

# How to Tie-Dye

## Complete Instructions

### S-135

#### What is Tie Dye?

A method of creating patterns in fabric by tying it to prevent the dye from reaching the fabric evenly. Any place that the dye can't reach will stay white, or a lighter color. The gradations of color from intense to light can be beautiful. You accomplish this by folding the fabric, tying it with string, rubber bands, or even zip ties.

The best fabrics to dye are cotton, linen, silk, hemp, or rayon. 100% is best but the higher % of the natural fiber, the better the fabric will hold the dye. Pre-wash fabric to remove sizing. Avoid using fabric softener or dryer sheets. Always wear gloves.

#### Explore and choose a desired technique.

No matter which way you choose to tie the fabric, secure folds with rubber bands.

- Fold a piece of fabric in vertical pleats, and you'll end up with horizontal stripes.
- Horizontal pleats result in vertical stripes.
- Diagonal pleats make a nice effect.
- For concentric circles, grab the cloth where you want the center to be, and pull, until you've more or less made a long tube of garment, then apply rubber bands at intervals along the fabric.
- For the traditional spiral, you lay the garment on a flat surface, smooth out all the wrinkles, then make a small pleat right across where you want the center to be. Grab the very center of that pleat with a clothespin, and begin to twist. As you twist, pleats appear farther away from the center; as these pleats get too large, split the pleats with your hands, keeping each fold the same height above the table, no more than one to two inches in height.
- Another technique is to use small rubber bands to pinch and bind fabric in several places all over the garment. This will make circles of color.
- Explore additional techniques online.

#### Color Choice

The two most obvious differences between a wonderful tie-dye and so-so one are color choice and color saturation. You'll find that you really have to work to squirt enough dye into the folds to avoid a large amount of white on the finished garment. In choosing colors to place adjacent to each other, remember the color wheel. Do not place "opposite" colors next to each other, such as red near green, or blue near orange, or yellow near purple: the results would be a muddy mess. If you really like bright colors avoid placing a color with red mixed in it, such as purple, near green. Squeeze the area saturated with dye to insure color penetrates the inside layers of fabric for a bold result.

#### Color Combinations

- a lot of fuschia and a little yellow make red
- red and yellow make orange
- yellow and turquoise make green
- a lot of turquoise plus a little fuschia makes blue
- turquoise plus fuschia makes purple

## **Mixing the Dyes**

1. Always add powder dye to empty squirt or spray bottles first and then add water.

Be careful when you measure out the dye. Leave the jars open as short a time as possible and use a face mask. Don't breathe in the dye powder!

2. Replace bottle cap and shake until dye is fully dissolved.

For best results apply dye to fabric within 30min of mixing.

## **Pre-soaking the Fabric**

Be sure to pre-wash all clothing to remove anything that can prevent the dye from getting to the fabric. It is okay to moisten the fabric with plain water to tie, but just before dyeing, pre-soak the fabric for fifteen minutes to one hour in a solution of sodium carbonate (Soda Ash), mixed one cup per 2 gallons of water.

## **Applying the Dye**

Once you have your fabric folded/tied, lay the garment on a plastic protected surface. Squeeze the dye directly into the fabric, checking to make sure dye has penetrated into the folds.

Cover dyed fabric in plastic to keep wet once complete.

## **Reaction Time**

Make sure that the fabric stays wet for the reaction or take place, no less than two hours, but preferably eight to twenty-four hours. The amount of time required depends on the temperature, which should be at least 70° F (21° C). You can drop each fabric item into its own resealable plastic bag and label it with person's name and time to wash out.

## **Washing the Clothing**

Carefully cut any rubber bands making sure not to snip your fabric. Rinse by hand in cold water before machine-washing. Wash first in cold, once, to release excess dye from the fabric, then again in the hottest water available to remove any trace of the un-reacted dye. The water should be clear.

Now your garment should be ready for the washing machine. Wash and dry separately for the first few washes.