patience and discipline to the sincere student.

Before you begin...

You may want to buy special origami paper at craft stores. It can be printed with colorful designs, or solid in color. You can also cut your own squares, if you're very careful to measure and cut precisely. (Or if you're feeling reckless, don't measure at all! Just take a clean-edged, rectangular sheet of paper and fold one corner over to the opposite edge, and cut along the resulting square edge. See the diagram above for more details.) If you do choose to make your own, use something light, like wrapping paper or magazine pages. You'll find it easier to follow origami diagrams if your paper's front and back do not match.

Origami is a lovely art, but for some folks it's frustrating before it's rewarding. It's not always easy to visualize where your careful folds are leading you--so you may not see what you're making until you reach the last step. This mystery of the folds, however, only adds to the thrill of creation!

Begin a project by setting aside some time--you'll need some peace and quiet. Be prepared to make mistakes and perhaps start all over again. Having this attitude will reduce the frustration index considerably.

Project 1: Create a bird

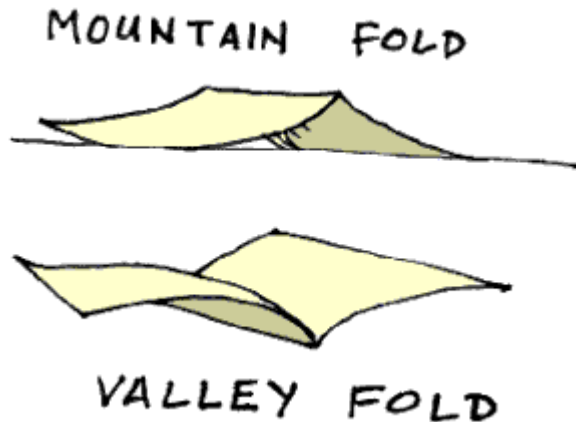
A crane is probably the most famous of all origami figures. In Japanese culture, the crane is a powerful symbol and people may fold a thousand of these birds for someone they wish well. However, to fold a crane takes more than thirty steps--it's hardly the place to begin origami. The bird figure presented below takes far fewer steps, but it's still completely satisfying to make. When it's done, you'll have a powerfully abstracted form, distilled into a beak and a neck, wings and a tail.

Project 2: Make a Cup

A few origami figures are practical. This cup is the perfect example. Again, if you want your cup to work more than once, try making it out of foil or a waxed paper.

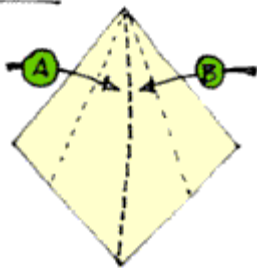
Project 1: Create a bird

Step 1: Make the wings



Begin by clearing a place to work. If you've washed the working surface, make sure it's thoroughly dry. Starting off with soggy origami paper would be inauspicious.

BIRD: C



- Place your paper so that **the prettiest side faces down.** (This will give your bird a plain body, but fancy head, neck and wings.) You'll be doing mountain fold and valley folds in origami--see **Keywords** for more info.

- **Mountain fold** your square along a diagonal and then unfold it, leaving it flat. The plain side should still face up. Now orient the square as a diamond, with the crease line running from top to bottom. Use a pencil to label very lightly the left corner as **A**. Label the right corner as **B**.

- **Fold corners A and B**, so they meet in the center of your diamond. Crease these folds with a fingernail or a ruler, checking to make sure the new corner you form at the top remains neat. You can label that corner **C**, if you like.

Step 2: Make the bird's neck and head

At this point the paper should have a kite shape--broad at one end and narrowing towards the tail.

- Locate the new top corner (that's corner **C**, where you'd attach the kite's tail), and **fold it down** to the spot where the corners **A** and **B** now meet. This fold makes the bird's neck.

- **Fold corner C** back up a little bit, where the narrow end used to be. Don't worry about exactly how far you fold it. This fold makes the bird's head. Its beak points up, towards where the corner you labeled **C** used to be.

Step 3: Help the bird sit up

Here's a way to picture this--you're giving the bird a base to sit on.

- **Mountain fold** the bird in half along the crease you made in **Step 1**. (Make sure all previous folds remain intact.) Turn the bird in your hand so that the neck and head are upright and face to your left-hand side. Spread the bottom edges away from each other, which will the bird will sit up.

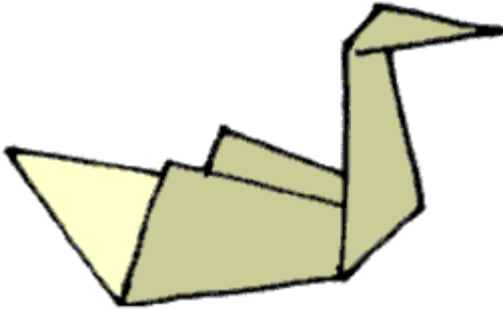
Step 4: Shape the neck and head of your bird

- **Pull the beak up**, and flatten the back of the head. Squeezing the back of the head will form new angular creases. Your beak should now point up towards the sky.



Pull the neck out from the body so the beak points forward. Pinch together the base of neck to make new creases, which will hold the neck in place.

Sit back and admire your handiwork!

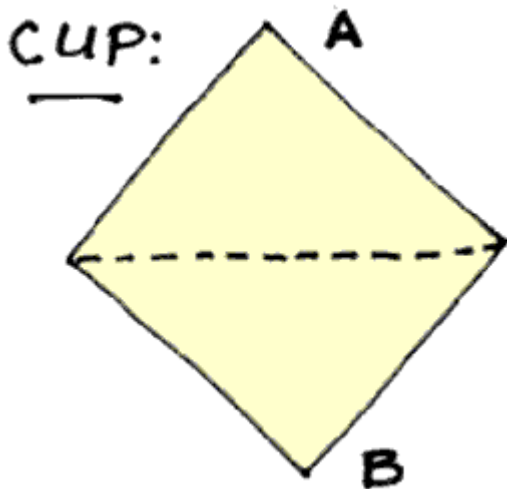


Project 2: Make a Cup

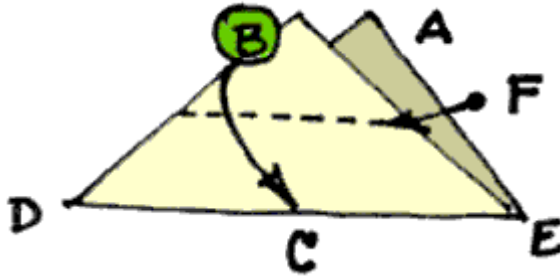
Step 1: Perform the opening maneuver

These are the basics moves. If your paper has two distinct sides, place it so that **the pretty side is up**.

- **Orient** the square of paper as a diamond, lightly labeling the top corner **A** and bottom corner **B**.



- Valley fold your paper, so that corner **B** comes up to meet corner **A**. You now have a triangle. The fold, which you can label edge **C**, should now be flat on the table and near you. Label the triangle's bottom left corner **D**. Label its bottom right corner **E**.

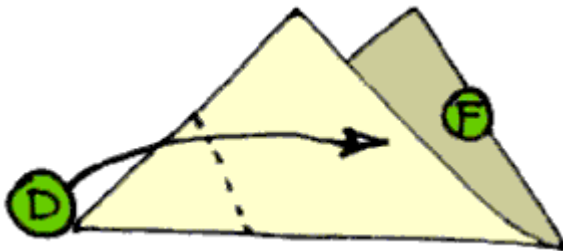


- Fold down corner **B**, but not corner **A** (they lie right on top of each other). Make corner **B** line up exactly with edge **C**.
- Now unfold the corner **B** fold (what you just did). On the right side of the triangle, mark the end of the crease you just made as point **F**.

Step 2: Create the cup

This move should follow easily from the above.

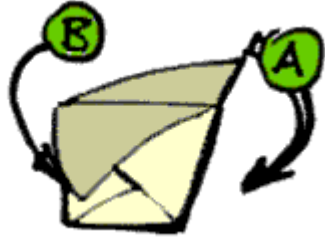
- Fold corner **D** (the bottom left corner), so that it touches point **F**. Mark the spot directly across from point **F** as point **G**.



- Now fold corner **E** (bottom right corner), so that it touches point **G**.



- Fold your old friend, corner **B**, down in front.



- Fold corner **A** down in back. Your cup is done. The front half of the cup should be thicker than the back.
- Pour water into your cup and **observe!** there's no open edge for the water to leak out of.

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