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How to Recycle Magazines into Jewelry

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 [Diane Gilleland](#), contributor

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 Magazine paper lends itself well to this colorful little project. This pendant is made with parts of three different pages.

Photo: Diane Gilleland

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Before you recycle those old magazines, turn some of their pages into pretty coiled pendants. You can make a whole collection of them in no time.

What you'll need:

- Magazine pages
- Scissors
- Bone folder
- Thin wooden skewer
- Low-temp glue gun
- White craft glue
- Eye pin
- Blank cardstock
- Clear acrylic sealer
- Jump ring

A note on glue: After much testing, I've found that my low-temp hot glue gun works well for this project. Since this kind of glue hardens so quickly, I can build my coils in a snap. Keep in mind, though, that you can accidentally come into contact with the hot glue, and if your fingers are sensitive, they could burn. (I've developed Teflon fingers over the years, so this doesn't bother me.)

As an alternative, you can glue your coils with white craft glue, but you'll have to hold the work in place for a few minutes to let the glue set.



Gather some magazine pages and heat up your glue gun.

First, you'll need several magazine pages. Tear them out or cut them—just make sure you get as much of the page as possible. And, if you're using a glue gun, start letting it heat up.



The best coils come from bold, brightly colored pages.

I'm going to jump ahead of myself for a moment here to show you something important. See the lovely photo on the left? It makes a somewhat muddy-looking coil. So when you're looking for good magazine pages, seek out bolder, brighter ones like what you see on the right. They'll result in much prettier, more graphical coils. (Very often, I get the best coils from ad pages.)



Fold the page in half (a torn edge is fine).

To make a coil, begin by folding a magazine page lengthwise down the center, as shown. If one edge of your page is torn, just line up the most intact corner to make your fold.

Unfold the page and cut it in half along your foldline.



Fold the half page in half lengthwise.

Fold this half page in half lengthwise. Again, if you're working with the half that has a torn edge, just line up the most intact corner, as shown. The torn edge will be completely hidden once we finish this series of folds.

Fold the piece in half lengthwise a second time.

I recommend creasing each fold with a bone folder. If you don't have one of these, you can use the back of your thumbnail.



Fold the edges in
toward the center.

Unfold that second fold, and then fold the two edges in toward the center. Crease these folds.



Fold the edges
toward the center
again.

Repeat that step—fold the two edges in toward the center again. Crease those folds, too.

Try to keep your folds and creases as precise as you can during this stage of the process—it makes a big difference in your finished coils.



Fold in half again.

Lastly, fold the strip in half lengthwise, capturing all those folds inside.



Begin the coil on a
wooden skewer.

Okay, now to begin coiling! I like to get the process started with a thin wooden skewer. Start at one end of the folded strip and roll it tightly around the skewer for about three complete turns.

Remove the skewer and set it aside. The coil will relax a little, but don't worry about that for the moment.



Remove the skewer.
Re-coil the strip by
hand.

Now, re-coil this end of the strip by hand, making sure there is no hole in the center. Coil about two turns and stop. Then we need to start adding some glue.



Apply a small
amount of glue to
the strip.

Here's how I hold the coil when I glue it: I use my nondominant hand to pinch the flat part of the coil. Then, with the other hand, I can apply some glue.

If you're using hot glue, remember that it hardens very quickly, so apply a strip of glue that's no longer than 1/2 inch. In addition, keep the strip of glue thin so it won't ooze out when you start coiling.

(Incidentally, my apologies for the condition of my glue gun. It sees a lot of action.)



Wrap the strip along the coil, over the glue.

Use your dominant hand to firmly wrap the magazine strip over the glue, which in turn grows the coil.

Repeat these steps until you're happy with the size of your coil. You can make these coils any size you like—and cut off the rest of the magazine strip at any time. Just glue the end of the strip firmly down to the coil.



Add a new color by placing the strips end to end.

You can make a coil in several different colors by joining two strips end to end, as shown, and continuing the coil with a new color.



Use the side of the bone folder to press out any corners that appear in the coil.

If you have a bone folder, it's a handy tool if your coil develops any little corners along the way. You can mash them flat with the side of the bone folder. (Or, try using a butter knife.)



The bone folder flattens the coil, too.

You can also use the bone folder (or butter knife) to flatten your coil.

By the way, wash your hands between coils, because magazine print will often leave residue on your fingers. You don't want that to dirty up your other coils!



Trace the finished coil onto cardstock, and cut out.

When your coil is done, or you've finished gluing several coils together, it's time to add finishing touches. Trace the coil onto a piece of cardstock. Cut this shape out (cutting inside your traced lines).



Apply glue and an eye pin to the back of the pendant.

Flip the coil over to the back. Apply a generous amount of craft glue, and place an eye pin across the back of the coil, so that the loop sits at the top of the coil. (You may need to trim the eye pin so that it fits on the back of the coil.)



Press the cardstock into the glue.

Press the cardstock over the glue, and allow to dry. Then, seal the pendant on the front and back with clear sealer.

Finally, install a jump ring and add your favorite chain, neckwire, or ribbon.

Did you make this?

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