

Heart of Home



These directions for making scented candles at home is a Human-directed Process Report written to a general audience.

INTRODUCTION

Set the mood; give them as a gift, or say, “I love you” with a homemade candle! Whether young or old, everyone enjoys the warm light and fragrance of a candle.

Store bought candles are lovely, but can be quite expensive. You don’t need to buy a lot of fancy equipment and costly supplies to make candles at home – you can use things you already have. If you are willing to take the time, you can make beautiful candles for yourself and your friends. Homemade candles are a thoughtful gift anyone would be glad to receive.

There are several types of candles. Some are dipped; others are poured into decorative glass cups, or into temporary molds that are removed to reveal a stand-alone candle. These instructions will focus on making poured candles. I will answer the following questions about candle making.

- **How do I make candles at home?**
- **How do I melt the wax?**
- **How do I install the wick?**
- **How do I add the fragrance?**
- **How do I decorate the candles?**
- **How do I store and use the finished product?**

Following these simple instructions, you will be making your own candles in no time at all! Now let’s get started.

HOW DO I MAKE CANDLES AT HOME?

Let's begin with a few safety tips.

A double-boiler is best to use for melting the wax. NEVER microwave the wax as it can splatter and be very dangerous. It also fades the color. Always use pot holders or oven mitts when handling the double-boiler, the hot wax, or hot molds.

Next you'll need to gather some materials:

- An old sheet, towel or newspaper to cover your work surface and catch spills
- An old saucepan or double-boiler
- Large metal container such as a tin coffee can (not needed if you're using a double-boiler)
- Oven mitt or potholders
- Cotton twine or wicks purchased from an arts and craft
- Masking tape
- Store-bought or homemade* molds
- Long metal spoon or ladle
- Scissors
- Pencil or stick
- Wax chips or paraffin wax (you can use leftover candles)
- Aroma/fragrance chips, lavender blooms, ground cinnamon or other aromatic spice
- Color chips

*Homemade molds can be constructed from small milk containers, boxes that bar soap comes in, Hostess cup cake containers, toilet paper rolls, etc. If the mold has a bottom that isn't totally sealed then use masking tape to seal the bottom on outside of the box so it doesn't leak. You may use glass containers if making votive candles, or store bought plastic molds purchased from an arts and crafts store see figure 1)



Figure1: Store bought candle mold
www.genwax.com

HOW DO I MELT THE WAX?

It is best to use a double boiler, (see figure 2) but don't panic if you don't have one. You can make one by using a metal coffee can and an old saucepan. Put one inch of water in the saucepan (or bottom section of the double-boiler). Add the wax chips or paraffin to the coffee can, (or the top section of the double-boiler) and add sit the can (or top section) inside the saucepan (or double boiler). Heat on stovetop at low temperature until the wax melts. DO NOT allow it to boil! While heating the wax, set up your glass containers or prepare the homemade molds.



Figure 2: Double-boiler
Source www.amazon.com

HOW DO I INSTALL THE WICK?

First, you'll need to prime the wick.

- Cut a piece of string a little longer than the length of the mold.
- Tie a toothpick or pencil to one end of the string
- Hold the wick by the pencil and dip the string in the melted wax. Do this a few times, letting the wax harden on the string in between each dip. This helps the wick burn better.
- Tape the free end of the wick to the bottom of the container or mold.
- Set up wick in the container with the pencil balanced across the top.
- Pull the wick tight by turning the pencil.

HOW DO I ADD THE FRAGRANCE?

When wax has completely melted, let it cool a few minutes then add the color chips and fragrance chips. You can use the same kind used in making soap, which may be purchased at an arts and crafts store. A little goes a long way, so use color and fragrance sparingly.

HOW DO I DECORATE THE CANDLES?

Pouring and cooling:

Wearing an oven mitt, take a soup ladle or large spoon and dip a small amount of hot wax into the mold while holding the wick straight. The mold should have about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of wax in the bottom. It is important to allow the small amount to harden before adding more wax. Once it does harden, add enough wax to suitably fill your mold. Leave space to add decorative materials such as

Due to contraction during cooling you may have a sunken area in your container. Simply poke holes near the wick with a toothpick and fill it again.



Figure 3: Lavender plant
Source: www.papagenos.com

You may add crushed or whole lavender flowers, (see figure 3) coffee beans, cinnamon, or other aromatic spices, leaves, grain, etc. The material may settle to the bottom but they are still attractive. You may add leaves, seashells, orange slices, or flowers in the mold once the wax is poured and begins to cool (see figure 4).



Figure 4: Seashells candle
www.shop.innercite.com

Removing the molds:

Once the candles are cool to the touch, you may tear away the paper molds, or remove the plastic molds. You can speed up the cooling process by putting them in the refrigerator but do NOT freeze them as they may crack.

Trimming the wick:

Using scissors, trim the top of the candlewick to about $\frac{1}{3}$ ". Turn the candle over and closely trim any wick that may be hanging from the bottom.

HOW DO I USE & STORE MY FINISHED PRODUCT?

First a word about clean up:

Do NOT pour hot wax down the sink drain! It will clog. Instead, pour the waste wax into smaller containers such as an old muffin pan or ice cube trays. The small size will make melting easier next time. Be sure to label the scent. If you spilled wax on a hard surface, scrape it off once it cools. If wax gets on cloth, pour hot water through it to melt it away. If wax gets on something you can't pour water through (such as your carpet!) let it harden, then rub it with an ice cube to make it brittle. Then scrape it with a dull knife. Metal and glassware can be put through the dishwasher cycle to clean.

Now that you've completed your first at-home candle-making project, it's time to enjoy the finished product (see figure 5). Remember to always use a metal, glass, or clay saucer underneath your candle to catch drips and avoid ruining your furniture. This is also a safety precaution. Trim the wick to about ¼" after each use, and allow the wax to cool and become solid before attempting to move the candle.

When not using or displaying candles, store them upright at room temperature, in a dark place, preferably in a sealed bag. This will keep the color, shape, and scent. Avoid exposing your candles to extreme cold or hot.

Candle making is an enjoyable and easy project anyone can do at home. The savings advantages and thoughtfulness of giving a homemade gift far outweigh the convenience of purchasing a candle at a retail store. With practice you could become an expert. If you are curious about making more sophisticated candles, please check out the following websites (see source page).



Figure 5: the finished product
source: www.members.iinet.net

Sources:

<http://members.aol.com/mommything/p-candle.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Valley>

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~campbell1/waxes.htm>