

Save Your Rolls!

Thank you to Teena Krause who suggested this article by Helen Ruthberg, reprinted from Miniature Collector, April, 2000.

Ordinarily, we consider paper tubes disposable and toss them out. Hold it! They are most useful as the beginning of many a miniature project.

We're interested in tubes from wax paper, plastic wrap, aluminium foil, toilet paper, paper towels, scotch tape, gift wrap, frozen juice containers and more. Variety is necessary because tubes do differ in width and in strength. Some tubes fit easily inside each other, so a larger tube provides the necessary cover, for example, for the smaller body of a hat box.

Carefully measuring for size is necessary. A pencilled line is adequate and the best tool for cutting along this line is cuticle scissors. To cover the open end of the tube, place end of tube onto cardstock or cardboard. Trace around tube with pencil, Cut out circle. Apply stream of glue along edge of hole opening and put cut-out round into place. Allow to dry. If there is some extension, cut away with scissors.



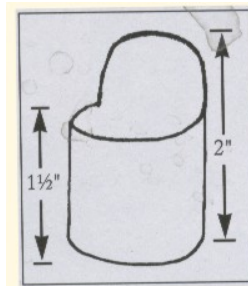
Sometimes it is better to cover the outside of the tube first before adding the circle. Do this when you want to fold and glue fabric or paper over the edge to the inside. Then add the circle, which also may be covered.

Tubes don't have to remain round. They can be pressed into oval shapes to make, for example, a large, old-fashioned copper boiling pan. There are instructions for a number of items provided here, but let your imagination discover other possibilities.



Skirted Table: Spread Tacky Glue on top of a 2 x 1 ¼ inch diameter tube and drape it with a round of fabric. You may wish to cover the open (top) end of the tube before draping the fabric, particularly if your fabric is fairly heavy. Place straight pins equidistant around top to position folds. Spray with hairspray to hold shape. When dry, remove pins. Glue on ribboned bows and a bead bowl filled with seashell "flowers".

Boudoir Chair: Cut a toilet paper tube to a height of two inches. Cut a shape that provides a back, curved area and a seat height of 1 ½ inches. Cover entire outside area with fabric, allowing small amount of fabric to overlap inside of seat and onto front of back. Cut thin foam to fit upper back inside area. Cover foam with same fabric, overlapping edges. Glue to inside upper part of chair. Cut a seat out of cardboard to fit open seat area. Pad with foam or cotton and cover with fabric. Glue into place. Trim with military braid, ribbon, lace, floss or other accessories.



Cat or Dog House: Cut a 1 ¼ inch opening on one side of a 2 inch tall tube. Spread glue on tube and cover with fabric, overlapping the hole.

Notch fabric to the opening, fold to inside and glue. Cut a top, cover both sides. Glue to top of tube. Add bottom.

To make a pillow, cover a wad of polyester or cotton with fabric and glue to inside bottom. Insert favourite pet. Several of these stacked in interesting positions would make a great cat "condo" for multiple cats.

Basket: Cover the inside of a tube with fabric, overlapping top and bottom, so raw edges are on the outside, Spread glue on outside, then encircle with course string. Insert and glue string handle before wrapping final rows.



Drum or Planter: Cut tubes 1 ½ inches high. Cover with appropriate material (fabric, paper, aluminium foil, etc.), folding raw edges to inside. For drum, cut cardboard circles that are a little smaller in diameter than the tube. Insert circles 1/16 inch below top and bottom edges. Add braided trim.

For planter, trace and glue a top and bottom to fit the tube. Place plant on top.

Hat Box: This project uses two different sizes of tubes. The top tube is 1 ¾ inches in diameter; the bottom tube is 1 inch high by 1 ½ inches in diameter. Cover the outside of the smaller tube with fabric and fortify inside with cardstock. Glue thin cardstock or cardboard to the bottom to cover raw edges of fabric.



Cover the rim of the larger tube with fabric. Make and cover a top. Glue top to rim edge. Glue cardstock inside. Decorate with lace, trims, or ribbon and a fabric rose.



Wall Decorations: These are narrow three dimensional settings and can accept anything small. The one illustrated uses a cut greeting card as the backing and foreground, a tiny lady from an HO gauge railway figures set and tiny seashells.

Narrow ovals and circles can also enhance picture frames, where depth is desired.

Last but not lest, save your old cardboard gift wrap tubes to make a sensible storage rack for your strips of wood moulding. Tape several tubes together, and lay them in a box on its side. The unit can lie on a shelf so that your stock is stored horizontally, well protected from damage and warping. Add a round circle of cardboard taped to one end to prevent strips from sliding right through the tube, and leave the tubes loose in their box. Then even small pieces can be stored with like mouldings and tipped out when needed.